

Expert group joint opinion

Evaluation Procedure: Assessment of Study Field

Higher Education Institution: Rīga Stradiņš University

Study field: Health Care

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

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Rīga Stradiņš University (hereinafter RSU) is the third largest higher education institution in Latvia with a pronounced international orientation - about 25% of all RSU students are international students. RSU's registered office is Dzirciema iela 16, Riga, but RSU study programmes are implemented also at other addresses. For example, RSU has one branch at Rīņķu iela 24/26, Liepāja, which is fully suitable for the work of the university. The total number of programmes in the Health Care study field is 26 programmes (SAR, Part I, paragraph 1.1.). The infrastructure of RSU Medical Education Technology Centre (MITC) has been developed and the simulation-based training process for medical residents, as well as for other health care specialties, has been improved (SAR, Part I, paragraph 2.3.2.).

Strategic development plan of RSU shows coordinated cooperation of study programmes within the framework of a single study field, in academic, and in research activity. The study field and the relevant study programmes comply with the main directions of the strategic development of the RSU and meet the needs and the development trends of the society and national economy. The study programmes within the study field "Health Care" have been implemented at RSU that has obtained the international Quality Management System ISO-9001 standard certificate. The standard of RSU quality management system includes the ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education) internal quality assurance standards for studies and guidelines for quality evaluation in the European Higher Education Area, as well as the requirements of the Law on Higher Education Institutions of the Republic of Latvia.

University has identified strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats that is evident from the self-assessment report (further SAR), where SWOT analysis is presented in very detailed form with full explanations of each factor, and discussion about possible ways for fixing of the problems or development of existing strong sides. SWOT analysis contains actions that will eliminate these weaknesses.

The management structure of the study field and the corresponding study programmes is oriented towards the development of the study field, decision-making takes place efficiently, the support provided by the administrative and technical staff ensures all the needs of the study programmes corresponding to the study field.

RSU educational innovations change learning and teaching to improve quality and student learning. Successful learning and teaching innovations incorporate new ideas and adapt conventional methods to modern needs.

The main strengths identified by the experts group in the management of the study field - RSU Information Technology Department and RSU Center for Educational Growth regularly provide practical training for lecturers, support staff, and students on ethics, academic integrity, mechanisms for their observance, and effective anti-plagiarism tools. Strategic plan developed in the right direction in accordance with the goals of the study field. An important direction of the university's development is the emphasis on scientific activities.

The main strengths in the efficiency of the internal quality assurance system - substantial increase in student survey response numbers due to implementation of mandatory surveys and the joint quality monitoring process is implemented while implementing joint study programmes at RSU.

The resources and provision at the disposal of the RSU are used effectively to provide competitive higher education. Strengths of the resources and provision - the University has created an efficient and highly functional infrastructure in the analyzed areas (distribution of financial resources, technical support, methodological and informative provision). The Center for Educational Growth is an impressive functional unit within the University that offers a wide range of modern tools for improvement for the teaching staff.

Strengths in the scientific research and artistic creation - The RSU Research Department, Development and Project Department, and Technology Transfer Office offers teaching staff specific opportunities for research projects and practical support for project preparation and implementation. The RSU has well developed models and various ways of including students in scientific research. List of tools implemented for innovative solutions are applied in the study field. They have a significant positive impact on the study process, the strategic development plan of the University focuses on international research. VIP projects – Vertically Integrated Projects – good tool for the integration of scientific research into the educational process.

RSU cooperates with the institutions from Latvia (higher education institutions/ colleges, employers, employers' organizations, municipalities, non-governmental organizations, scientific institutes, etc.) within the framework of the study field on a very high level. RSU's international standing in the study field "Health care" is noted and has resulted in a number of bilateral agreements signed with European and American Academic Institutions, and international non-governmental organizations.

Many significant changes have been made within the study field and study programmes taken into account recommendations received from the previous accreditation cycle. The changes cover a wide range of areas starting with resource, material and technical base to internationalization of the teaching staff and quality assurance matters. The strengths is the establishment of a strong and modern material and technical base in the Faculty of Pharmacy. Substantial changes made in granting credit points and establishing learning outcomes. However, there are some aspects that still require more in-depth attention and further improvements to be fully-implemented.

The weaknesses which were identified in the study field: large numbers of students are not aware and are not informed of the existing complaint and proposal mechanism, which is established at the RSU, graduates are not surveyed on a regular basis. There are no standard feedback survey questionnaires in RSU for surveying students, employers and graduates. Response rates in student surveys substantially differ based on faculty and department. The distribution of workload for the teaching staff has a potential to become disbalanced if too much emphasis is put on the research aspects in the future. The remuneration of the teaching staff is a weak point in terms of facilitating motivation and interest.

There is an inequality in students' involvement in scientific research between the faculties. International links are not established with all geographical regions of Europe. Within the study field "Health Care", there are variations in the level of cooperation with international partners - with room for improvement for those within rehabilitation. For example: there is only one cooperative partner university in Professional bachelor study programme "Nutrition" (42722) and Professional bachelor study programme "Audiology and Speech Therapy" (42722) study programmes.

In the Faculty of Pharmacy, there is a low response rate in student surveys that fluctuates from 25% to 60% and is unstable despite the fact that student surveys are mandatory. In the second level professional higher education programme "Medicine" (49721), for the recommendation received to ensure an assessment of the pedagogical quality of the supervision of students' practical training, the outcome of the recommendation implementation, is not clearly defined. In the Joint Professional master study programme "Industrial Pharmacy" (47725), there is a limitation on providing individual study courses and also programmes in English due to the large count of practical classes and placement in drug manufacturing companies. In clarity in understanding of the Joint Academic master study programme "Nutrition Studies" (45722) structure of decision-making, which brought a little confusion of how the internal decisions are organized.

The majority of the study programmes are evaluated as good, however many recommendations for the study quality improvement were provided by the expert group.

I - Assessment of the Study Field

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1.1 Management of the Study Field

Analysis

1.1.1. The aims of the study field "Health Care" are aligned with RSU's strategic goals and the overall mission of the university, which is: to provide excellent, research-based and inclusive education of health care professionals to promote sustainable development of public health and well-being, realizing everyone's potential throughout life. RSU's vision and one of its main goals is to provide research-based, high quality and exportable higher education in Europe and in the world. RSU provides a solid foundation for academic and professional education and research work.

The goals and directions of development of the study field are clearly presented in the strategic plan for 2022-2026 and achievable (Annex 4.1.- Development Plan of the Study Direction "Health Care"), as evidenced by interviews with representatives of the administrative staff (with Rector, Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs, Vice-Rector for Science). The Vice-rector for Administration and Development presented strategic plans for developing the University during the meeting.

From interviews with administration representatives it is obvious that the administrative staff clearly understands the University's development strategy, supports it, and believes that the University is developing in the right direction in accordance with the goals and objectives outlined in the strategic development plan.

All interviewed parties (including academic staff, students, graduates and employers) noted the correct policy of strategic development of the University, and emphasized that the priority is the development of the scientific direction - increasing the number of researchers, increasing the number and quality of scientific research, the involvement of academic staff and students in scientific work, participation in international projects, conferences, etc.

During the meeting, the Rector of RSU explained about international cooperation, internationalization, resource sharing, expansion of research and innovation potential of the University.

The representatives of administrative staff (Vice-rectors, Rector, Director of Study field) mentioned that RSU was granted the status of a science university, which emphasizes the role of research in the operation of the entire University, including in the study field of "Health care". After RSU has acquired the status of a science university, research activities are promoted in all major study programmes, the number of high-quality scientific publications increases, applications are made for RSU research grants, Latvian Science Council grants, various international financial sources, including Horizon projects.

Strategic development plan of RSU shows coordinated cooperation of study programmes within the framework of a single study field, not only in academics, but also in research activity. The study field and the relevant study programmes comply with the main directions of the strategic development of the University and meet the needs and the development trends of the society and national economy, which was proved during the meeting with Rector, Director of Study field.

The study programmes within the study field "Health Care" have been implemented at Rīga Stradiņš University that has obtained the international Quality Management System ISO-9001 standard certificate. The standard of RSU quality management system includes the ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education) internal quality assurance standards for studies and guidelines for quality evaluation in the European Higher Education Area, as well as the requirements of the Law on Higher Education Institutions of the Republic of Latvia.

Graduates of the University and employers noted a high percentage of employment of RSU graduates, their high competitiveness, sufficient knowledge, clinical skills, communication skills that prove that the University is developing in the right direction, and the programmes corresponding to this study field have good strategic development plans. Graduates from "Health care" study programmes work in Latvian health care, which allows to say that the study field as a whole and the study programmes in it form a full "palette" of specialties for national health care, which are

complementary to each other, their content, goals and tasks are mutually agreed, avoid overlapping or duplication.

1.1.2. University has identified strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats that is evident from the self-assessment report (SAR, Part 1, paragraph 2.1.2), where SWOT analysis is presented in very detailed form with full explanations of each factor, and discussion about possible ways for fixing of the problems or development of existing strong sides.

SWOT analysis of the study field "Health Care" is devised and annually approved in a joint working group with the members of the Study Quality Council, carrying out the annual study field quality assessment and preparing the report. The SWOT analysis and the study field development plan, compiled and evaluated, were reviewed and updated.

For example, strengths of the study field are (is evident from SAR, Part 1, paragraph 2.1.2, and from meetings with Head of Study Innovation and Development Projects Unit, Director of Study Department and etc.) - use of modern study methods and their constant development; cooperation with a large number of professional associations, organizations and international professional associations; a wide clinical learning bases: hospitals, outpatient institutions, clinical research institutions, private healthcare sector; wide RSU Library resources available to students and academic, teaching staff; implementation of a student-centered approach in the study process; opportunity for students to evaluate and influence the study process by introducing a student survey process and feedback system for teaching staff; rapid development research promotion system.

Weaknesses of the study field by SWOT are average age of the academic staff, generational change; lack of methodological literature in Latvian; low completion of study course evaluation questionnaires; insufficient active feedback from teaching staff on survey results.

SWOT analysis contains actions that will eliminate these weaknesses.

Threats from the SWOT analysis are low pay for teaching staff, which threatens the attraction of teaching staff and the attraction of high-level professionals as teaching staff, especially in clinical sectors and study courses; failure of national systems to organize healthcare study process in a number of clinical institutions; difficulties in organization of students' clinical training in particular medical institutions; unpredictable reforms in higher education, non-alignment of laws and regulations.

1.1.3. The management structure is described in the RSU organizational charts (Annex 3) and RSU management structure of study field (Annex 4.2). The management of the study field and the corresponding programmes are carried out in accordance with the Process Description No 35 "Planning and administration of the study process" (Rector's decree of 31.07.2020). The management structure of the study field and the corresponding study programmes is oriented towards the development of the study field, decision-making takes place efficiently, the support provided by the administrative and technical staff ensures all the needs of the study programmes corresponding to the study field.

The management structure is composed of academic structural unit, the Study quality Council (the Quality Council of the study field "Health Care", which includes representatives of students and employers), Director of the study field; Faculty Council; The study programme Quality Councils (includes representatives of employers and students); Directors of the study programmes; Lecturers of study courses.

The director of the study programme is a programme developer and an organizer and coordinator of the study process, and a support provider to the lecturers of the study courses involved in the implementation of the study programme and an encouragement to the students (SAR, Part 1, paragraph 2.1.3). This was evident from the meetings with teaching staff. The director of the study programme is responsible for developing/updating the content of the programme, planning the acquisition of the study programme and preparing the plan for approval by the Council of Deans. The director of the programme is responsible for ensuring the examination of knowledge, skills and competences and their compliance with the learning outcomes; is responsible for the organization of

placement, cooperates with the lecturers and students of study courses, cooperates with employers to find out the satisfaction of employers with the competences of the graduates.

All Deans of the Faculties noted the support from the administrative staff and the close cooperation between the Director of the Study Field "Health Care" and Directors of individual educational programmes.

The Director of study field, Deans of the Faculties and Directors of individual educational programmes talked about the coherent mechanism of the relationship between various structural units, about meetings that take place on a regular basis. During meetings they discuss problems and ways to eliminate them, about necessary equipment, and material support is necessary for the programme. The study field Director with Deans and Directors of the programmes analyzes implementation of the programmes, directions for their improvement that is based on questionnaires received from various stakeholders. For example, some kind of rewards are made based on analysis of the work of scientific staff.

The interviews prove that management structures clearly understand the needs of the study field and corresponding programmes and annually decide what would be better and fix existing problems.

This is evident not only from interviews, but also from a visual inspection of the classrooms specific to the programmes - many different simulator rooms for different programmes and different purposes, very huge library resources with almost all medical databases, a lot of clinical bases (number of them increases).

The interviews with the Directors of educational programmes and Deans proves their competence as leaders. It is obvious that they are aware of the problems related to the implementation of programmes. They are constantly looking for ways to improve the material resources, financial support of programmes. The study programmes Directors and the Deans have close and constant communication with students (evident from meetings with students), they discuss together and find ways to eliminate problems. In this complex process of collaboration, administrative staff of programmes are helped by permanent surveys of students, which are analyzed, identify weaknesses and strengths, problems that have to be eliminated, and improve certain aspects of the educational process.

All interviewed structures - representatives of academic, teaching staff, students, graduates, and programme directors, assure that there is a huge support provided from administrative and technical staff when needed and in a productive way.

1.1.4. The RSU Senate sets the admission standards for each academic year in accordance with the Law on Higher Education Institutions. RSU has specific entrance regulations for every academic level. The admission regulations can be found on the RSU website in both Latvian and English. Enrollment of students, advancement in academic pursuits, acknowledgment, and validation of qualifications RSU offers admission procedures that are tailored to a specific goal in accordance with pre-established and publicly available admission regulations. The Academic Affairs Department collaborates with the directors of the study programmes to annually evaluate and amend the admission regulations. The RSU admission policy ensures that matriculation procedures and criteria are consistently applied. Applicants are admitted based on fair and equitable competition. The RSU guarantees a fair admission process by establishing consistent admission regulations for all candidates. These regulations are based on precise and well-known requirements derived from relevant national terms, conditions, and legal principles. This ensures that the rights of the most qualified applicants to study in their chosen study programmes are protected. RSU fulfills its duty to accept the documents presented by applicants and determine their conformity with the standards specified in the annexes to these admission regulations. RSU also discloses the admission outcomes in compliance with the admission regulations and arranges the signing of study contracts with successful applicants. Upon completion of the study contracts and fulfillment of the specified applicant's requirements, RSU guarantees the enrollment of these applicants. The recognition of

qualifications relies on collaboration with other higher education institutions, quality assurance organizations, and the National ENIC/NARIC Centre (Academic Information Centre). This collaboration aims to provide standardized and consistent nationwide recognition of qualifications. RSU has effectively coordinated its efforts with a commission, assuring the participation of a specialist in the corresponding educational field. Implementing a single commission for all thematic areas of education has guaranteed a consistent approach across the institution, eliminating the development of varying interpretations and ensuring equitable treatment for all individuals. It is crucial to emphasize that the student council-appointed member of the recognition commission ensures complete student involvement in the decision-making process (SAR p. 32-33).

The higher education institution will offer students the opportunity to pursue further studies at another study programme or another accredited higher education institution or college in the event that the implementation of the study programme is stopped. The higher education institution ensures that students will be reimbursed for any financial losses incurred if the study programme is not accredited or if the license for the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the institution or college. This guarantee applies only if the student chooses not to pursue studies in another study programme (SAR p. 33).

Listed arguments and observations during the site visit proved that the RSU has established a system and protocols that have been devised to facilitate the admission of students and to evaluate their academic progress, professional experience, prior formal and non-formal education, as well as their achievements and learning outcomes. These procedures are both logical and effective, and all relevant parties at RSU have been duly informed about the system. The criteria is well met.

1.1.5. Academic Regulations I (in Latvian and English) explain academic performance assessment criteria, conditions, and binding processes. Process Description No. 6 "Evaluation and Submission of Learning Outcomes," mandates defining and assessing knowledge, skills, and competence. Before starting a study course, all students are informed, usually through the course description, and in the first lecture, of its evaluation methods, learning outcomes, and completion standards. Academic freedom is respected for lecturers in course implementation, including examinations, while ensuring that teaching and examination methods align with learning outcomes. Lecturers, directors, and RSU study process support departments frequently assess course quality in order to align student performance assessment with study programme objectives and student needs (SAR p. 33).

The RSU Center for Educational Growth ((Pedagoģiskās izaugsmes centrs), hereinafter referred as PIC) and Academic Affairs Department review and approve study course descriptions. To promote cooperation and information exchange, teaching staff and directors of study programmes participate in observation and experience-sharing workshops, as well as mapping of study programmes focusing on the link between course learning outcomes and study programmes outcomes. Teaching staff and students examine study course assessment methods to determine their relevance to study programmes' goals. Best practices are adopted and implemented during annual course updates. Assessment methods in study courses are discussed, with a separate commission dedicated to them, based on course evaluation survey findings. The study uses summative and formative assessment to improve student performance and assess learning outcomes. Both course-specific and transversal knowledge, abilities, and attitudes are vital for learning outcomes; thus, students' active engagement, initiative, and responsibility are also assessed. Student profiles in RSU e-learning allow individual assessment of interim and end-of-course exams (SAR p. 34).

Creative, research, practical, and self-reflective works are graded according to each study course's goals and evaluation criteria, which the lecturer provides at the start. In 2020, Bachelor and Master students received updated methodological requirements for research papers (Latvian, English) (SAR p. 34).

The Faculty of Rehabilitation (RF) supervises the implementation of study courses, including assessment methods and procedures, involving students evaluating courses at the end of each semester and discussing them with course leaders (with reflection elements), lecturers, and the

Head of the Department. Support from the RSU PIC (training for teaching staff, experience exchange seminars, and individual counseling) and peer observation of study courses is also used. The teaching staff has support from RSU PIC in the form of training, experience exchange seminars, and individual counseling, which is highly valued by the teaching staff. Employers on the RF Council and State Examination Boards evaluate the RF study programme learning outcomes. At the outset of their studies, Liepāja branch students learn about assessment criteria, prospects for improvement, and regulations outlined in Academic Regulations I. Study programme directors, instructors, and support staff - the office manager, branch director, and study process coordinator—follow these procedures, and updates to study courses, methodologies, and evaluation criteria are made routinely. The PIC trains teachers to improve learning (SAR p. 35).

Employers on the Faculty of Pharmacy (FP) Council and State Examination Boards evaluate FP study programmes learning results. Changes to State Examination evaluation based on employer recommendations have been implemented. For example, changes in pharmacology and pharmacotherapy tests were considered when developing objectively structured clinical examination standards for pharmaceutical care (SAR p. 35).

Academic Regulations II for Residency Studies, published in Latvian only (https://www.rsu.lv/sites/default/files/imce/Dokumenti/studijas/rsu_rezidenturas_studiju_reglaments_2021_2022.pdf), explain the Faculty of Residency's residency study programme evaluation process. Interviews between a medical resident and the specialty programme director at least twice a year are vital to residency assessment. The specialty programme director listens to the resident's self-assessment of the training process, discusses and assesses the study programme's acquisition (learning outcomes), positive aspects, and potential problems, and these assessment results are recorded in resident's book records (SAR p.35).

RSU Academic Regulations I outline examination and assessment rules for the Faculty of Public Health and Social Welfare (FPHSW), Liepāja branch, and other faculties. Students are familiarized with these rules upon starting each course. Course descriptions list assessment criteria. Satisfactory mastery of the study programme requires satisfactory evaluation of all course content. The Faculty Council considers the heads of departments' summary of study course evaluation, questionnaire analysis and conclusions about their study courses, as well as student academic performance (SAR p. 35).

“Academic Regulations III. Academic Regulations for Doctoral Studies” (Latvian, English) explains the criteria, conditions, and binding procedures for assessing students' academic performance. Process description No. 44 describes evaluating doctorate exams and research work of doctoral students. Individual doctoral studies course descriptions specify assessment requirements for course completion. Doctoral students can read study course descriptions before getting started. The academic freedom of each lecturer in the development and implementation of study courses, including study exams, is respected as long as the teaching and examination methods are chosen in accordance with the learning outcomes (SAR p. 35).

RSU Faculty of Medicine (FM) conducts State Examination "Clinical Medicine" with a Chairperson representing employers and a Vice-Chairperson, visiting professor P. Goreckis from Charité Clinic in Germany. It ensures impartial assessment of faculty students' knowledge and capabilities and conformity with employer and international norms. The State Examination consists of three parts: theoretical knowledge, manipulation skills, and clinical knowledge synthesis and skills assessment in a genuine clinical setting at the patient's bedside. Knowledge-skills evaluation standards and components are clearly stated throughout the process. Maintaining consistent assessment criteria across lecturers, avoiding subjectivism, and providing correct feedback on assessment formation is crucial. When analyzing the theoretical component, the lecturer follows predetermined criteria to determine what content should be included in the student's answer and how to assess it. Students should only answer questions about the content covered in their study course to avoid exceeding the level of undergraduate studies. Following each National Examination, a meeting is held to

analyze progress and make improvements, with teaching staff and student representatives providing feedback. During 6th-year rotation placements, a portfolio is created to document practical work, including findings, skills, and abilities. The supervisor evaluates the student's professional development based on this portfolio. The Student's Portfolio allows students to self-evaluate their development, and the placement supervisor tracks their professional and personal growth. The final rotation placement assessment is cumulative, with 50% assessing practical skills in the medical institution and 50% assessing the defense of the placement. Both the professor and placement supervisor receive clear instructions on assessment criteria, which are also available to students (SAR p. 26, Annex 9).

Listed arguments and observations during the site visit proved that the RSU has established and well-defined student accomplishment assessment methods, principles, and procedures. The applicability of assessment methods and procedures to study programme goals and student needs is analysed and revised. The criteria is well met.

1.1.6. The RSU Code of Ethics (in Latvian, in English) and Ethics Committee (in Latvian, in English) review infractions and disputes based on applications. RSU created and approved the paper "Methodological Guidelines for Citing References and Compiling Bibliography" (in Latvian, in English) to teach students how to properly reference other authors' works. RSU has implemented the Unified Computerized Plagiarism Control System to ensure academic integrity and enable lecturers to check student work. Additionally, the university has licensed the Turnitin user guide for wider use. The tool is integrated into RSU e-learning for ease of use. For instance, all coursework, final papers, and course reports must be submitted in e-learning at the relevant study course. After the papers are uploaded, e-learning shows the overall percentage of similarity and visually displays corresponding spots in the paper, identifying the sources used that match portions of the text. The Turnitin User Guide for Academic staff developed by RSU (available only in Latvian) provides guidelines for the interpretation of the results. Coursework supervisors evaluate the results. After considering these results, the supervisor assesses if the work submitted meets academic integrity standards and makes an assessment or informs the student if it has to be corrected. The evaluation with Turnitin, takes into account that a relatively high (above 20%) similarity with other sources may not indicate plagiarism but indicate a lack of contribution from the author, namely that the author has used other sources of information and correctly referred to them, but the work lacks its analysis, argumentation, and interpretation, which the supervisor also points out to the student when giving the assessment (SAR p. 37.).

RSU Information Technology Department (ITD) and PIC regularly provide practical training for lecturers and support staff to enhance their knowledge and skills in using this tool for checking and correcting student work, providing feedback, and checking qualification and diploma papers at the end of the study programmes. Students get lectures and seminars on academic integrity concepts and techniques for monitoring and verification during the learning process (SAR p. 37).

Introduction of academic integrity in study field programmes in "Health care": students learn about academic integrity through the courses such as "Introduction to Pharmacy", "Pharmaceutical Chemistry", and "Research Project" at the Faculty of Pharmacy. Directors of study programmes must be informed about academic integrity and RSU's plagiarism prevention procedures (consideration of plagiarism cases in department meetings, maintenance of a plagiarism register, recording each case, risk of exclusion for repeated plagiarism). Only two occurrences have occurred at the Rehabilitation Faculty. The Faculty of Public Health and Social Welfare promotes academic integrity by updating the basic principles of RSU Academic Integrity Policy in the study courses implemented by its departments and by analyzing academic integrity issues in Council meetings. All final papers (semester papers, bachelor's theses, and master's theses) are uploaded to the e-learning site and checked with the help of the Turnitin tool. Issues that raise academic integrity are discussed with the RSU Student Union (SAR p. 37).

Medical residents follow the Code of Medical Ethics in addition to the higher education institution's

academic integrity monitoring and implementation. In almost all medical institutions (e.g., Children's Clinical University Hospital, Riga East Clinical University Hospital), a document that defines the basic principles of professional ethics and general norms of behavior of a resident as a doctor is binding on residents who study there. Medical ethics are also discussed in pediatrician, psychiatrist, and psychotherapist courses (SAR p. 37).

The Faculty of Dentistry marks practical exam materials to prevent cheating. To prevent cheating, pre-clinic tests use individually marked moulage teeth. Student work with a patient is evaluated individually at the clinic. The Liepāja branch must follow the academic integrity criteria outlined in RSU regulations. University anti-plagiarism techniques are employed frequently. Both face-to-face and remote learning promote ethics and academic integrity among students, professors, and administrative staff. Annually, the Academic Integrity Principles are updated. A fresh doctorate student learns about the RSU Academic Integrity Policy from the Department of Doctorate Studies (SAR p. 38).

Students are introduced to academic integrity on the first day of their first year of medical school at the Faculty of Medicine. Also at matriculation. The Faculty of Medicine departments explain the required principles of academic integrity in each study course and the restrictions in the e-learning environment before the course begins. At each joint meeting with the student stream, Faculty of Medicine management informs students of RSU Academic Integrity Policy (SAR p. 38).

RSU has developed a plan to establish and implement a framework for a culture of academic integrity and compliance with its principles to promote a unified approach to the definition, detection, handling, and sanctioning of academic integrity violations across the university. This effort is part of the draft project application for the Ministry of Education and Science Specific Support Objective 8.2.3. "To ensure better governance in higher education institutions." (SAR p. 38).

Within the framework of the development of a support system, the main planned activities are:
promoting prevention.

improvement of the internal system

To implement a high-quality ethics and academic integrity system, an experienced external expert will be consulted on defining unified principles, aligning regulatory frameworks, and implementing prevention mechanisms. To align ethics and academic integrity in Latvia, cooperation with various higher education institutions has been planned to establish principles, develop materials, share resources (e-study courses, training materials), and promote compliance. A strategic cooperation declaration is in place between RSU Red Cross Medical College, the University of Latvia, and Riga Technical University. Other higher education institutions have also agreed to cooperate to harmonize ethical and academic integrity principles, develop teaching materials on sharing the academic integrity module, exchange experience to introduce best practices in ensuring academic integrity, and raise the issue nationally (SAR p. 39).

The additional information can be found in the Article "Integrity is an Integral Part of Academics" of 05.03.2019 (available in Latvian, English); Article "Seminar "Academic Integrity and Ethics in Higher Education" was Held" on 15.11.2019 (in Latvian); RSU Academic Integrity Policy (available in Latvian, English) .

Listed arguments and observations during the site visit proved that the RSU has established academic integrity norms and processes. IT applies efficient anti-plagiarism instruments that encourage internal culture development, and all of the involved stakeholders are involved in these mechanisms. The criteria is well met.

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

The study field of "Health Care" at RSU is in accordance with the university's strategic goals for 2022-2026, demonstrating a clear alignment between the study field's objectives and the overall mission of the university. The attainment of science university status has positively impacted

research activities within the study field. RSU's commitment to research is reflected in increased scientific publications, grant applications, and participation in international projects, contributing to the university's recognition as a hub for healthcare-related research. The implementation of study programmes, both at the main university and its branch, adheres to international quality standards (ISO-9001). The Quality Management System encompasses ENQA standards, ensuring the delivery of high-quality education in accordance with Latvian regulations. The strategic development plan of RSU emphasizes coordinated cooperation among study programmes, fostering collaboration in academic and research activities. The study field and its programmes align with societal and economic needs, showcasing a comprehensive approach to development. RSU has conducted a detailed SWOT analysis, identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Action plans have been formulated to address weaknesses, demonstrating a proactive approach to continuous improvement. The management structure for the study field exhibits efficiency, with clear decision-making processes. Collaboration among academic units, councils, and directors ensures the fulfillment of programme needs and supports the overall development of the study field. RSU has established clear admission standards and procedures, ensuring fair and equitable competition. The university's commitment to consistent admission regulations based on national standards safeguards the rights of qualified applicants. The university has well-defined and transparent criteria for assessing academic performance, with clear communication of evaluation methods, learning outcomes, and completion standards. This contributes to a fair and standardized assessment process. Observations during the site visit proved that the RSU has established and well-defined student accomplishment assessment methods, principles, and procedures. The applicability of assessment methods and procedures to study programme goals and student needs is analyzed and revised. RSU has established and implemented measures to uphold academic integrity, including a Unified Computerized Plagiarism Control System. The university actively promotes a culture of academic integrity and collaborates with stakeholders to ensure compliance. By establishing protocols, systems, and mechanisms for admission, assessment, and integrity, RSU demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement. Regular training for staff further enhances the effectiveness of these processes. RSU Information Technology Department (ITD) and PIC regularly provide practical training for lecturers and support staff to enhance their knowledge and skills in using this tool for checking and correcting student work, providing feedback, and checking qualification and diploma papers. This has been proven to be a very effective and valuable resource, recognized and appreciated by RSU teaching staff, that strongly contributes to quality assurance at RSU.

Listed arguments and observations during the site visit proved that the RSU has established a system and protocols that have been devised to facilitate the admission of students and to evaluate their academic progress, professional experience, prior formal and non-formal education, as well as their achievements and learning outcomes. These procedures are both logical and effective, and all relevant parties at RSU have been duly informed about the system. The criteria is well met.

Listed arguments and observations during the site visit proved that the RSU has established academic integrity norms and processes. IT applies efficient anti-plagiarism instruments that encourage internal culture development, and all of the involved stakeholders are involved in these mechanisms.

Strengths:

1. RSU Information Technology Department (ITD) and PIC regularly provide practical training for lecturers, support staff, and students on ethics, academic integrity, mechanisms for their observance, and effective anti-plagiarism tools.
2. Strategic plan developed in the right direction in accordance with the goals of the study field.
3. An important direction of the university's development is the emphasis on scientific activities.

Weaknesses: None.

1.2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System

Analysis

1.2.1. RSU has established a quality policy, which is publicly available on the website of RSU, it is approved at the meeting of RSU Council of 18/01/2023, Minutes No. 1-P-1/1/2023. The quality policy is implemented by all RSU units and employees, through the implementation of strategic objectives at both departmental and individual level in accordance with the ISO 9001 standard "Quality Management Systems Requirements".

The quality policy is implemented by observing the following principles: quality, partnership, a student-centric approach, and research and practice-based education and experience. One of the requirements regarding the implementation of the joint study programmes is jointly created quality assurance system. RSU is implementing 5 joint study programmes assessed at the moment: (1) joint short-cycle professional higher education study programme „Medical Massage“ (41722), (2) joint professional bachelor study programme „Medical Engineering and Physics“ (42527), (3) joint academic master study programme „Health Management“ (45345), (4) joint academic master study programme „Nutrition Studies“ (45722), (5) joint professional master study programme „Industrial Pharmacy“ (47725). The study programme "Medical Massage" is implemented in an institution of higher education (RSU Liepāja Branch (LB) and RSU Red Cross Medical College (RCMC)) (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.1.2.). Implementation of the content of the study programme „Medical Massage“ is supervised by the Joint Quality Council of the study programme (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.1.5.). The professional bachelor's study programme "Medical Engineering and Physics" is implemented as a joint study programmes of RSU and Riga Technical university (RTU) (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.1.5.). The study programme "Medical Engineering and Physics" has a Joint Quality Council (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.1.5.). Pressing matters are resolved several times a year, also regarding improvement of the content of studies. The interuniversity professional master's study programme "Health Management" is implemented by RSU and RISEBA University of Business, Arts and Technology (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.1.5.). The study programme has a single Quality Council, the process of the programme has been approved, information is exchanged between the institutions of higher education regarding assessments of student study courses, a single quality monitoring process is implemented (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.1.5.). The joint study programme of the University of Latvia (LU), Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies (LBTU) and RSU is titled "Nutrition Studies" (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.1.5.). The second level higher education study programme "Industrial Pharmacy" is implemented in close synergy between RTU and RSU (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.1.2.). It was witnessed during the on-site visit meetings with the study field administration, there is a joint quality policy applied in all the joint study programmes, applied in the faculties, however, as it was mentioned by the representatives of „Health Management“ study programme, the implementation of the joint quality policy sometimes is challenging.

RSU is applying The Deming Cycle of plan - do - check - act (SAR, Part I, Figure 5, paragraph 2.2.1.) in the introduction and implementation of the internal quality system. Process descriptions, such as Process Description No 35 "Planning and Administration of the Study Process" (SAR, Part I, Annex 1, No. 4.5.) sets the requirements for planning, supervision, and quality control of the study process at RSU. Requirements for defining and assessing learning outcomes – knowledge, skills, competence – are included in the Process Description No 6 "Assessment and Submission of Learning Outcomes" (SAR, Part I, Annex 1, No. 4.14.) and Academic Regulations I. The same requirements are applied for all study programmes in the study field.

The continuous improvement is ensured by the comprehensive supervision of study quality with control measures throughout the year. In order to ensure the supervision of the quality of studies, once a year an evaluation of study fields is carried out, a study programme review and a development plan/review of the study field are drawn up, as well as a plan/review for the implementation of the recommendations put forward by external evaluation experts. The

programme review should include an analysis of the study programme quality indicators (approved in 2016) (SAR, Part I, paragraph 2.2.1.).

The development is ensured by internal quality monitoring. The internal quality audit is performed at the institutional level - monitoring of the quality strategy, participation of RSU (including the Health Care Study field) in ratings, financial monitoring, monitoring of energy saving in structural units of the study field, data protection quality analysis; at the level of processes- analysis of complaints and non-conformities review processes, success analysis, risk analysis; at the level of study programmes - study quality analysis, study programme and SWOT analysis, plan evaluation, analysis, etc. at the level of analysis of structural units - analysis and audit of the level of academic activity of structural units, analysis of student surveys and feedback analysis.

The efficient performance is ensured by the supervision of the processes taking place at the University. The analysis of the fulfillment of process quality criteria is carried out once a year. The results are reported at the management meeting - the Rectorate, where decisions are made regarding future activities.

It was emphasized by the administration of the study field that the studies are focused on digital skill development, sustainable development goals are implemented in the study programmes. The strength of the studies - successful Integration of international students, based on 43 years of experience. However, international students want to be better supported by real world exposure. Latvian students are feeling the risk of doing extra semesters in case they use Erasmus+ possibilities. The first observation results prove that the emphasis is put on the science, however the humanistic aspect (the patient) is noticed, the biopsychosocial model is employed, however It is understood as the challenge by the representatives of RSU.

The experts panel considers that the QA system is sufficient. The overall opinion of the experts is that the student feedback works; it is improved significantly, and it is transparent. The experts consider it is important to take care of the influence of the student feedback on the bonus on the salary; so it doesn't become a threat to the criteria of teaching staff for the course. The reward could come in recognition and praise of the good work of teaching staff with promotion based on their achievements based on the statistics from student surveys. The experts consider the promotion system may include the best teacher of the semester, or the year, not using the nomination, as this could be subjective, but using the statistics from the students' surveys. Experts suggest it is important to revise and update study course descriptions and reading lists, addressing changes related to the new ECTS credit system, with the goal of ensuring accuracy and alignment with the evolving educational landscape, and implement these revisions within the next assessment period to facilitate a smooth transition to the new credit system.

1.2.2. According to the information gathered during the on-site visit, the university has implemented student surveys as mandatory due to the previous low response rate of around 30%. Implementation of mandatory student surveys have positively impacted the response rate and increased it to 68%, which at this point of time is seen as a good rate in the opinion of the university. It was clarified during the on-site visit that it is indicated on every study course page that the student survey is mandatory, however, "mandatory" does not limit at this point student ability to enroll in next semester study courses. The representatives of QA system implementation stated that at this point, they are not planning to implement any other stricter restrictions, however, if the response rate is about to decrease, they have some ideas on how to regain the responsiveness from students. During the meeting with the students, they stated that they are aware the surveys are seemingly called mandatory but there are no penalties or sanctions in case of not filling them. The study course evaluations are conducted twice per academic year at the end of each of the study semesters. As clarified during on-site visits, the surveys are conducted electronically.

During on-site visits with students and academic staff, it became clear that there is a feedback system established to students. It was stated that the survey results are gathered, data is analyzed, summarized and then the summaries of data per year are published online, when students can

easily access them and see the reports. Academic staff representatives stated that after every cycle of survey analysis, they are informed of their performance and it is being analyzed separately. It was stated during on-site visits that lecturer remuneration can be reduced based on general negative performance of a lecturer, however, the fact alone that there has been negative student feedback of a specific course is not valid grounds to decrease the salary of a specific lecturer. On the other hand, lecturers who manage to provide good quality of studies that have a high student satisfaction rate in the feedback and have a certain percent above average of general student performance receive an additional bonus to their salary.

Based on the meeting with the management of Faculty of Medicine (FM), Residency and DSP, it was clarified that in medical studies the system of QA is more complex, highly observed and layered on many levels. As it was described during the meeting, during the 6th year of their studies, there are 18 weeks of clinical rotations for students - surgery, internal diseases and elective courses that students wish to specialize in various fields. Then RSU is expecting results from the students, students give feedback on how it went, how was the communication with the supervisor who differs for each of the students in the hospital life. Then there is also feedback from the supervisors, education center from the hospital of individual performance of each of the students. There are also meetings at the beginning of an academic year with the students to analyze how it went during the previous year, how to organize students better, what should be changed etc. One example students gave an evaluation of and said that they need more skills in emergency situations and next year they trained students for such situations at the FM. Response rate of students FM is 85%, also of employers. There is a portfolio of each student and employer feedback is added to the portfolio.

Based on the on-site visit meetings, it was specified that in joint study programmes there are two study platforms that students use - each in the specific university where they have the necessary access to study course information, have separate emails that they use for communication with their lecturers as well as surveys. The QA system is ensured separately in each of the universities, however, as specified in the management meeting, the main responsible provider of QA is RSU.

Based on the meetings with graduates and management from different faculties, the information on graduate surveys differ. The management of faculties all stated that graduates are involved and a crucial part of QA mechanism. Graduates of the Faculty of Medicine stated that they remember filling out graduate surveys, however, graduates from Faculty of Pharmacy did not remember if they had received or filled any survey after their graduation.

When it was asked to graduates about the way how QA process was organized when they were students at RSU, overall, it was stated that graduates believe that the surveys and feedback provision is effective in general, however, they pointed out that not all lecturers take feedback seriously and actually change something in their teaching style or eliminate the issues while the trend is positive and some improvements can be noticed.

RSU is following the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) described in Annex No 23.1 (SAR, Part I, paragraph 2.2.2.). Process Description No 34 "Updating and Development of Study Courses, Study Programmes, Study Directions" (a link is available in Annex 1) is defining the procedure for development and internal approval of study programmes, supervision of their operation and periodical inspection in accordance with the requirements of external laws and regulations. The responsibility for the quality of study programmes is distributed in a clear manner. Supervision over the implementation of a study programmes and its quality is ensured by the director of the study programme by evaluating the study process, learning outcomes, analyzing the results of student surveys, changes to the trends in the labor market, and current events in the sector and world. Annual revision process of study programmes and study fields is regulated by the Rector's decree or the instructions by the Administration of Studies, and its goal is to prepare a summary of the annual study process quality monitoring. Programme directors and members of the Quality Council of the study field participate in the preparation of the report on the study field. The report includes an analysis of the significant

development indicators of the study programme and the learning outcomes to be achieved, as well as the development plan for the study field.

The frequency of student and employer surveys are not described in detail in the SAR. However, an expert group found out during additional meetings that employer surveys are organized by human resources personnel once in 2 years. It was also specified that the human resources department usually works together with study programme directors in regards to the content of questions asked in the employers' surveys.

Mechanisms for obtaining and providing the feedback in work with the students, graduates and employers are developed and clearly defined in the SAR, Part I, paragraph 2.2.4. Student surveys are organized centrally at the higher education institution twice per academic year. Students fill in an anonymous electronic questionnaire for each study course completed in the semester. It is the responsibility of each study course leader to familiarize themselves with the results of the course survey and provide students with structured feedback on the identified strengths and weaknesses of the course, as well as the planned improvements to the study course, if any. The information obtained in the surveys is analyzed at all relevant levels (at the level of the University, study fields and study programmes, departments and study courses), evaluated and discussed in collegial bodies (Faculty Councils, department meetings, Study Quality Councils and Council of Deans), where the experience gained and decisions taken on necessary changes in the implementation of the study course or programme.

Mechanism of obtaining and providing feedback from / to employers involves the feedback survey (research commissioned by RSU "Study on competitiveness and relevance of the study programmes of Rīga Stradiņš University and RSU Red Cross Medical College to the medium and long-term development trends in the labor market and sector" was carried out), and additional ways of collecting the feedback are used - employers as supervisors of Master's these are addressed during the development of students' Master's theses, as well as employers are involved in the evaluation of the Master's theses both as reviewers and as the Chairpersons and members of the evaluation committee.

According to the information gathered during the on-site visit, the university has implemented student surveys as mandatory due to the previous low response rate of around 30%. Every year there is one meeting with all hospital leaders in Latvia. There is also a possibility to collect feedback from them. However there are no standard questionnaires for that purpose. Graduates are not surveyed on a regular basis. Graduate surveys are organized by the Alumni Association.

1.2.3. As it has been stated in the SAR pp. 43-45, there is a mechanism developed for submission of student complaints. It has also been confirmed during the on-site visit when meeting university representatives that are responsible for the QA management system and successful implementation of it. As specified in the SAR p.43, the procedure for submission and review of student complaints and proposals is defined in Process Description No. 31 "Management of Complaints, Appeals, Non-Conformities and Proposals" that is accessible in the Annex 1, No. 20.2. Other additional requirements for submission and consideration of appeals are set out in the Academic Regulations I. As specified during on-site visit, students can submit their complaints and suggestions throughout the study year when the specific problem has arisen. There are various ways that are specified on how the students can submit their complaints and they are outlined in the SAR p.43 - at the Student Services, through Student Union and/or through Quality Assurance and Internal Audit Department. It was stated during the on-site visit meeting with the representatives of the QA management system that the process is anonymous. Based on the SAR p.43, the submitter of the complaint is informed in writing regarding results of the review and the actions taken to fix the situation.

According to the data provided in the SAR p. 44, generally, there is a positive trend of decrease in numbers of student complaints and appeals throughout the time period from 2017 to 2022. In 2022, 32 complaints, 61 appeals and two proposals were registered in the structural units, while the highest number of complaints were registered in 2019 with 65 complaints, 203 appeals and 4

proposals.

Based on the responses received by the students during on-site visits, the majority of all students were not aware of the existing procedure. They stated that in most of the cases the usual approach is to provide feedback through surveys. Some of the students stated that they can provide feedback on the course from the moment the course has started and this person believes it is a sufficient way to share their opinion also in cases when it is negative. Another student shared that in cases of a problem, the department of academic affairs of Student Union is active and can assist, if necessary. During the meeting with academic staff, one of the lecturers provided information that in order to eliminate complaints from students throughout the surveys at the end of semester it is important to ensure face to face communication of the expectations as well as the study process.

Management representatives mentioned during on-site meetings that employers are contacted on a weekly basis and there is a close cooperation with RSU. There is also a formal way of communication with the employers and there is a high response rate, especially in the Faculty of Medicine and Residency due to active rotation of the students at the hospitals, where students require supervision and assistance and employer feedback is provided in each individual student's portfolio.

1.2.4. The existing mechanisms for obtaining and providing feedback from students, graduates and employers differ due to division of responsibilities within the RSU. As it was clarified during on-site visit, student surveys are the responsibility of the Innovation and Growth department that gathers and analyzes them. The conduction of graduate surveys is the responsibility of Alumni Association, while employer surveys are organized by the HR department and personnel with assistance from Study programme directors in forming the questionnaire. Employer surveys are conducted once every two years.

The new approach of mandatory student surveys is giving an opportunity to an RSU to create statistics on teaching staff performance, and results can be used for human resource management. Due to the data teaching staff can be rewarded for their good performance and encouraged their good work. In the criteria promotion the results of students surveys should be included in the form of stimulation.

The statistical data collection mechanism established by RSU is efficient, because (SAR, Part I, paragraph 2.2.4.) it has a clear division of responsibilities for data analysis at various levels (RSU institutional level, study field and programme levels, faculty and academic structural unit levels and study course level) (SAR, Part I, paragraph 2.2.4.). The statistical data collection mechanism is effective, because it has a wide use to improve the study field, for example, in different ways: to assess the awareness of the study field and its study programmes, to identify opportunities for interdisciplinarity in the offer of the study programmes, to improve publicity activities in certain regions and secondary schools in the next period, for a more objective assessment of the number of applications in the future periods and for the analysis of student dynamics, which affect many other indicators (drop-outs, the number of graduates, the number of state-funded study places, publicity activities); to analyze both the dynamics of the level of skills of students and the relevance of study courses to the needs of students, as well as to identify possible changes in the study course assessment system and the structure of content and learning outcomes, and possibly in the teaching the course in general; to identify possible differences in the demand and supply of higher education, to analyze the gap in students' expectations and to facilitate the communication of the teaching staff, directors of the study programmes and support departments and students about the reasons for dropping out. Information about the status of study course descriptions is analyzed to ensure regular updating of study courses, including updating of the literature and other sources given in the study course description. Statistics on the number and qualification of the teaching staff are used to assess the compliance with regulatory requirements of programmes, publicity activities, identification of programme quality and strengthening of lecturer qualifications, financial calculations of the study process, etc.; distribution of types of lecturers' work - information on types of lecturers' work is analyzed in order to plan the staff development of academic departments and

to balance the pedagogical, research and methodological work of lecturers (SAR, Part I, paragraph 2.2.4.).

The statistical data collection mechanism established by RSU ensures regular collection and analysis of information (statistics) on the study programmes corresponding to the study field, because the data from different RSU information systems are periodically automatically backed up in a data storage room, where information can be analyzed in different ways, integrating data from different disciplines (SAR, Part I, paragraph 2.2.4.).

The mechanisms for obtaining and providing feedback, including from students, graduates and employers, their effectiveness and focus on the improvement of the study field, are discussed in the Joint report, analysis of criterion 1.2.2.

Expert panel considers the statistical data collection mechanisms established by RSU are efficient and effective, because it has a wide use to improve the study field.

1.2.5. The information published on the website of RSU about the study programmes corresponding to the study field corresponds to the information available in the official registers, provides applicants and students with important information that is published in all languages of implementation of the study programmes: study field is indicated, degree conferred and qualification offered, credit points, accreditation term, language in which the study programme is implemented, study location, study duration, study places and tuition fee, information about the head of the programme and teaching staff, as well as the contact information.

RSU has an active website/homepage, which provides detailed information on HEI and the existing implemented study programmes within each of the study fields. The information on the website is available in English and Latvian. All the relevant study programmes of the study field can be found there with descriptions of the necessary information - study length, state funded places, degree obtained after graduation, study fee and other. The information published on the website of the higher education institution about the study programmes of the study field corresponds to the information available in the official registers (VIIS and E-platform).

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

The quality policy is implemented by all RSU units and employees, through the implementation of strategic objectives at both departmental and individual level in accordance with the ISO 9001 standard "Quality Management Systems. Requirements". The quality policy is implemented by observing the following principles: quality, partnership, student-centric approach and research and practice-based education and experience. One of the requirements regarding the implementation of the joint study programmes is a jointly created quality assurance system. All joint study programmes ensure this requirement by having one (joint) Quality Council, that is how the joint quality monitoring process is implemented. University's structure is solid, University is justifiably proud as the institution, open, honest, conscious that every day is a chance to improve. Students are not afraid to speak up, they see positive changes. The graduates are proud to have been a part of RSU. Wide range of social partnership proves the significance of RSU in the region and the country.

Studies are focused on the digital skill development, sustainable development goals are implemented in the study programmes. The strength of the studies - successful Integration of international students, based on 43 years of experience. However, international students want to be better supported by real world exposure. Latvian students are feeling the risk of doing extra semesters in case they use Erasmus + possibilities.

The first observation results prove that the emphasis is put on the science, however the humanistic aspect (the patient) is noticed, the biopsychosocial model is employed, however it is understood as the challenge by the representatives of RSU. There are obviously many efficient ways to collect the feedback from the students. Every year there is one meeting with all hospital leaders in Latvia. There is also a possibility to collect feedback from them. However there is no one standard

questionnaire for that purpose. Graduates are not surveyed on a regular basis.

Strengths:

1. Substantial increase in student survey response numbers due to implementation of mandatory surveys.
2. Joint quality monitoring process is implemented while implementing joint study programmes at RSU.

Weaknesses:

1. Large number of students are not aware and are not informed of the existing complaint and proposal mechanism, which is established at the RSU.
2. Graduates are not surveyed on a regular basis.
3. There are no standard questionnaires in RSU for surveying students, employers and graduates.
4. Response rates in student surveys substantially differ based on faculty and department.
5. The statistical data from the students' surveys are not used enough for positive improvement and human resources management.
6. Students are aware that there are no consequences if they don't fill in the surveys, even the filling is obligatory. This raises risks in the future implementation of QA using student surveys.

Assessment of the requirement [1]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The efficient performance is ensured by the supervision of the processes taking place at the University. The analysis of the fulfillment of process quality criteria is carried out once a year. The results are reported at the management meeting – the Rectorate, where decisions are made regarding future activities.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

RSU has an established policy and procedures for quality assurance of higher education, which are determined by internal regulatory documents. They define the quality mechanisms of the study process at RSU and which apply to all study programmes.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

RSU has developed a mechanism for the creation, internal approval, supervision and periodic review of the study programmes of the higher education institution and applies to absolutely all study programmes.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

For criteria, conditions and procedures for the assessment of students' academic performance, which enable reassurance of the achievement of the intended learning outcomes, see Section

2.1.5 and Annex 17.1 (Compliance of the study programme with the State Education Standard (for each study programme)) and paragraph 1.3 of the Annex 23.1 (Compliance of RSU study programmes with Part 1 of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)).

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Internal procedures and mechanisms for ensuring the qualifications of the academic staff and the work quality are described in Sections 2.3.5, 2.3.6, 2.3.7 and in Paragraph 1.5 of Annex 23.1 (Compliance of RSU study programmes with Part 1 of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)). Each year compliance assessment is conducted, and the mechanisms are reviewed.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Section 2.1.5. provides information on student academic performance. Section 3.1.3 (for each study programme) and Annex 10 provides information on graduate employment.

The existing mechanisms for obtaining and providing feedback from students, graduates and employers differ due to division of responsibilities within the RSU based on their internal structure of implementation of internal quality assurance. Students are monitored regularly and mandatory survey form has been implemented. However, there seems to be no unified common way to survey graduates. Employer surveys are conducted once every two years.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The higher education institution ensures continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study direction whilst implementing their quality assurance systems. This is described in sections 1.3, 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.3, 2.2.1, 2.2.2 and Annex 23.1: Compliance of RSU study programmes with Part 1 of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). See Annex 4.1 Development Plan of the StD, Annex 4.2 Management Organisation of the Study Direction and Annex 11 Recommendation Implementation Plan.

1.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Field

Analysis

1.3.1. According to the Self-Assessment report (SAR, PART II, paragraph 2.3.1), the University has established a financial resource distribution system for the study programmes that includes multiple factors - the number of students, the necessary equipment and materials, facilities, the size of student groups, the number of contact hours, the proportion of lectures and classes. Information on other factors is not provided, despite the fact that those are also considered. Taking into account the differences in the content, the amount of funding can vary significantly for different study

programmes. All funding is allocated in the annual budget planning procedure.

An in-depth analysis of the above-mentioned factors is done annually at the end of the academic year. Afterwards, proposals for the improvement of the profitability of study programmes are prepared, these usually include optimization procedures of various degrees, however, a more drastic approach like closure of the study programme in question is not ruled out as well.

Concerning the scientific research, the funding is done by both external sources (most importantly the EU research and innovation programme "Horizon Europe", international cooperation programmes, EU structural funds, the Erasmus+ programme, as well as revenues from cooperation with the private sector, the State Research Programme and the Fundamental and applied research programme) and internal sources (doctorate grants, internal grants, joint grant programmes, support of individual projects from the Alumni Association and patron fund).

The financing process for artistic creative activities is two-fold - University earnings and co-financing by the Riga City Council.

The analysis above indicates that the University has established a supportive system for attracting diverse funding for the implementation of the study field and scientific research activities. The available funds presumably are distributed according to the defined needs of the study programmes, however, additional effectiveness analysis is not provided.

Additionally, the funding sources for scientific research are defined and implemented, these include both internal and external sources. Unfortunately, the expert can't perform any analysis on the effectiveness of this system due to the fact that no information of this kind is given. This leads to the conclusion that the funding system is supportive to some degree.

1.3.2. According to the Self-Assessment report (SAR, PART II, paragraph 2.3.2) the information and communication technology infrastructure of the University includes:

1. Computer network located in several buildings (including student dormitories).
2. Infrastructure and resources of the data center of the academic network of Latvia.
3. IT hardware and software monitoring system.
4. Communication platforms, particularly Zoom, which is the basic platform for the remote study process.
5. Video lecture recording systems (Panopto).
6. E-mail system for employees that also provides cloud services (Exchange).
7. Electronic identity management system.
8. Self-services for copying, printing and scanning.
9. Classroom reservation system, which is linked to the lecture and lesson planning system.

Necessary support on the availability of IT resources and problem solving is provided by the service center which is available to students, administrative staff and teaching staff. Consultations are provided by email or phone on working days and Saturdays.

Employees and students have access to free Eduroam Wifi network, as well as free-access computers.

The study process provision also includes high-resolution interactive multimedia projectors with sound system, a centralized multimedia equipment management system for the auditoriums, multiple computer classrooms for electronic exams and other types of tests, hybrid auditoriums with automatic tracking for conducting hybrid lectures and classes with the possibility of conducting online lectures and classes, as well as modern interactive solutions like green screen, interactive displays and transparent board (learning glass).

During the interviews, it was established that the digitization process in the University is implemented through regular discussions on all levels. It was also noted that infrastructure capacity at all levels is strictly monitored to ensure its effectiveness.

In the experts opinion the University has created a capable information and communication technology system for the implementation of the study field. Wide range of modern tools (remote lectures and tests, remote test environment software, video recording of both lectures etc.) are

used in the study process, which complement traditional teaching and study methods.

1.3.3. According to the given information the funding for the library resources has been significantly increased over the past 5 years. The library environment is gradually improved and modernized with new technological solutions introduced every year.

The support procedure for the library consists of 3 main components, those are:

1. Planning of the acquisition of information sources.
2. Evaluating and supplementing the provision.
3. Determining the level of user satisfaction.

Additional procedure for the quality of trial databases has also been developed, it includes analysis of usage statistics, user reviews and costs. If these parameters are evaluated as positive, a full subscription for the given resource is ordered.

In order to determine which resources for the collection are topical, library specialists cooperate with the teaching staff and students. For this reason procedures for the replenishment of the library resources are simple and available in a remote format.

Previously conducted surveys of both students and teaching staff showed high ratings for the library. The University operates a free access subscription that provides the opportunity to receive books at home using self-service equipment.

Students are provided the opportunity to communicate with the library on various issues by phone or email. Resources that are not available on site can be accessed through other libraries using instruments like Inter-Library Loan or International Inter-Library Loan.

The University provides 24/7 access to a wide range of online databases that are recognized worldwide. The usage statistics for these resources are evaluated every six months, so far indicators for these have been high (noteworthy are ClinicalKey, Proquest Ebook Central Academic Complete, EBSCO LV, Health Research Premium Collection Journals, MEDLINE Complete, UpToDate and Cochrane Library). E-resource management is done by the unified search engine that also provides access to student theses and other University publications (DSpace platform). Publications of the University are also included into the additional information system (Pure) that focuses on the research areas topical for the University (SAR, PART II, paragraph 2.3.3).

The analysis given above indicates that the University has developed a system for management of library resources and provision. Library resources are available to the students on-site and remotely which greatly facilitates the study process.

1.3.4. The most important tool for organizing the study process is the E-studies platform that contains all study courses of the study field. The platform is available to all students and lecturers for access to study materials, tests, homeworks, anti-plagiarism check and evaluation (grading). The platform also contains a calendar of upcoming events, the latest university news and discussion forums, study materials and all the latest information about what the lecturer of the study course wants to convey to the students - various tasks, sample tests, supplementary materials, etc. The platform is available around the clock from anywhere with internet access, including mobile devices. Interconnected to the E-studies platform is MyRSU portal which gives the possibility to view the necessary information about the study process and use the e-services.

Remote lectures and classes are mostly implemented using the Zoom platform and the Panopto service for video recordings and live broadcasts of lectures and presentations. Students have the opportunity to submit their final theses in video format. Thesis defense can be organized entirely online as well. Testing in case of remote studies is done in a secure environment using the LockDown Browser - this software blocks all prohibited side actions during the test (cheating) (SAR, PART II, paragraph 2.3.4).

The previously described information and communication technology solutions ensure an appropriate and effective study process.

1.3.5. The University has defined that the core tenets in this regard are transparency and efficiency. In accordance with the Law on Higher Education Institutions and the Law on Scientific Activity only

highly qualified and competent teaching staff with good reputation are involved in the study process.

The qualification of candidates for academic positions takes place in accordance with the requirements for the position specified in the Law on Higher Education Institutions, the tasks of academic positions mentioned in the RSU Constitution and the RSU election process, taking into account the following factors:

1. Education.
2. Experience.
3. Competencies.
4. Potential.
5. Merit.
6. Scientific contribution.
7. Pedagogical skills.
8. Seniority.
9. Recommendations of experts and industry representatives.

The University has developed a detailed description of the procedure with defined quality criteria, these are:

1. The number of elected academic staff corresponds to the indicators defined in the Strategy.
2. Elections are organized according to the requirements.
3. All departments are informed in a timely manner.
4. The necessary academic staff is taken into account during the budget planning of the relevant departments.
5. The proportion of academic staff with a doctor's degree corresponds to the external requirements (Process description No. 29., Set of Internal Regulations).

The requirements for elected and visiting teaching staff of all levels are clearly defined in the Regulations on academic elections.

Topical information about vacant positions is published on the University website, the National Research Activity Information System website and other portals if such necessity exists. University employees receive this information via work email (SAR, PART II, paragraph 2.3.5).

During the interviews, it was noted that in the process of content revision of the study programmes, the opinion of the labor market representatives is also taken into account. Additionally discussions are organized at different levels of management.

Given the analysis mentioned above, there are grounds to assert that the University has successfully defined and implemented procedures to attract and retain qualified teaching staff on all levels.

1.3.6. The workload of the teaching staff is planned according to the study plan of each academic year and study semester. In the event that the study courses are organized in the form of modules, the workload is reviewed according to the need and regulations.

The most significant achievement of the University in this area is the establishment of the PIC, which provides support for improving the quality of study process. This is done by conducting quality analysis, providing consultations on the study programme and study course modernization, and organizing continuing education activities.

The main thematic directions are dedicated to:

Pedagogy (didactics and management of the education with emphasis on the study result defining, evaluating, creating the pedagogical design of the study course, focusing on the basic learning of pedagogical legalities).

Technology-enriched learning and teaching (information and communication technologies, digitization, is implemented in cooperation with the RSU Information Technology Department).

Cross-competence (e.g. skills to communicate, collaborate, innovate, improvise, work interdisciplinary and in data-driven research).

The content of PIC is updated every semester. The form of education is specially adapted to the goal

to be achieved, this includes interactive workshops, seminars, conferences, think tanks, thematic cycles, guest lectures, simulations, etc. Training takes place in both remote and on-site formats. Additionally participation in these events is included in the performance bonus criteria for the teaching staff.

Information such as the number of lecturers who have participated in the activities, the academic hours devoted to participation in the center's activities and the number of attended activities is purposefully collected for further analysis. The feedback of the improvement measures is reflected in the improvement of study quality indicator performance.

During the interviews it was clarified that PIC is under a monitoring process with defined input and output measures.

The teaching staff of the University also have access to:

1. Training opportunities in the Medical Education Technology Center, the Career Center and the Personnel Department.
2. The possibility to participate in the events of the Open University.
3. The possibility to use the materials and services of the library.
4. The opportunity to participate in the Erasmus+ exchange programme.
5. The opportunity to participate in the IT excellence programme for the improvement of digital skills at the University of Buffalo (USA).
6. The opportunity for qualification improvement outside the RSU.

The expert concludes that the needs of professional and didactic development of the teaching staff are determined, appropriate improvement measures are used, evaluating the results and effectiveness of the implemented measures.

1.3.7. According to the Self Assessment report (SAR, PART II, paragraph 2.3.7) members of the teaching staff are individually assigned to a certain amount of pedagogical workload during the academic year, this is expressed in a specific metric - Pedagogical work units (PWU). The PWU amount may vary between different members of the teaching staff. The teaching workload is planned according to the study programme plan of each study semester and academic year.

The amount of PWU for each structural unit is planned every academic year. The implementation process is monitored by the Department of Studies. If necessary, recommendations by the Department of Studies are given to heads of structural units. For higher academic positions PWU amount is lower due to the fact that more time needs to be dedicated for research and scientific work. Participation in research activities is mandatory for teaching staff members who are permanently employed at the University. The division of responsibilities can be changed by the head of the structural unit, after discussion with the employee.

During the interviews, it was confirmed that the University plans to develop the direction of international research, therefore increase in funding for scientific activity is certain. It was also noted that the division of time between academic and other types of work is allowed to keep the teaching staff interested and motivated.

The analysis indicates that the University has defined, developed and implemented a system for workload of the teaching staff, however information on the balance between different categories of the workload is lacking. Additionally, no information about the employee survey results on this issue is given.

1.3.8. According to the Self-Assessment Report (SAR, PART II, paragraph 2.3.8) the University supports students with special needs with the aim of promoting their independence and inclusion in the study process. Support is provided at various stages, such as choosing a study programme, entering a university, as well as during the study process. Additionally the University has developed guidelines and implemented support policy for this matter.

To help students overcome adaptation problems the University has successfully implemented psycho emotional support consultations. The availability of this service has been appreciated by both local and foreign students. Possibility to choose group or individual consultations is provided.

The service has so far helped to reduce the number of students who have break periods in the study process.

Additionally Career Center consultations (both individually and in groups) are also available. The Career Center organizes events on current topicalities in the labor market and other topics related to career-development. Students have the possibility to post their CV and receive information about vacancies suitable for them. Literature and informational materials on career topics are also provided, these can be read on site or taken to read at home.

An important tool in ensuring the quality of study courses are student surveys, which are organized at the end of the study period. The survey results are analyzed within the Study Department involving all levels of management. The feedback usually covers approximately 70% of students. Plans for even more encompassing results are in development. The students also receive information about the changes implemented due to the survey results.

Informational support for foreign students is provided by the Department of International Relation. This is done to ensure the integration of students in the University environment and in Latvia (including support in arranging immigration procedures).

A week before the beginning of the first semester, the Department organizes an Orientation week event. During this event foreign students are informed about the university, study process, evaluation system, student rights and obligations, E-study platform, immigration and residence issues, Latvian culture and language. Additionally, mentorship programmes are also maintained with the aim of facilitating the adaptation process.

During the interviews it was confirmed that the funding for student activities constitutes a sufficient part of the overall budget with the tendency of gradual increase. A concern was raised in regards to the teaching staff salaries with the situation at present being unsatisfactory.

The University has identified the necessary support for students and a functioning support system has been established to meet these needs.

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

The University has established a supportive system for attracting diverse funding for study programmes and scientific research activities, these include well defined internal and external sources.

A robust ICT system for the implementation of study programmes, utilizing modern tools like remote lectures, tests, and video recording is established. The E-resource management is well-structured through a unified search engine accessible both on-site and remotely.

Procedures to attract and retain qualified teaching staff on all levels are successfully implemented, including professional and didactic development. A functioning support system for students has been established to meet their needs.

The main concerns include an unsatisfactory situation regarding teaching staff salaries, lack of additional information on the effectiveness of the funding system for scientific research and imbalance between different categories of workload for the teaching staff.

Strengths:

1. The University has created an efficient and highly functional infrastructure in the analyzed areas (distribution of financial resources, technical support, methodological and informative provision).
2. The Centre for Educational Growth (PIC) is an impressive functional unit within the University that offers a wide range of modern tools for improvement for the teaching staff.

Weaknesses:

1. The distribution of workload for the teaching staff in multiple instances is imbalanced due to too much emphasis on the research.

2. The remuneration of the teaching staff is a weak point in terms of facilitating motivation and interest.

1.4. Scientific Research and Artistic Creation

Analysis

1.4.1. Scientific research is well presented in the SAR, part 2, paragraph 2.4.1 and the document was also confirmed and supplemented by the study field director, study programme directors and teaching staff of the University in the interviews. The results of the research have not only been used in the development of the specialty in cooperation with professional associations, but also new information is used in the development of study programmes of all levels.

The priority direction of the University's development is to encourage scientific researchers. In the interview the Rector of RSU mentioned that the strategic development plan of the University focuses on International research. The number of local and international scientific projects, peer-reviewed scientific publications in the field of "Health Care" increases every year. RSU research week is held annually, where the results of joint scientific activities of academic staff and students are presented. The goal of RSU research is not only increasing internationally high-quality scientific results, but incorporating them into the study process of the study field "Health Care". The emphasis is on digitization of research processes, closer integration of science and studying processes. RSU supports and promotes interdisciplinary and cross-sector research, as well as data-intensive research and research involving data reuse.

RSU research has three research platforms: the medical platform, public health platform and social sciences platform, each of which conducts research in several groups of scientific disciplines, in priority science directions for the economy of Latvia and in areas determined by the health policy of Latvia and EU.

The Medical platform supports research in the fields of medicine, pharmacy and dentistry. Research covers major groups of diseases and almost all fundamental sciences of medicine.

The main areas of medical sciences that the University is going to develop in the future as a priority are general medicine, oncology, infectology, microbiology and virology.

Compared to 2016, scientific output has improved significantly, as measured by the number of original scientific articles published and cited in the WoS or SCOPUS databases, peer-reviewed scientific monographs published by research associates, and intellectual property retained or registered abroad. The number of scientific results mentioned above has doubled in absolute terms (from 359 to 728 in 2016 and 2020, respectively). A similar increase is observed in the number of original scientific articles, peer-reviewed scientific monographs published by researchers, which are not published in the WoS and SCOPUS databases, as well as in the number of patents registered and maintained in Latvia (in absolute terms from 864 to 1540 (SAR, part 1, paragraph 2.1.3; Annex 6.4.1 - Summary_of_academic_staff_publications_16-10-2023).

A bioinformatics laboratory has been created at the University. Understanding the need for strong expertise in bioinformatics and big data analytics, RSU has established a Bioinformatics Laboratory, which made it possible to get such research as the analysis and integration of genome, transcriptome, microbiome and other omics data with epidemiological, clinical, and environmental and lifestyle information in the context of personalized medicine.

The Public Health Platform includes research in the fields of public health, occupational safety and environmental health, rehabilitation.

RSU Social Sciences Platform cooperates with RSU Medical and Public Health Platform, promoting a comprehensive understanding of the research of RSU value the human being.

RSU received a high rating in the "International Assessment of Scientific Institutions", in 2019 it has been "4" on a scale from 1 to 5. The separated research platforms have been evaluated as well. The Medical Platform got the score - 4, The Public Health Platform - 3, Social Sciences Platform - 3. This

assessment identified certain areas of RSU that provide internationally recognised research quality, such as virology, vaccine research, phage research, dentistry and stomatology.

In 2008, with the involvement of ERDF co-financing, the Technology Transfer Office (TTO) was designed. The main goal of this Office is developing and maintaining external relations with the private sector by providing information on RSU research activities and experience (commissioned research, commercialized offers to companies, contact exchanges, exhibitions, etc.).

The management of research activities is carried out by the Board of Science, which is managed by RSU Vice-Rector for Science. He explained in detail about his responsibilities and about development of scientific research in the RSU and in the Study field "Health Care" as well.

Annual monitoring in research is carried out in University through annual revision of the results of scientific activity. RSU Research Portal collects information on the results of scientific activity of RSU academic staff - publications, projects, awards, research activities, datasets, presentations, communication in the press, media and others. The portal has open access. RSU Research Portal facilitates cooperation with the university researchers and research groups, communication and dissemination of knowledge.

The directions of scientific research of the study field "Health Care" correspond to the developmental strategic plan of the RSU and are relevant for the study field.

1.4.2. In the study field "Health Care", the link between scientific research and the study process takes place through the involvement of students in scientific research (that is evident from SAR, Part 1, paragraph 2.4.2). The University has implemented many scientific international projects that relate to both the field of medicine and the field of education (as evidenced by interviews with representatives of the administrative staff (with Rector, Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs, Vice-Rector for Science). During the meeting, the Rector of RSU, Director of Study field explained about international research projects, implementation of their results in the study process.

For example, during studying the students of the Faculty of Rehabilitation gradually acquire research skills (research process, principles of ethics in research, information literacy, research methods), critical reasoning abilities and skills to integrate research results into professional activity (evidence-based rehabilitation interventions). At the end of studies, students prepare research papers (Bachelor's or Master's thesis).

Students of the Faculty of Pharmacy can publish their research results in scientific journals or participate in local or international conferences. For award results at RSU student conferences or international publications, the student's performance is validated as a research paper or the student gets an increase in assessment by one grade. During the study process, teaching staff share their own research work, which are included in the relevant study course (the study courses "Pharmaceutical Chemistry", "Medicinal Chemistry", "Pharmacology", "Pharmacognosy", "Clinical Pharmacy", "Pharmacogenetics", "Social Pharmacy").

Evidence-based knowledge, action and decision-making in the study process are emphasized and taught at the Faculty of Public Health and Social Welfare from the beginning of studies, ensuring not only understanding and evidence-based behavior/practice, but also guided interest in research, which is the basic tool for generating this evidence. During the study process, students are required to collect, synthesize and analyze research data on specific problem issues or interventions within several study courses, summarizing the obtained results in the form of presentations, semester papers, etc., which enrich the study process for other students, as well as to carry out their own research within the framework of final papers.

The results of research work of the students of the Faculty of Dentistry are used as methodological and additional material for other students. From autumn 2021, students have had the opportunity to participate in the activities of the Baltic Biomaterial Centre of Excellence (BBCE) and carry out their own research work.

The doctoral students work on the research paper, provide pedagogical work in the current department, publish articles on the topic of his/her doctoral thesis, participate in research projects

and scientific activities in Latvia and abroad. Doctoral students report on their achievements and research to the Research Activity Evaluation Committee at the end of each year of study.

By the Regulations for Doctoral Studies the doctoral student must have carried out research and scientific activity (related to the topic of the doctoral thesis) during the doctoral studies, which meets at least one of the following criteria: Two double-blind peer-reviewed scientific publications in scholarly journals or conference proceedings indexed in SCOPUS or Web of Science database, or included in the ERIH+ database; One double-blind peer-reviewed scientific publication in a scholarly journal or conference proceedings indexed in SCOPUS or Web of Science database, or included in the ERIH+ database and a peer-reviewed scientific monograph on one research topic or problem, and containing a bibliography. If the peer-reviewed scientific monograph is published in Latvian, it should contain a summary in at least one of the other official languages of the European Union or, if the peer-reviewed scientific monograph is published in a language other than the official language of the European Union, it should contain a summary in at least one of the official languages of the European Union.

A very important role in the process of integration of scientific research into the educational process is played by the so-called VIP projects – Vertically Integrated Projects. VIP is a good opportunity to involve students of the Faculty of Medicine in the research process. Some big research groups are united within the framework of VIP projects. Each research group includes representatives of the academic staff, doctorands and students of different courses. Each student performs his own specific part of the work within the particular project. The result of work in a VIP project for a student is a semester paper, Bachelor's or Master thesis, publications in scientific journals or dissemination of the obtained research results in local and international scientific forums. The VIP is a new and innovative addition to the study process that provides significant practical knowledge in conducting research activities for students at all levels.

Directions of scientific research are relevant and directly connected with the study process. Scientific research and the results are clearly integrated in the study process in the all study programmes.

1.4.3. The University takes part in many international research projects. RSU participates actively in different EU and national programmes like Horizon Europe, international cooperation programmes such as COST Actions, ERA-NET, ERDF, FLAG-ERA, etc. RSU is a member of international research infrastructures such as EATRIS, BBMRI, EOSC, SHARE, EIT Health. The University participates in international consortia (CIMBA, BCAC). 130 international research projects were submitted for 2017-2021, 39 of which were funded. These include 13 projects under Horizon 2020 and 9 are ERA-NET projects, which was proved during the meeting with Rector, Director of Study field, Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs, Vice-Rector for Science, Vice-rector for Administration and Development.

The most important projects for the EU Structural Funds are related to infrastructure improvements, improvement of management processes and modernization of the content of study programmes, strengthening the capacity of academic staff, reducing fragmentation of study programmes and promoting internationalization of studies, as well as during this period RSU has welcomed foreign visiting researchers in its research community (SAR, Part 1, paragraph 2.4.3).

The Department of the Doctoral Studies organizes international webinar cycles with the involvement of visiting lecturers and leading experts, for example, an interdisciplinary webinar cycle of cognitive sciences, webinars on the application of FAIR data principles in medical and health sciences.

The Department of Doctoral Studies is the partner in SHARE (Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe) research, and provides information on health, aging and retirement in Europe. In order to provide international cooperation in research, RSU concludes cooperation agreements with leading international scientific institutions, organizes international scientific conferences, supports international symposia and conferences organized by other scientific institutions. For example, the International Symposium on Cognitive Sciences, Logic and Communication. Students of the study programmes of the Faculty of Pharmacy are involved in the Horizon 2020 (2020-2026)

project implemented by the Baltic Biomaterials Centre of Excellence (BBCE). The project is developed in cooperation with Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis (LOSI), Riga Technical University (RTU), RSU Institute of Stomatology, as well as AO Research Institute in Davos (Switzerland) and Friedrich-Alexander Erlangen-University of Nuremberg (Germany) in accordance with the Smart Specialisation Strategy of Latvia - Biomedicine, Medical Technologies, Biopharmacy and Biotechnology. The project offers extensive training opportunities for both faculty staff and doctoral students and undergraduates. The project stimulates students' involvement in research and offers a wide range of educational activities and training (SAR, Part 1, paragraph 2.4.3).

The Faculty of Dentistry has international cooperation within the BBCE with German and Swiss research institutions, the University of Erlangen and the AO Centre in Davos. In the field of scientific research, there is cooperation with universities in Rostock, Malmö, Cardiff, Oulu and others. A cooperation agreement with the University at Buffalo, USA, is planned.

The staff of the Faculty of Public Health and Social Welfare are involved in international cooperation in research within different projects, such as the EU program "Horizon 2020" SHARE (Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe) study on health, aging and retirement in Europe, the EEA/Norwegian government funding project "Towards elimination of cervical cancer: intelligent and personalized solutions for cancer screening", the World Health Organisation, CDPC, MoH and RSU cooperation study "Health Behaviour in School-aged Children" (HBSC), the research project "How to protect a normal birth" within the Nordejordemodern Network (for teaching staff and students).

International cooperation in the Liepāja branch is projected in the mobility of teaching staff. Pilot studies are planned and carried out under the Erasmus + program (SAR, Part 1, paragraph 2.4.3).

Teaching staff from the Department of Paediatrics of RSU Faculty of Medicine participated in the EU Horizon 2020 research project "Diagnosis and Management of Febrile Illness using RNA Personalized Molecular Signature Diagnosis (DIAMONDS)". An international ERA NET NEURON cooperation project Examining the Synergistic Effects of a Cognitive Control Videogame and a Home-based, Self-administered Non-invasive Brain Stimulation on Alleviating Depression (DiSCoVeR) contract No 1.1.1.5/ERANET/19/04 continues until 2024 at the Department of Psychiatry. Since 2021, teaching staff of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology of the Faculty of Medicine have been participating in the World Health Organisation (WHO) study IMAGiNE EURO -Improving MATernal and Newborn carE in the EURO region. The Statistics Unit of the Faculty of Medicine has been participating in the European Economic Area and Norway Grant (EEA/N) programme Research and Education", EEA-GRANT-205 project Promoting Healthy Ageing, Welfare and Social Security from 2021 to 2024.

1.4.4. Teaching staff of RSU constantly participate in research work, present reports at scientific conferences, including international conferences. Teachers also teach abroad through Erasmus + (e.g., 22-25.03.2022 at Vilnius University, Faculty of Medicine, Doctoral School). Several lecturers have written or co-authored scientific monographs on research technique, writing, and dissemination of research results, as well as collective monographs in psychology. All faculty write international peer-reviewed articles and review scientific papers. Lecturers serve on scientific journal editorial boards, participate in financed research, and are experts in numerous initiatives. They work for international organizations and are professional members (SAR p.84, Annex 23.1; Annex 6.2; Annex 14; Annex 6.4.).

The RSU Public Health Platform ecosystem includes the Rehabilitation Faculty. The Faculty's scientific research is diverse and interdisciplinary, working with other RSU departments and external partners. In 2022, Faculty of Rehabilitation staff co-authored 9 articles and participated in 4 Latvian and RSU projects (SAR p. 83).

The Faculty of Public Health and Social Welfare is an RSU Public Health Research Platform member. The Faculty's teaching staff participates in RSU Institute of Public Health research projects and local and international research initiatives, such as the National Research Programme for COVID-19 mitigation ("Impact of Covid-19 epidemic on the healthcare system and public health in Latvia;

strengthening health sector preparedness for future epidemics”) (SAR p. 83).

RSU has several assistance systems to help teachers develop scientific activity. The Pharmacy Faculty (further FF) implements one Horizon 2020 project (BBCE), one LFP FLPP project, three European Agricultural Fund initiatives, and six RSU grants. By 2022, 8 further projects were filed. Pharmacology, pharmaceutical chemistry, drug delivery systems, clinical pharmacy, pharmacokinetics, phytochemistry, and social pharmacy are the key research areas. Despite being one of the smallest faculties at RSU, the Faculty of Pharmacy publishes research results annually in scholarly journals. Each year, SCOPUS (Web of Science) reports more international publications. In 2019, solely FF faculty authors and co-authors published 23 articles, 30 in 2020–2021. Teachers publish their research in prestigious journals like British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology, Basic and Clinical Pharmacology and Toxicology, Toxicology Letters, Pharmacological Research, Biochemical Journal, Nutrients, Journal of Infection and Chemotherapy, Medicina, Molecules, Nanomaterials, Journal of Ethnopharmacology, Plants, BMC Medical Education, BMJ (Online), Journal of Pharmaceutical Policy and Practice, etc (SAR p 83.).

All academic staff in the Faculty of Dentistry must do scientific research. The staff works on LCS, RSU, and RSU SI research projects. RSU Institute of Stomatology created a Research Director position in 2022 to advance science in the faculty and institute (SAR p. 83).

In the Liepāja branch, teaching staff involvement in research focuses on managing student research and individual initiative. Two instructors have completed their PhD degrees and are completing their theses (SAR p. 84).

Many of the doctoral study programme's teaching staff are science experts in Latvia. To be awarded this status in social sciences, you must have three double-blind peer-reviewed scientific publications in a scientific journal or conference proceedings indexed in SCOPUS or Web of Science, or in ERIH +, including a scientific publication in Ope. Only Latvian Council of Science-certified scientists who do research and publish results internationally supervise RSU doctoral theses (SAR p.84).

Academic staff in the Doctoral studies programme have the following research directions and outcomes: 1) focused on successful doctoral study programme execution; 2) related to doctoral teaching staff interests and research activities by participating in worldwide and national research projects (SAR p.84).

The academic staff's research on oncology, endocrinology, microbiome, digital interventions, anthropometric parameters and morbidity indicators, epidemiology, and other current topics in an interdisciplinary context contributes to the field's development, the study programme's development, and the study content's improvement. Professors incorporate recent research into their classes. Teachers write textbooks, methodological materials, and scientific articles (SAR p. 84).

Academic staff involved in study direction implementation are actively involved in scientific research; scientific publications are used in the study process (recommended as compulsory or recommended literature in the study course), contributing to the quality and sustainability of the study programme. The RSU Research Department, Development and Project Department, and Technology Transfer Office regularly hold activities for teaching staff involved in research, offering not only specific opportunities for research projects but also practical support for project preparation and implementation. These arguments and observations during site visit lead to conclusion that the criteria is well met.

1.4.5. RSU students participate in scientific research based on their knowledge, abilities, competency, and experience. In general, RSU students can conduct research as follows:

Vertically integrated projects that teach students how to do in-depth and practical research (web; Vertically Integrated Projects | RSU).

Apply for Student Research and Innovation Grants (SRIG) to finance projects that encourage RSU students to pursue research (web <https://www.rsu.lv/en/student-grants>).

Enhance research skills through RSU Business Incubator B-Spac PINK and INK programs (web: <https://www.rsu.lv/en/b-space-business-incubator>) .

joining various student research interest organizations. There are currently 26 active research interest groups (web: <https://www.rsu.lv/en/about-us/rsu-student-interest-groups>).

Applying for Student Union financial help for conferences or seminars within or beyond the country (around 10 students receive support annually).

Apply to an RSU doctorate student on the student portal for research paper assistance.

Joining RSU Student Union's "Academy of Researchers" (web: <https://www.rsu.lv/petnieku-akademija>)

participate in RSU Science Week international scientific conference (web: <https://rw2023.rsu.lv/>).

Take use of the Doctoral School's One-stop agency to enhance research skills (web: <https://www.rsu.lv/petnieciba/doktoranturas-skola>) .

using the Science Platform for student research and projects (web: <https://www.rsu.lv/aktualitates/zinatnes-platforma-studentu-iesaistei-zinatniskos-projektos-un-petiju-mos>).

presenting students projects at RSU International Student Conference (ISC). Student Union conference became international in 2015, it organizes RSU ISC annually, attracting more foreign students each year. In 2018, the conference grew to two days and included approximately 270 students with health and social science research topics (web:<https://isc.rsu.lv/>).

RSU International Student Conference is organized by RSU departments. Student research interest groups create workshops. RSU instructors evaluate papers, while management and structural units handle organizational concerns. Each year, this project has a new team of organizers, thus the project manager must set a better standard than the year before. The outcome depends on the manager's vision and objectives. In 2019 and 2020, the conference website, radio interviews, and printed materials in RSU and other university buildings promoted the conference well. Next year's conference must recruit additional health and social science researchers to enhance sessions and attendance. Research Week, which includes an international scientific conference for researchers and students, begins in April 2019. It encourages international cooperation, involvement in research networks and groups, and attracting international partners for projects, research, and publications (SAR p. 86).

The study programmes of the Faculty of Rehabilitation (FR) teach students about current scientific breakthroughs and their research outcomes in their courses. Students participate in research through a Rehabilitation research interest group, Bachelor's and Master's theses under FR teaching staff, Vertically Integrated projects (VIP) at the Institute of Occupational Safety and Environmental Health, Department of Health Psychology and Pedagogy, and individual research projects by the Department of Rehabilitation (SAR p. 86).

Students at the Faculty of Pharmacy participate in departmental and project research. As noted in SAR Section 2.4.2: Linking scientific research to the study process, students are motivated to publish their research in scientific journals or attend RSU or other international conferences. Students participate in these research initiatives to learn research skills:

2019 – 2023: European Agricultural Fund. 18-00-A01620-000028 “Development of antiparasitic phytopharmaceutical containing extracts of medicinal plants” (3 students) (web <https://www.rsu.lv/projekts/arstniecibas-augu-ekstraktus-saturosa-pretparazitara-fitolidzekla-izstrade>).

2022-2026: European Agricultural Fund. No 22-00-A01612-000007 “Development of medicinal forms of the leaf extract of tansy, the traditional medicinal herb of Latvia and its effect on the microbiome and anti-parasitic control of the digestive tract of sheep” (3 students).

2020 – 2026: Baltic Biomaterials Centre of Excellence (further BBCE), second phase, (10 students (web: <https://www.rsu.lv/en/project/baltic-biomaterials-centre-excellence-phase-ii>).

A considerable rise in student involvement in research projects improves the study process by allowing students to share their experience with others. It fosters collaboration between students and faculty, fosters future scientists, enhances research skills, fosters boldness and proactivity, and

fosters collaboration with industry and academia. Student involvement in research projects and scientific labor helps them understand drug research and their future scientific interests (SAR p. 87). The Faculty of Public Health and Social Welfare emphasizes and teaches evidence-based knowledge, action, and decision-making from the start of studies, ensuring understanding, evidence-based action/practice, and guided interest in research, the basic tool for generating this evidence. Students are required to collect, synthesize, and analyze research data on specific problem issues or interventions in several study courses, summarizing the results in presentations, semester papers, etc. to enrich the study process for other students, and to conduct their own research in final papers. Research skills are learned sequentially through semester-based courses. In collaboration with state and local institutions and RSU departments, students should have access to research databases for their scientific studies. The Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (CDPC), RSU Institute for Occupational Safety and Environmental Health, and other institutions have collaborated on "Public Health" study initiatives for years (SAR p. 87).

To encourage residents of the Faculty of Residency to present excellent research results at international scientific conferences, they can apply for funding for a trip to a scientific conference. All RSU medical residents are encouraged to participate in the RSU International Scientific Conference (held every two years) and receive a cash prize for the three best research papers selected for this conference. A conference travel, scholarly paper, or other scientific activity can be funded by the monetary reward (SAR p. 87).

All Dentistry graduates must write and defend a scientific research thesis. Ninth-semester thesis development and defense. Faculty of Dentistry departments divide thesis subjects. Students can participate in BBCE and professor projects and showcase their work at international student conference (SAR p. 87).

In the Liepāja branch, students are encouraged to participate in RSU-organized scientific conferences and present research at international conferences in collaboration with faculty. With guidance from faculty, students explore and propose solutions to healthcare concerns (SAR p. 87).

All RSU Faculty of Medicine students have 36 student research interest groups to develop their skills as competitive and talented researchers. Mentors help members of the research interest group create valuable research articles for student scientific conferences. Members and guests of the research interest group participate in events organized by Rīga Stradiņš University, including Health Week, Young Doctors Academy, Research Week, and field trips to rural hospitals in Latvia. Research interest groups collaborate closely with Latvian medical associations and departments (SAR p. 87).

Research paper development is a student research interest group priority. Interest group research papers were successfully defended at international conferences and won awards. After each year of education, interest group Olympiads are held to measure knowledge and practical skills. Students begin research in their first year and most actively attend the Department of Morphology's annual International Morphology Conference. Later-year students enjoy the RSU International Student Conference. Students in the 6th year of medical school must complete the MF_002 Research Paper, which requires them to conduct theoretical and practical research and successfully defend their paper. After the 4th year of study, the Faculty of Medicine gives students the required support to start and defend their research paper, which is a mandatory part of the program (SAR p.88).

The Doctoral study programme aims to create a close synergy between research and studies, allowing students to participate in both research and scientific organization work, enabling them to contribute to healthcare sector development through substantial original research, including peer-reviewed publications. Doctoral students learn to independently solve significant research or innovation tasks, formulate topical research ideas, plan and structure research projects, including internationally, by participating in research projects. Doctoral study programme "Health Care" students develop and participate in many research projects: Sub-programme "Medicine" 10 projects and 42 students involved; Sub-programme "Pharmacy" 4 projects and 9 students involved, and Sub-programme "Psychology" with 5 projects and 9 students involved, for the previous assessment

period (SAR p. 88 - 89).

Listed arguments and observations during the site visit lead to the conclusion that the RSU procedures encourage student participation in scientific, practical, and artistic research. The mechanisms developed are functional and effective. Students at all levels conduct scientific, practical, and artistic research. However, even though the RSU has offered equal opportunities to all the students regarding the involvement in scientific research activities, the inequality in participation of students is obvious between the faculties. Most of the students' involvement is related to the scientific work of their mentors at the Faculties, therefore it is highly advised to take care of the students' involvements and encourage their participation at the university level. This will contribute to more opportunities for students to get involved and the interdisciplinarity of their research activity, which is highly encouraged. Despite the many options offered, considering the high number of students at RSU, the relative number of students involved in research activities should be better.

1.4.6. RSU educational innovations change learning and teaching to improve quality and student learning. Successful learning and teaching innovations incorporate new ideas and adapt conventional methods to modern needs. Pedagogical innovations are not equated with excellence. Different lecturers may view the same innovation as significant, while others may view it as a long-standing practice. Innovative learning and teaching improves student study experiences, which is very significant. Methodological innovations—promotion of studies based on research, work environment, inquiry, projects, problem situations, and other approaches and methods—and technological innovations—the use of H5P, Miro, Turnitin QuickMark, 3D printers, augmented and virtual reality, and other solutions to transform learning and teaching—are considered. RSU promotes learning and teaching innovation through training, good practice exchange, and guidelines (available in Latvian). These guidelines are approved by teaching staff and help them understand the innovation cycle and modernize their studies (SAR p. 90).

According to expert recommendations during the study field's accreditation, study programmes were mapped in 2017-2018 as part of the study programmes management process to enhance student-centered learning and teaching. Study programme mapping analyzes the association between programme content, especially learning outcomes, and study courses. The maps and observations from the study programme mapping process are utilized to improve the study programme, including course content, outcomes, and assessment techniques, and the study programme plan. The mapping is started using RSU PIC's MS Excel mapping tool, which collects data from study programme study course descriptions in the RSU registration of study courses. MS Excel's mapping function is improved annually depending on mapping process results. RSU study programme planning IT system now includes mapping feature built for the European Social Fund project "Improvement of management processes and modernization of study programme content at Rīga Stradiņš University". Currently, the mapping system is integrated into RSU IT systems and maps the learning outcomes of study programmes and study courses, monitors coherence, maps study programmes against professional standards, external laws and regulations, and any other documents describing relevant learning outcomes. International professional association suggestions, UN Sustainable Development Goals, etc (SAR p. 9; Annex 17.1 and Annex 18.1).

RSU faculty can receive the Boris and Inara Teterev Foundation target scholarship every semester from 2014/2015 to develop new innovative study courses, modernize existing courses, and integrate international experience into RSU. The Scholarship can be implemented by a young or experienced lecturer working alone or with a mentor, with both target scholarship holders equally responsible for the method and quality of the work. Teaching staff will implement innovative learning solutions, including gaming, digital scenarios, and peer-to-peer assessment, within the Scholarship framework for four months. They will also develop new study courses. The Scholarship provides educational, technical, and financial support to teachers. Teaching staff can receive special scholarships for guest lecturers, individual lectures, counseling, and professional development within study programs (SAR

p. 90).

The Scholarship allowed the Faculty of Rehabilitation to upgrade “Assessment and Classification of Functional Capacity Limitations” (REK_075) and “Biopsychosocial Approach in Palliative Care in Adults” (REK_248) in 2021/2022. In the 2019/2020 academic year, the study course “General Rehabilitation” (REK_032) now involves students from all RF study programmes, promoting inter-faculty cooperation and mixed small groups. This approach promotes multi-professional cooperation in rehabilitation. The study course implementation is systematically upgraded with fresh teaching staff (SAR p. 90).

Seven Faculty of Pharmacy teaching staff have won scholarships and advanced their courses in recent years. In 2021/2022, “Pharmaceutical Pharmacology”, “Inorganic Chemistry”, “Qualitative Analysis”, “Pharmacotherapy in the Practice of Pharmacist” and “Quantitative Analysis” were upgraded. The course “Pharmacotherapy in the Practice of Pharmacist” also covers hospital medication issues. The initiative includes immunization training to extend pharmacy services during the COVID-19 epidemic (SAR p.90).

RSU launched a new research activity information system, RSU Research Portal, in 2021 to list scientific results, including publications, projects, intellectual property, doctoral theses, awards, public speaking, and other research activities. Microsoft Excel and Word data lists are replaced by the system. Multiple versions are eliminated, data quality is improved, time is saved (for both academic and administrative staff, as data do not have to be submitted repeatedly to several units, but access is provided to both sides), and staff no longer need to submit data within a narrow timeframe. The system can be accessed and data added at any time convenient for the staff member. The system lets one see one's “impression” or “fingerprint” (the most commonly used term in research results), expose one's research results to the public, and see one's true network of cooperation at the level of people and organizations (national or global). The system records and submits research results to external entities, including the Ministry of Education and scientific (NZDIS), with the RSU Annual Report serving as the basis for scientific funding calculations (SAR p.91).

RSU aims to enhance study quality with new technology and e-solutions including several tasks that will bring benefits to a study process in the future. RSU has set the following administrative efficiency tasks to ensure an advanced internal information exchange system for administrative issues, speed up information circulation and decision-making, and ensure electronic document circulation (SAR p.92).

Since re-accreditation, the Faculty of Residency has implemented simulation-based training for medical residents, aligning with international norms and integrating simulations on living tissues. International guidelines recommend including simulations in medical residents' daily theoretical teaching, focusing on invasive medicine branches before working with patients. Residents of all specialties participate in an annual simulation training seminar in cardiopulmonary resuscitation and emergency situations (SAR p. 92).

Simulation training, playing out various simulation scenarios, was a pilot project in 2020/2021 and 2021/2022, but it is now part of the specialty programmes of anesthesiology, resuscitation, paediatric surgery, general practitioner (family medicine), gynaecology, obstetrics, surgery, ophthalmology, trauma, orthopaedics, and urology. Since certification, the Doctors Safe Train Centre has been training medical residents on live tissues. This theoretical and practical training on living tissue mimics clinical situations. Since 2022/2023, this training has been required for paediatric surgery, general practice, gynaecology, obstetrics, invasive radiology, surgery, and urology (SAR p. 93).

For instance, the Faculty of Dentistry uses advanced technology to objectively and uniformly evaluate pre-clinic students' practical work. Virtual simulators boost students' practical work quality. Pre-clinical students' practical and test work records are analyzed. A digital planning room was employed in prosthetic dentistry and orthodontics in fall 2022 (SAR p.93).

Students in Liepāja branch collaborate with healthcare institutions, the Environment and Health Department, and educational institutions to educate various age groups during the study process. Special lecture and class cycle “My choice-medicine” was implemented for the 3rd year. These events aim to enhance students' cooperation, communication, and education abilities, elevate Liepāja branch's regional recognition, and recruit future students (SAR p.93).

RSU and the Department of Doctoral Studies coordinate Latvia's EATRIS-ERIC membership. RSU's National Node of Latvia will provide biomedical researchers with a national infrastructure information, knowledge, monitoring, and data platform to boost Latvia's medical and biomedical research position. The 2020 EATRIS national hub agreement was signed and high-level translational medical science courses conducted every two years by EATRIS. Participating countries are entitled to a fixed number of spots. Latvia joins other European biomedical research infrastructure consortia with similar opportunities: Biobanking and Molecular Resources (BBMRI) Structural Biology Instructor Eric OPENSOURCE (Medical Chemistry and Drug Screening) and ERIC are interesting for pharmacy doctoral candidates. ERIC is necessary for pharmacy PhDs. Collaboration in methodology should also be established with other ESFRI platforms (ELIXIR, MIRRI) as Latvia integrates into them and with other ERIC consortia, such as SHARE in social medicine. Access to new technology and approaches is crucial for doctorate students, and ERIC offers a wide range of chances for innovation. If implemented inside Integrated Framework Programme Activities projects, ERIC infrastructure access does not require additional financing and travel costs are paid (SAR p. 93).

Since 2008, RSU has maintained the Technology Transfer Office (TTO) to foster external relationships with the corporate sector. The TTO enhances RSU research capability, manages intellectual property, and collaborates with the private sector (e.g., commissioned research, commercialization offers, contact bourses, exhibitions, SAR p. 94).

From the listed arguments and site visit, it can be concluded that the study process is supported by new solutions developed by RSU management and relevant departments, indicating continual growth. List of tools implemented for innovative solutions are applied in the study field. They have a significant positive impact on the study process. The criteria is well met.

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

RSU demonstrates a clear commitment to scientific research, with a strategic development plan emphasizing international research collaboration. The university actively participates in various national and international scientific projects, leading to a consistent increase in peer-reviewed publications in the field of "Health Care." The RSU successfully integrates the outcomes of scientific research into the study process of the "Health Care" study field. The involvement of students in scientific research, particularly through VIP projects (Vertically Integrated Projects), that serves as a vital link between research and education, as well as research grants, business incubator programmes, and participation in scientific conferences. Faculties such as Rehabilitation, Pharmacy, Dentistry, and the Liepāja branch actively engage in diverse and interdisciplinary scientific research projects, showcasing a commitment to research excellence. The RSU actively engages in numerous international research projects, contributing to EU and national programmes. The university's involvement in 130 international research projects from 2017-2021, with 39 funded projects, demonstrates a strong commitment to global collaboration, including participation in prestigious programmes like Horizon 2020 and ERA-NET. The RSU provides support systems for teaching staff involved in research, including regular activities organized by the Research Department, Development and Project Department, and Technology Transfer Office. These activities offer opportunities for research projects and practical support for project preparation and implementation. While there has been a considerable rise in student involvement in research projects, the relative number of students engaged in research activities could be improved. Despite the available options and overall success, there is a recognition of the need to address disparities in student participation

among faculties, emphasizing the importance of encouraging broader student involvement in research activities. Efforts should be made to enhance student participation, foster collaboration, research skills, and a deeper understanding of their scientific interests. RSU actively implements innovative solutions in the study field, ranging from pedagogical innovations to technological advancements. RSU implements innovative solutions in the study field, emphasizing their positive impact on the study process. The introduction of the RSU Research Portal, simulation-based training for medical residents, and advanced technology in Dentistry demonstrate a commitment to modernizing teaching methods and improving the quality of education. RSU's emphasis on innovation extends to faculty development, with initiatives like the Boris and Inara Teterev Foundation target scholarship supporting the creation of innovative study courses. Educational innovations are promoted through training, good practice exchange, and guidelines approved by teaching staff, contributing to the modernization of studies.

Strengths:

1. The RSU Research Department, Development and Project Department, and Technology Transfer Office offers teaching staff specific opportunities for research projects and practical support for project preparation and implementation.
2. The RSU has well developed models and various ways of including students in scientific research.
3. List of tools implemented for innovative solutions are applied in the study field. They have a significant positive impact on the study process.
4. The strategic development plan of the University focuses on International research.
5. VIP projects – Vertically Integrated Projects – good tool for the integration of scientific research into the educational process

Weaknesses:

1. Inequality in students' involvement in scientific research between the faculties.

Assessment of the requirement [2]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The directions of scientific research correspond to the development goals of the RSU and are relevant for the study field and industry. The connection of scientific research of the study field with the study process is logical and justified. International cooperation in the field of scientific research within the study field and the relevant study programmes is ensured and it is being purposefully developed. The higher education institution has developed mechanisms for the involvement of the teaching staff in scientific research. They are well-functioning and efficient. The higher education institution has developed mechanisms to promote the involvement of the students in scientific research. They are well-functioning and efficient. Innovative solutions are applied in the study field, which have a significant positive impact on the study process.

1.5. Cooperation and Internationalisation

Analysis

1.5.1. There is ample evidence from SAR section 2.5.1 but also corroborated by the site visit interviews with university management, and academic members of staff, students and graduates that RSU as a higher education institution in Latvia cooperates with many institutions from Latvia. RSU has shown evidence that they value cooperation with specifically selected Latvian stakeholders that can meaningfully contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study field and the relevant study programmes and the specific features of the study field. The

cooperation is mainly with:

1. other higher education institutions/ colleges in Latvia – for example staff and students of the Faculty of Pharmacy are involved in several projects that take place in cooperation with other universities of Latvia – Riga Technical University (RTU) and Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies (LBTU), with the branch of Pharmaceutical Sciences cooperating scientifically with LBTU for the use of medicinal plants in the development of veterinary dosage forms. Another example is cooperation with RTU Rudolfs Cimdins Riga Biomaterials Innovation and Development Centre, the Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis as part of the Baltic Biomaterials Centre of Excellence (SAR, p.81).

2. Employers and employers' organizations, municipalities, non-governmental organizations, scientific institutes: This is first and foremost by virtue of the fact that most of the teaching staff of the various faculties are professionals in their field of specialization and carry out their lecturing work concurrently with their professional work both in the public, as well as in the private sector. In addition, RSU invites employers' representatives, for example various medical institutions such as hospitals, to take part in the national examination boards. There is also the presence of representatives of professional associations that contribute by ensuring professional standards in the education, training and examination of skills. Furthermore, teaching staff across faculties participate as experts in working groups of the Ministries of the Republic of Latvia (Ministry of Health, Ministry of Welfare, Ministry of Education and Science) on issues related to organization of aspects of the Latvian health, social, welfare, and education sectors, so as to ensure improvement of services and inclusive education. During site visits, several employers have stated they accepted the students for internships, and the feedback to RSU about the quality and behavior of students was really good. Some - for example in the dental field stated that about 20 percent have remained as employees in the clinic (communication during site visit).

The director of the study field underscores the indispensable role of stakeholders in the development of study programmes, emphasizing the significance of their opinions, which are duly considered.

During the meetings with employers associated with the respective programmes, it was affirmed that RSU maintains consistent and productive communication for evaluating, refining, and fostering collaboration in the corresponding study programmes. Notably, the creation of the Joint Professional master study programme "Industrial Pharmacy" (47725) stands as a testament to direct engagement with manufacturers. Furthermore, employers consistently regard RSU graduates as highly skilled specialists and express their readiness to employ them in the future.

The mechanism for attracting partners involves active communication and promotion of the study field and the study programmes, participation in international events and associations, organization of events, dissemination of information and good practices, establishment of contacts and trust, identification of common interests and needs, etc.

The experts panel considers that the cooperation is sufficient, RSU cooperates with the institutions from Latvia (higher education institutions/ colleges, employers, employers' organisations, municipalities, non-governmental organisations, scientific institutes, etc.) within the framework of the study field, and such cooperation contributes to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study field and the relevant study programmes.

1.5.2. There is ample evidence from the SAR sections 2.5.1 and 2.5.2 and also corroborated by site visits' interviews with university management, and academic members of staff, less so by students and graduates, that RSU as a higher education institution in Latvia cooperates with several institutions from abroad. In particular during site visits, RSU repeatedly emphasized their vision and mission in internationalization by stating that they signed more than 200 bilateral cooperation agreements that provide opportunities for mobility of the students and staff in all cycles of studies:

during Bachelor's, Master's, and doctoral studies. As shown in SAR annexes (9.2_Anx_List of cooperation agreements_StD Health Care.pdf) and illustrated (8.2_Anx_Student_Mobility_16-10-2023.pdf), examples of bilateral agreements include those with University of Debrecen, Hungary, Medical University of Graz, Austria, Universidad de Malaga, Spain, Medical University of Graz, Austria, and Charles University, Czech Republic, these enabling student mobility as part of Erasmus programme. According to the SAR - section 2.5.1 and 2.5.2, the choice of the partner universities are selected mostly on the basis of information available on equivalent Study Programmes and the language of instruction. Examples as shown in 9.2_Anx_List of cooperation agreements_StD Health Care.pdf and 8.2_Anx_Student_Mobility_16-10-2023.pdf include University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, Westfälische Wilhelms, Universität Münster, Germany, and Warszawski Uniwersytet Medyczny, Poland.

RSU participates in international associations and rankings (RSU ranks 901-950 overall in the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings 2024, RSU is ranked among the world's top 1501+ universities in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2024, etc), and has received recognition for its student-centeredness and internationalization. RSU organizes regular events and activities to promote and facilitate international cooperation. The cooperation with international stakeholders can meaningfully contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study field and the relevant study programmes and the specific features of the study field. The energy and investment put in establishing this level of internationalization has enabled RSU to attract significant numbers of international students across faculties, in particular in the Faculty of Dentistry, but much less so in the Faculty of Rehabilitation. This international visibility has also enabled RSU to achieve better rankings over the years in the world, in the Baltic States and in its research activity assessment. Nevertheless, this cooperation may be improved by including more geographical regions within Europe, as well as with other institutions outside Europe. Indeed, for example this cooperation is very visible with Germany, which seems to be a country of destination for employment of healthcare professionals educated and trained at RSU.

The self-assessment report section 2.5.1 stated that RSU students have the opportunity to go on exchange studies or international placement for one semester or the entire academic year abroad with an Erasmus+ scholarship. Related information is also available for students on the website with detailed description and requirements. However, despite the numerous bilateral agreements signed, the students during on-site visits do not seem to be inclined to take these opportunities mostly because they fear having to prolong the duration of their studies at RSU. In addition, students across faculties stated that they lack support from ERASMUS coordinator in regards to the study exchange opportunities. One student mentioned that due to lack of communication from the coordinator's side, thus, missed the application deadline. Another student from another study programme mentioned that there was a presentation for them of all of the exchange opportunities that are present and available for that study year. In some of the study programmes, such as "Nutrition", there is only one cooperative university in Romania and in "Audiology and Speech therapy" - one in Portugal, which is considered too little. Students shared that they would appreciate it if the cooperation pool was expanded. In the case of the "Physiotherapy" programme, students wished to go on ERASMUS, but they were hesitant due to missing clinical practice experience which would leave an impact on their career in a longer run.

1.5.3. RSU has developed a system and procedures for the attraction of the teaching staff and students from abroad within the study field, the system is effective. Teaching staff and students participate in both outgoing and incoming mobility, which provides added value to the implementation of the study process and the quality of studies (SAR, Part I, paragraph 2.3.2.).

The Faculty of Medicine actively engages in providing a robust clinical placement programme, catering not only to local students but also to international ones. Moreover, it facilitates international

mobility, fostering collaborations with medical institutions in various countries. This initiative not only attracts international students but also forges partnerships conducive to student exchanges and academic cooperation. Dentistry and Medicine stand as the main undergraduate study programmes offered in English at RSU. Study programmes in English also include Joint Academic master study programme “Health Management” (45345) and Doctoral study programme “Health Care” (Codes of sub- programmes: 51721 – Medicine, 51725 –Pharmacy, 51313 – Psychology).

The Medicine faculty for international students at RSU is gradually expanding, a process carefully evaluated based on the institution's capacity. However, the number of applicants aspiring to enroll in this programme far exceeds the available positions (during the interview, RSU representatives said that they have several applications for each English study programme place). This level of interest underscores RSUs high international regard and established reputation abroad.

During the last seven years, students from abroad were mostly from Germany, Sweden, Finland, Norway, and Italy.

RSU ensures comprehensive support tailored for English-speaking students through dedicated student services, offering psychological assistance, essential educational materials in English, and avenues for learning the Latvian language. Despite this, residency programme face very reduced popularity among foreign students due to their insufficient knowledge of the Latvian language (during the interview, RSU representatives explained that there are legal requirements of language knowledge for this programme).

RSU facilitates international students' engagement in clinical practice within their home countries or through cooperation clinics abroad. The aim of such cooperation is to enrich students' clinical experience abroad and to get to know the healthcare system of the home country in a timely manner.

Around 20% of students remain in Latvia each semester, showcasing also the attractiveness of the programme for international participants. The RSU actively collaborates with medical institutions both in Latvia and internationally to provide placement opportunities, fostering outgoing and incoming mobility.

The Erasmus+ programme mobility activity has been implemented among the countries of the programme. Bilateral cooperation agreements have been signed, providing mobility of the students and staff in all cycles of studies: during Bachelor's, Master's, and doctoral studies. The Erasmus+ outgoing and incoming mobility of various programmes were highlighted by the students during the meetings and were also detailed in the self-assessment report sections 2.5.3 annexes. However, it's worth noting that in certain study programmes, students do not avail themselves of this opportunity. In programmes such as “Clinical Pharmacy” and “Industrial Pharmacy,” the lack of student participation can be attributed to their own busy schedules. In the “Supervision” programme, student absence over the past few years should be taken into account. However, in the case of the Academic master study programme “Rehabilitation” (45722), students at the meeting explained to the experts that the lack of participation was mainly related to insufficient information from the department.

Teaching staff have international training options in corresponding and/or recommended areas. During the meetings it was mentioned that available options are sufficient. SAR sections 2.5.3 annex 6.3 also shows positive dynamics on outgoing academic staff mobility after two years of reduced activity due to Covid-19 related restrictions. The number of business trips and cases of excused absence was more than 300 per year till 2019, with a tangible decrease in 2020 and 2021 (55 and 31 only), and a noticeable increase in 2022 to 149. During the last seven years the most popular countries were Lithuania, Germany, and Italy (SAR sections 2.5.3 annex 6.3).

Additional data on the involvement of foreign lecturers in the implementation of study programmes is reflected in this Annex 6.3.1. The largest number of foreign teaching staff was reached in the academic years 2018/2019, 2019/2020 and 2022/2023. Foreign teaching staff are mostly from Germany, the United Kingdom, and Sweden (one-third of the total proportion). On the other hand, a

decline was observed in two academic years, during the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic worldwide and in Latvia. The employment expectancy of most foreign teaching staff is not longer than one week. Whereas, 71% of all foreign teaching staff employed in the academic year 2022/2023 were employed directly in the Second level professional study programme of “Medicine”. It should be noted that until now, aggregation of statistical data on the incoming mobility of teaching staff and involvement of foreign lecturers in the implementation of study programmes in the study field “Health Care” at RSU has not been uniformly accumulated (SAR sections 2.5.3 annex 6.3). A unified system for data collection has not been introduced so far, although such collections are regularly performed, including due to the need for data slices for international ratings, etc.

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

RSU in Latvia collaborates extensively with local institutions like universities, employers, non-governmental organizations, and scientific institutes. This collaboration includes joint projects, faculty involvement in practical work, employer engagement in boards, and government participation. Employers praise RSU students and hire many as interns, even retaining a percentage as employees. Stakeholder input shapes programme development, evident in specialized programmes. RSU actively communicates, participates in events, and fosters trust to attract partners for collaborative efforts. Overall, RSU shows a proactive approach to engage stakeholders for academic and professional advancement.

RSU in Latvia collaborates extensively with international institutions, facilitating student and staff mobility across study cycles. Partnerships focus on equivalent programmes and language compatibility, fostering exchanges, research projects, and conferences. RSU's emphasis on internationalization attracts many international students. However, there's a need to diversify collaborations beyond Europe and address student concerns like potential study duration extension and inadequate support for exchange programmes. Despite numerous agreements, students express hesitancy due to fear of prolonged studies and limited options in some programmes.

RSU effectively attracts teaching staff and students from abroad, enhancing study quality. The Faculty of Medicine offers robust clinical placements, fostering global collaborations. RSU's Medicine programme faces high demand globally, exceeding available positions, indicating its strong international reputation. Support services assist English-speaking students. Erasmus+ mobility varies among programmes due to students' schedules or insufficient information. Teaching staff have adequate international training options, with improved mobility post-COVID-19 restrictions.

Strengths:

1. RSU cooperates with the institutions from Latvia (higher education institutions/ colleges, employers, employers' organisations, municipalities, non-governmental organisations, scientific institutes, etc.) within the framework of the study field on a very high level.
2. RSU's international standing in the study field “Health care” is noted and has resulted in a number of bilateral agreements signed with European and American Academic Institutions, and international non-governmental organisations, as shown in 9.2_Anx_List of cooperation agreements_StD Health Care.pdf

Weaknesses:

1. International links are not established with all geographical regions of Europe.
2. Within the study field “Health Care”, there are variations in the level of cooperation with international partners - with room for improvement for those within rehabilitation. For example: there is only one cooperative partner university in the “Nutrition” and “Audiology and Speech Therapy” study programmes.

Assessment of the requirement [3]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Official documents on cooperation agreements with Latvian and foreign organizations, including on placement assurance agreements of students as in Annex 9 of each study programme as well as analyses provided in experts joint opinion, section 1.5. shows that the implemented cooperation provides a precondition for achieving the aims of the study field.

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

Analysis

1.6.1. According to Annex 11 that can be found under study programme annexes of the First level professional higher education study programme "Physician's Assistant" under the name 11_Anx_Previous expert recommendations_Phys_Assist, there are no recommendations issued by the evaluation commission of the study field "Health Care" accreditation, that has been identified by an evaluation commission.

According to Annex 11 that can be found under study programme annexes of the First level professional higher education study programme "Medical Massage" under the name 11_Anx_Previous expert recommendations_Med_Massage, there are 3 recommendations that have been given by the evaluation commission of the study field "Health Care" accreditation.

The first recommendation (1) – graduates of the First level professional higher education study programme "Medical Massage" cannot continue studies "Medical Massage" at a higher level. Based on the information provided by RSU, students are motivated to continue their studies; graduates have the possibility to continue studies in the RSU study programme "Health Sports Specialist" in Liepaja or Riga and the possibility to equalize individual study courses.

The second recommendation (2) – consider methods of attracting more mature students and methods of adapting for working students. Based on the information provided by RSU, when commencing their studies, students are informed about the equalization and recognition of the study courses acquired in the previous stages of studies; based on the workload of working students, the number of video lectures has been increased; the classes are planned for and implemented on Fridays and Saturdays so that working students are able to participate in studies.

The third recommendation (3) – publishing opportunities for students should be extended. Based on the information provided by RSU, students have participated in RSU Research Week as listeners (mandatory requirement); students are being motivated to develop publications, taking into account the experience obtained during the conference.

Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendations for the first level PHESP "Medical Massage" have been fully implemented.

According to Annex 11 that can be found under study programme annexes of the First level professional higher education study programme "Dental Hygiene" under the name 11_pielik_Eksp_Rek_iev_parskats_ZH_eng, there are 5 recommendations that have been provided by the evaluation commission.

The first recommendation (1) – consideration should be given to a broader distribution of elective courses within semesters. Based on the information provided by RSU, the supply of elective study courses of the study programme and their distribution by semesters are in accordance with the aims of the study programme and balanced acquisition of the programme. Every year, the content of compulsory elective courses is evaluated and updated, adapted to the study process and current developments in society.

The second recommendation (2) – outdated recommended readings in the main practical study

courses should be refreshed. Based on the information provided by RSU, descriptions of professional study courses have been supplemented with the latest literature in the field of dentistry. The availability of compulsory readings in the RSU Library and in internet resources has been coordinated.

The third recommendation (3) – when starting each study course, is to familiarise students with the importance and learning outcomes of the study course. Based on the information provided by RSU, the lecturers of the study programme are informed regarding the need to inform students about the importance and learning outcomes of the study course.

The fourth recommendation (4) – the addition of the 3rd year of studies would have to be strictly considered (would enable graduates to obtain a bachelor's degree). Based on the information provided by RSU, the 3-year programme has not been developed and thus has not been introduced either. The decision of RSU is justified, because, if a dental hygienist completes the study programme with a bachelor's degree and the qualification of a dental hygienist, then it must be a professional bachelor's study programme, and, taking into account the legislation of Latvia, the duration of a professional bachelor's programme must be four years (i.e. the existing programme must be extended by two years) and the occupational standard of dental hygienist should also be changed from Level 5 to Level 6 of professional qualification.

The fifth recommendation (5) – is to find ways to foster and encourage students to choose mobility projects. Based on the information provided by RSU, every year, students are informed and motivated to choose and make use of mobility opportunities (ERASMUS, Nordplus, etc.). In the academic year 2017/2018, 2 students attended Savonia University of Applied Sciences (Finland) as part of the Nordplus project; in the academic year 2021/2022, an intensive Erasmus+ course was implemented at RSU; ten first-year students participated in that course.

Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendations for the First level professional higher education study programme “Dental Hygiene” are fully implemented, except the fourth recommendation. Taking into account the legislation of Latvia, it is not possible to implement a 3-year bachelor's study programme while maintaining the possibility of obtaining a professional qualification.

According to Annex 11 that can be found under study programme annexes of the Professional Bachelor Study Programme “Nursing” under the name 11_Anx_Plan_for_implementation_of_recommend _ Bak_Nurse, there were no expert recommendations provided during the accreditation. However, 3 recommendations were given by the experts with respect to the amendments in the programme license as of 14.07.2021.

The first recommendation (1) – Include new study courses Clinical Placement I (pre-clinical) (2 CP) and Placement. Interdisciplinary Approach to Emergency Medical Conditions (2 CP) in the theoretical part of the study programme, without applying it to learning in the clinical environment. Based on the information provided by RSU, Placement I (pre-clinical) has been consolidated (into the study course Clinical Care and Rehabilitation in Patient Care). Placement: Interdisciplinary Approach to Emergency Medical Conditions – has been consolidated (into the study course Anaesthesiology and Intensive Care).

The second recommendation (2) – is to apply the Professional Bachelor Study Programme “Nursing” placement (90 ECTS) only to studies in the clinical environment, as provided for in the Law on the Regulated Professions and the Recognition of Professional Qualifications and Directive 2013/55/EU of the European Parliament and the Council. Based on the information provided by RSU, the total volume of clinical placement implemented in the clinical environment in the Professional Bachelor Study Programme “Nursing” is 90 ECTS.

The third recommendation (3) – is to invite the Ministry of Healthcare and the Ministry of Education and Science to dialogue on additional funding for the development of the Professional Bachelor Study Programme “Nursing”, including the provision of clinical training and placement. Based on the information provided by RSU, the draft law of 2023 “On the state budget for 2023 and budgetary

framework for 2023, 2024 and 2025”, the funding planned for the health sector for 2023 is 1.6 billion EUR. Taking into account the insufficient number of nurses in the country, this year, an extra 2.8 million EUR are expected to be diverted to the introduction of the profession of general care nurse, including promoting the employment of nurses in the profession. This will enable more students to master the nursing education programme in higher education institutions ensuring entry of additional nurses in medical institutions in the long term and thus improving the quality of health care services.

Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendations for the Professional Bachelor Study Programme “Nursing” have been fully implemented.

According to Annex 11 that can be found under study programme annexes of the Professional Bachelor Study Programme “Midwife” under the name 11_An previous expert recommendations_Midwifery, there are 2 recommendations that have been given by the evaluation commission.

The first recommendation (1) – To ensure the continued development of the Professional Bachelor Study Programme “Midwife”, attention should be paid to both attracting midwives to the teaching team and ensuring participation in relevant midwife-oriented international conferences. Based on the information provided by RSU, the number of professional practicing midwives – members of the academic staff – has increased: three more midwives are employed as lecturers.

The second recommendation (2) – The learning outcomes should be revised to be in line with the general rules for the formulation of learning outcomes. Based on the information provided by RSU, the learning outcomes for the Professional Bachelor Study Programme “Midwife” are clearly and sequentially formulated and the planning of contact hours in the study plan and course descriptions have been specified.

Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendations for the Professional Bachelor Study Programme “Midwife” are fully implemented.

According to Annex 11 that can be found under study programme annexes for the Professional Bachelor Study Programme “Public Health” under the name 11_An previous expert recommendations_PBSP Publ_Health, there were 4 recommendations proposed by the evaluation commission.

The first recommendation (1) – The study course “Pedagogy” corresponds to Level 7 of the Qualifications Framework, thus it does not meet the requirements of the Qualifications Framework level of the study programme. Based on the information provided by RSU, a specialised study course VPUPK_290 “Pedagogy for Public Health” of 2 CP/3 ECTS corresponding to Level 6 has been introduced in the professional Bachelor’s study programme “Public Health” since the academic year 2020/2021.

The second recommendation (2) – Attention should be paid to the learning outcomes and their mapping to demonstrate that learning outcomes within the course contribute to the achievement of learning outcomes within the programme. Based on the information provided by RSU, the director of the Professional Bachelor Study Programme “Public Health” and some of the study course lecturers have attended the cycle of seminars “Formulation and evaluation of learning outcomes for the improvement of study programmes” organised by the PIC. The learning outcomes for the study programme are clearly and sequentially formulated.

The third recommendation (3) – Credit points should be awarded using a consistent and fair formula. Based on the information provided by RSU, the learning outcomes for the Professional Bachelor Study Programme “Public Health” are clearly and sequentially formulated and the planning of contact hours in the study plan and course descriptions have been specified.

The fourth recommendation (4) – Specify the admission criteria to demonstrate how admission selection helps to identify who of the applicants is likely to become a successful healthcare specialist in the respective field. Based on the information provided by RSU, the admission criteria have been clarified.

Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendations for the Professional Bachelor Study Programme “Public Health” are fully implemented.

According to Annex 11 that can be found under the study programme annexes of the Academic Master Study Programme “Health Management” (hereinafter – programme) under the name 11_pielik_Eksp_Rek_iev_parskats_Veselibas_vadiba_eng, there were 2 recommendations provided by the evaluation commission.

The first recommendation (1) - is to ensure that the agreement between RSU and RISEBA administration gives benefit to the students of the Academic Master Study Programme “Health Management”. Based on the information provided by RSU, the uniform circulation of information between higher education institutions is regularly monitored and implemented in relation to the improvement of the study process. Several study processes have been improved and a single circulation of information has been established in relation to the enrolment and examination of knowledge of applicants, the development of a master’s thesis, submission to the e-studies site and the defense procedure; implementation of placement and defense procedure, the procedure of equalisation of previously mastered study courses.

The second recommendation (2) - is to ensure a consistent and fair approach to granting credit points. Learning outcomes should be written in a format accepted in education. Based on the information provided by RSU, the Academic Master Study Programme “Health Management” director and some lecturers participated in the RSU PIC cycle or seminars “Formulation and evaluation of learning outcomes for improvement of study programmes”. The content of the study courses and the amount of credit points related to the learning outcomes of the course have been updated for some courses, in case it was necessary.

Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendations for the Academic Master Study Programme “Health Management” are fully implemented.

According to Annex 11 that can be found under study programme annexes of the Academic Master Study Programme “Nursing studies” under the name 11_AnX_Previous expert recommendations_AMSP_Nurs_Stud, there is one recommendation that has been given by the evaluation commission.

The recommendation (1) - The programme contributes to the development of the nursing profession, but in order to maintain this, it is necessary to focus on the professional development of staff, in particular in relation to attending conferences. Based on the information provided by RSU, each year, the teaching staff participate in 1-2 scientific conferences (local and international), both as attendees and speakers, as well as presenters of poster presentations. The support provided by RSU PIC to the teaching staff for the improvement of their pedagogical and digital skills, as well as to the professional development of the staff, is very important.

Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendation for the Academic Master Study Programme “Nursing studies” is fully implemented.

According to Annex 11 that can be found under study programme annexes of the Academic Master Study Programme “Public Health” under the name 11_AnX_Previous expert recommendations_AMSP_Publ_Health.pdf, there is 1 recommendation that has been stated by the evaluation commission.

The recommendation (1) - Ensure a consistent and fair approach to credit point allocation. Update reading lists. Ensure that learning outcomes are written in a commonly accepted educational format. Based on the information provided by RSU, mapping of the learning outcomes of the Academic Master Study Programme “Public Health” and the study courses has been carried out in cooperation between the Director of the study programme and the study course lecturers. The Director of the study programme and some of the study course lecturers have attended the cycle or seminars “Formulation and evaluation of learning outcomes for the improvement of study programmes” organized by the PIC. The study course literature is reviewed at the beginning of each new academic year.

Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendation for the Academic

Master Study Programme “Public Health” is fully implemented.

No recommendations have been given by the evaluation commission for the Professional Master Study Programme “Supervision”.

According to Annex 11 that can be found under study programme annexes of the Second level professional higher education study programme “Dentistry” under the name 11_Anx_Plan_for_implementation_of_recommend_Dentistry.pdf, there were 7 recommendations given by the evaluation commission.

The first recommendation (1) – Consideration should be given to a broader distribution of elective courses within semesters. Based on the information provided by RSU, the existing number of elective courses has been preserved. The possibility to choose clinical placement has been increased and this is to be considered a positive change.

The second recommendation (2) – is to review course descriptions to ensure that learning outcomes are at a proper level of education and outdated recommended readings in the main practical study courses should be refreshed. Based on the information provided by RSU, study course descriptions have been reviewed, reading lists now include contemporary literature and the availability of mandatory readings in the RSU Library has been improved.

The third recommendation (3) – is that more attention should be paid to practical examinations at the end of each semester, in particular in clinical study courses (most attention should be paid to the level of practical skills). Based on the information provided by RSU, examinations have been supplemented with clinical cases. There is an accumulated assessment for mastered clinical manipulations within the state examination.

The fourth recommendation (4) – When starting each study course, familiarize students with the importance and learning outcomes of the study course. Based on the information provided by RSU, at the beginning of each study course students are familiarized with the content and aims, as well as the assessment criteria of the study course.

The fifth recommendation (5) – The economics and business course should cover actual and market needs. Based on the information provided by RSU, the requirements are met.

The sixth recommendation (6) – International students who choose to study dentistry in Latvia are not informed at the beginning of their studies that to obtain a diploma they need to get a C 1 language proficiency certificate in the Latvian language, which does not conform to the requirements of free movement in the EU labour market. Based on the information provided by RSU, students are informed about the certification requirements. In cooperation with the Latvian Medical Association, a common understanding of the certification process for international students has been reached and the process is progressing successfully.

The seventh recommendation (7) – is to continue progress in introducing a student-centred approach in practice. Based on the information provided by RSU, a feedback provision system has been created at RSU, and lecturers of departments have completed and published feedback for students.

Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendations for the Second level professional higher education study programme “Dentistry” are fully implemented.

According to Annex 11 that can be found under study programme annexes of the Second level professional higher education study programme “Residency in Medicine” under the name - 11_pielik_2LSP_Rezidentura_medicina_Eksp_Rek_iev_parskats_2022_eng.pdf, there are 4 recommendations that have been identified by the evaluation commission.

The first recommendation (1) – is to provide optimal infrastructure for the improvement of the training of medical residents in clinical institutions. Based on the information provided by RSU, the infrastructure necessary for the training of residents has been improved in a targeted manner.

The second recommendation (2) – is to ensure the quality of the scientific processes of students. Based on the information provided by RSU, within the residency study process, the involvement of students in scientific research work, including dissemination of research results, is planned carefully:

scientific research work is a mandatory part of studies; the regulations for writing a scientific research paper include the condition that if a resident has presented his/her research results at a scientific conference or published them in a scientific journal, then this scientific activity is equal to the resident's scientific research paper and it does not need to be written and defended separately; State budget-funded residents have access to faculty-administered funding to present their research results at an international scientific conference. These activities have ensured that 10% of residents present research results at international events.

The third recommendation (3) – is that learning outcomes should be written in a generally accepted educational format. Based on the information provided by RSU, the heads of the Second level professional higher education study programme “Residency in Medicine” have been provided with various recommendations on the formulation of learning outcomes, which are offered by RSU PIC. Each year, the Faculty of Residency requests the heads to review and update the learning outcomes, knowledge, skills and competencies defined in their study courses, which the heads do within the scope of their competence.

The fourth recommendation (4) – It is necessary to assess the pedagogical quality of the supervision of students' practical training. Based on the information provided by RSU, training of the heads of specialities is carried out in courses organized by PIC, which are listed individually for each head of a speciality programme in the RSU personnel growth management system (Grow).

Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendations for the Second level professional higher education study programme “Residency in Medicine” are fully implemented.

According to the Annex 11 that can be found under study programme annexes of Professional Bachelor's study programme “Medical Engineering and Physics” under a name - 11_Anx_Previous_expert_recommendations_Med_Eng_Phy.pdf, there are 2 recommendations that have been identified by evaluation commission.

The first recommendation (1) specified was to ensure that the agreement between RSU and RTU administration gives benefit to the students of this programme. Based on the information provided by RSU, necessary changes are coordinated and made in the Programme Quality Council to improve the quality of the programme in the interests of students when necessary.

The second recommendation (2) received was to ensure pedagogical skills and knowledge of English of the teaching staff. As outlined in the Annex 11 and also specified during the onsite visit, there are various activities provided by RSU to support and provide academic staff knowledge development. One of the ways is through improvement of language skills as lecturers attend English language courses such as “Business English and Correspondence in English”. During the reporting period, English language courses were attended by 10 lecturers. To strengthen their pedagogical skills, lecturers individually participated in the trainings organized by the PIC, such as “Teaching in intercultural environments”, “Developing a study course. Formulating and assessing learning outcomes”, “Technology - enriched study process”, “Hybrid model 2021 = How to lead learning in class + remotely”, “Mediation – wilful and responsible conflict resolution culture at a university”, “How can Google tools help to teach and learn?”, “Emotional aspects of a lecturer's work or how to work with students constructively”, “Lecturer as a smart leader of the pedagogical process”.

Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendations of the programme are fully implemented.

According to the Annex 11 that can be found under study programme annexes of Professional Bachelor's study programme “Audiology and Speech Therapy” (further - programme) under a name - 11_Anx_Previous_Exp_Recom_Audio_and_Speech_Therapy.pdf., there are 2 recommendations that have been identified by the evaluation commission.

First recommendation (1) received was to revise the study course descriptions to ensure that the learning outcomes are at the appropriate level of education as well as to revise the reading lists published in study course descriptions to better reflect the current situation. For the purpose of

achieving complete implementation of the recommendation, RSU divided 4 separate activities in order to achieve the necessary outcome: 1. Develop an Excel mapping format integrating the learning outcomes to be achieved in the programme and the study courses. 2. Organize a PIC series on 'Formulating and assessing learning outcomes for curriculum development' and involve lecturers in learning. 3. Analyze (map) the correlation between the learning outcomes of the programme, the outcomes of the included study courses and the standards and 4. In cooperation with the teaching staff, to specify the learning outcomes in the programme and study course descriptions, to supplement the study course descriptions with the latest literature and to check the availability of literature sources in RSU Library. By the study year of 2022/23, RSU has managed to successfully form an Excel mapping form for the study programme. The teaching staff of the study programme have completed the cycle "Formulation and evaluation of learning outcomes for the improvement of study programmes" organized by the PIC. The learning outcomes for the study programme are clearly and sequentially formulated and the planning of contact hours in the study plan and course descriptions are specified. Study course descriptions have been updated and supplemented with the latest literature. Discussions were held with the teaching staff involved in the study programme on the link between the aims, objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme and the goals, tasks and learning outcomes of the Standard for the Profession and the study courses implemented within the study programme.

Second recommendation (2) received for the programme was to reflect on ways to attract more mature students. Consider ways to accommodate working students. For a successful implementation of this recommendation, RSU has managed to find an approach to how students that are working can study in parallel in this programme. The following solutions have been implemented: 1. The possibility of aligning and linking the workplaces of working students to clinical placement sites was reviewed. Condition: the student's workplace must be able to ensure the fulfillment of the goals and tasks of the clinical placement, and there must be a lecturer involved in the implementation of the clinical placement (e.g. Riga pre-school education institution "Dzintariņš", special education for children with hearing impairment). 2. Anyone may participate as an attending student in the courses offered by RSU Open University in any programme or part thereof offered by the University both in the health care and in the social sciences. 3. New clinical placement sites in different regions of Latvia are being explored and attracted. Before the clinical placement is implemented, students' expectations and possibilities for successful clinical placement are explored. If a student demonstrates willingness to undertake placement in a particular region of Latvia, new contracts with the clinical placement provider shall be sought. 4. Options for validation of previous education. 5. The number of audio and video material on e-studies has been increased to facilitate the learning of study courses in a convenient place and time for the student. Clinical case analysis with prepared clinical cases, including audio and video recordings is provided for within the clinical placement; clinical case analysis is conducted remotely on the Zoom platform.

Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendations of the programme are fully implemented.

According to the Annex 11 that can be found under study programme annexes of Professional Bachelor's study programme "Occupational Therapy", (further - programme) under a name - 11_Anx_Previous_Exp_Recom_Occupational_Therapy.pdf, there are 3 recommendations that have been identified by evaluation commission.

First recommendation (1) made was to revise the study course descriptions to ensure that the learning outcomes are at the appropriate level of education and to revise the reading lists published in study course descriptions to better reflect the current situation. Various activities and procedures were applied in order to fulfill the given recommendation. 1. Excel mapping tool was created in 2018; the Excel mapping form of the study programme was completed by analyzing the learning outcomes to be achieved in the study programme and study courses. In April 2022, a repeated mapping of the learning outcomes to be achieved in the study programme and study courses was

done, using the improved mapping tool. 2. The Director of the study programme and study course leaders have attended the cycle "Formulation and evaluation of learning outcomes for the improvement of study programmes" organized by PIC. 3. In 2022 - the mapping of the study programme and the new Occupational Therapist Standard (agreed 15.12.2021) was done. 4. The learning outcomes of the study programme are formulated clearly and sequentially, the contact hours are clarified in the study plan and study course descriptions; reading lists in the study course descriptions are updated, including resources available at RSU Library. The sources of information included in the study process are regularly reviewed, and electronic sources of information are used as whenever possible. 5. Study course descriptions are updated before the beginning of each academic year and are available not later than 10 days before the beginning of the academic year. Up-to-date literature is included in the study course reading lists, and it is regularly updated. The availability of compulsory literature in the RSU Library has been improved. 6. At least one meeting of students with the Dean of the Faculty of Rehabilitation (RF) has taken place every year, and the Dean of the RF organizes regular meetings with the study course leaders.

Second recommendation (2) received was to reflect on ways to attract more mature students. Consider ways to accommodate working students. For that purpose, various solutions have been introduced to resolve the existing problem - 1. A remote format for online classes and tutorials has been introduced that offers more flexible forms of study, including increasing the number of video lectures and promoting the introduction of online video lectures; 2. The number of clinical placement locations in the regions that provide an opportunity to implement part of the placement closer to the student's place of residence has been increased; 3. Students are informed about the comparability of study courses and the comparability of the education obtained in prior learning is implemented and other solutions.

Third recommendation (3) received has been in regards to publishing opportunities for students that should be expanded. Based on the recommendation received there are various ways implemented how students can get involved into science and publish. 1. Teaching staff promote student participation in conferences and congresses and students can participate annually in the summer conference of the Latvian Association of Occupational Therapists, where they report on current issues in research. 4 years ago in 2019, students participated with reports in the Baltic Scientific Conference of Occupational Therapy and the students of the study programme got awards (1st and 2nd place) in the Competition for reports. 2. Every year students in cooperation with the teaching staff participate in the RSU Scientific Conference with reports; 3. Students participated in interdisciplinary conferences and congresses in Latvia with reports: First Latvian National Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine (2019), Second Latvian National Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine (2021), 9th Latvian Congress of Physicians (2022). However, student participation with reports in the annual ENOTHE conference is limited for financial reasons.

Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendations of the programme are fully implemented.

According to the Annex 11 that can be found under study programme annexes of Professional Bachelor's study programme "Physiotherapy" (further - programme) under a name -11_Anx_Previous_Exp_Recom_Physiotherapy.pdf, there are 2 recommendations that have been identified by evaluation commission.

First recommendation (1) received was to revise the study course descriptions to ensure that the learning outcomes are at the appropriate level of education as well as to revise the reading lists published in study course descriptions to better reflect the current situation. For the purpose of achieving implementation of the recommendation, RSU has implemented various solutions - 1. Excel mapping tool was created in 2018; the Excel mapping form of the study programme was completed by analyzing the learning outcomes to be achieved in the study programme and study courses. In February 2022, a repeated mapping of the learning outcomes to be achieved in the study programme and study courses was done, using the improved mapping tool. 2. The Director of the

study programme and study course leaders have attended the cycle "Formulation and evaluation of learning outcomes for the improvement of study programmes" organized by PIC. 3. In 2022, the mapping of the study programme and the new Professional Standard for Physiotherapy (agreed on 13.10.2021) was carried out. 4. The learning outcomes of the study programme are formulated clearly and sequentially, the contact hours are clarified in the study plan and study course descriptions, reading lists in the study course descriptions are updated, including resources available at RSU Library. The sources of information included in the study process are regularly reviewed, and electronic sources of information are used as whenever possible. 5. Study course descriptions are updated before the beginning of each academic year and are available not later than 10 days before the beginning of the academic year. 6. Up-to-date literature is included in the study course reading lists, and it is regularly updated. The availability of compulsory literature in the RSU Library has been improved.

Second recommendation (2) received was to reflect on ways to attract more mature students. Consider ways to accommodate working students. For that purpose, various solutions have been introduced to resolve the existing problem - 1. An IT system for providing feedback on the survey results to students was created and used at RSU. After the semester surveys are closed, the study course leader gets acquainted with the assessment and provides feedback in the system. The Head of the Department monitors the survey results of study courses and ensures that students receive feedback. The study plan for part-time students within the semester and the study course was updated, agreeing on the study plan and study course descriptions. 2. A possibility to study in the programme "Physiotherapy" part-time. 3. Active participation in the exhibition "Skola", Open days and other events in order to reach the widest possible audience and inform about study opportunities and the study process. 4. The implementation of the formative assessment approach in study courses has been increased. 5. Validation of education acquired during previous learning is being done. 6. The number of placement sites outside Riga has been increased, covering all regions and allowing completion of the placement or part of it closer to the student's place of residence. 7. The proportion of video lectures has increased. Remote class format was introduced.

Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendations of the programme are fully implemented.

According to the Annex 11 that can be found under study programme annexes of Professional Bachelor's study programme "Orthotics and Prosthetics" (further - programme) under a name -11_Anx_Previous_Exp_Recom_Orthotics_and_Prosthetics.pdf, there are 3 recommendations that have been identified by evaluation commission.

First recommendation (1) specified was to review course descriptions to ensure that learning outcomes are at a proper level of education. For the purpose of improvement, RSU has formed an Excel mapping form and it has been completed. The head of the study programme and part of heads of study courses mastered the cycle "Formulation and evaluation of learning outcomes for improvement of study programmes" organized by PIC. Based on the recommendation received, learning outcomes of the programme are formulated in a clear and consecutive way and the planning of contact hours in the curriculum and study course descriptions.

Second recommendation (2) received was to review the lists of readings published in course descriptions to make them better reflect the current situation. In the academic year of 2018/2019, the lists of readings of course descriptions have been updated specifying the most up-to-date professional literature.

Third recommendation received specified consideration of methods of attracting more mature students. To consider methods of adaptation for working students. The content of the study programme is equivalent to the professional standard for an orthotic technician of International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics ISPO. Types of studies have been diversified and the availability of learning materials in the e-environment has improved under the influence of the Covid-19 pandemic. Video lectures, presentations, online lectures, etc. are available. At the study quality

council meetings, it was also decided to continue enrolling students every year, as the labor market shows stable demand for RSU graduates.

Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendations of the programme are fully implemented.

According to the Annex 11 that can be found under study programme annexes of PBSP “Nutrition” (further - programme) under the name -11_Anx_Previous_Exp_Recom_Nutrition.pdf, there is 1 recommendation that has been identified by the evaluation commission.

The recommendation received was regarding implementation of a consistent method of calculation of credit points that would have to be used. It was stated that the SAR provides that the defined learning outcomes, as well as their examination and assessment methods in the form of skills and knowledge, as well as the defined assessment criteria are available to students in study course descriptions. This was not really clear from the SAR. For the purpose of implementing the provided recommendation, learning outcomes in the programme and the study course descriptions are clearly and sequentially formulated in cooperation between the head of the programme and the lecturers. The compliance of contact hours with the number of study course credit points has been clarified. The course reading lists include contemporary literature and the availability of mandatory readings in the RSU Library has been improved.

Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendation of the programme is fully implemented.

According to the Annex 11 that can be found under study programme annexes of Academic Master study programme “Rehabilitation” under the name -11_Anx_Previous_Exp_Recom_Rehabilitation.pdf, there are 3 recommendations that have been identified by the evaluation commission.

First recommendation (1) received was in regards to continuing the development by introducing the student-centered attitude in practice. Substantial changes have been implemented throughout the years such as - 1. An electronic feedback system was created at RSU, which was piloted until 31.03.2018. After the semester surveys are closed, the study course leader gets acquainted with the assessment and provides feedback in the system. If the student response was low and the survey results are not considered representative, the feedback may also be a formal acknowledgement of participation in the survey. The Head of the Department monitors the survey results of study courses and ensures that students receive feedback. 2. There are attempts to increase student responses and participation in surveys. 3. Since 2018, meetings of the students of the Faculty of Rehabilitation with the Dean have been organized at least once a semester (due to the Covid-19 pandemic, meetings were online and more frequent, as needed). Students can also arrange individual appointments with the Head of the Department of Rehabilitation and the teaching staff involved in the programme as needed. Students are represented in the study programme Quality Council. These are the most substantial changes that have been made and others are described in detail in the annex 11 - 11_Anx_Previous_Exp_Recom_Rehabilitation.pdf.

Second recommendation (2) received was in regards to revision of wording of the learning outcomes highlighted in the SAR. After the previous accreditation, the mapping of the learning outcomes of the study programme in compliance with the education standard was completed in the spring 2018. As the RSU mapping tool was improved, the repeated mapping of the programme was done in the spring 2022. The study course descriptions are reviewed and updated annually according to the current situation. This should be done at least 10 days before the start of the new semester. Periodic discussions are held with the lecturers involved in the implementation of the study programme, course evaluation questionnaires are analyzed, and a meeting of the study programme Quality Council is held at least once a semester.

Third recommendation (3) outlined a necessity to develop better compliance of credit points for study courses with contact hours. Based on the recommendation, a change has been made and contact hours were clarified in relation to the number of credit points of the study courses. Now, credit points, contact hours and final examinations are indicated in the study course descriptions

correctly and in accordance with the study plan. Up-to-date literature is included in the study course reading lists and the availability of compulsory literature in RSU library has been improved. The sources of information included in the study process are regularly reviewed, and electronic sources of information are used as whenever possible.

Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendations of the programme are fully implemented.

According to the Annex 11 that can be found under study programme annexes of Academic Master study programme "Nutrition Science" under the name -11_Anx_Previous_Exp_Recom_Nutrition_Science.pdf, there are 2 recommendations that have been identified by the evaluation commission.

First recommendation (1) received was to implement consistent and clearly understandable study course credit points that are awarded to students. For that purpose, RSU created and completed the Excel mapping form. The head of the programme and part of heads of study courses mastered the cycle "Formulation and evaluation of learning outcomes for improvement of study programmes" organized by PIC. Learning outcomes of the study programme are formulated in a clear and consecutive way and the planning of contact hours in the curriculum and study course descriptions. There is an established cooperation with lecturers in the programme to update the content of study courses.

Second recommendation (2) addressed formulated examples of decisions taken on the structure of the joint management programme. In general, the description of the study programme reflects more clearly and in greater detail the examples of decisions formulated, however, for the expert group there were minor unclearities of understanding the programme structure of decision-making, which brought a little confusion of how the internal decisions are organized. It is good that there have been changes implemented such as joint admission on a commonly negotiated basis in one day as it eliminates confusion for the students when they decide to apply.

Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendations of the programme are fully implemented.

According to the Annex 11 that can be found under study programme annexes of Professional Master's study programme "Art Therapy" (further - programme) under a name - 11_Anx_Previous_Exp_Recom_Art_Therapy.pdf, there are 3 recommendations that have been identified by evaluation commission.

First recommendation received was in regards to continuing the development by introducing the student- centered attitude in practice. Substantial changes have been implemented throughout the years such as 1. RSU has established a feedback system, and teaching staff of study courses is obliged both to complete and publish feedback to students and to take into account student suggestions when planning a particular study course in the future. 2. In collaboration with group leaders, student survey completion activity is being promoted and now has been implemented as mandatory. 3. The Student Quality Council includes a student representative - the group leader of the 2nd year of studies. 4. Meetings of students with the study programme director and teaching staff involved in the programme, as well as the dean have been organized annually at the beginning of both the autumn and spring semesters. 5. The share of video lectures and online classes has been significantly increased.

Second recommendation received was to review the formulation of the learning outcomes highlighted in the SAR. For that purpose various activities have been conducted - 1. A study programme Excel mapping form has been created and completed, integrating the learning outcomes to be achieved in the study programme and study courses. 2. The director of the programme and part of heads of study courses have mastered the cycle Formulation and Evaluation of Learning Outcomes for Improvement of Study Programmes organized by the Centre for Educational Growth. 3. Learning outcomes of the study programme as well as the study courses highlighted in the report (Drama Therapy I, Individual Counseling in Art Therapy and

Psychodynamics, Group Counseling in Art Therapy) have been clearly and sequentially formulated and the planning of contact hours in the study plan and study course descriptions has been clarified and other activities specified in the Annex 11.

Third recommendation outlined a need to develop better compliance of study course credit points with contact hours. For that purpose, the analysis of mutual correspondence (mapping) of learning outcomes of the study programmes and study courses and the occupational standard has been carried out. The mapping has been done according to the current standard, while the professional associations are currently working on updating and developing a new version of the occupational standard. Changes have been made to ensure a proportional relationship between the planned study course outcomes and the volume intended for course delivery (They are specified in the Annex 11 in detail). Learning outcomes of the study programme have been clearly and sequentially formulated and the planning of contact hours in the curriculum and study course descriptions has been clarified. Study course descriptions include contemporary literature, and the availability of required readings in the RSU Library is improved, including in electronic format.

Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendation of the programme is fully implemented.

According to the Annex 11 that can be found under study programme annexes of Professional Master's study programme "Clinical Pharmacy" (further - programme) under a name -11_Anx_Plan_for_implementation_of_recommend_Clinical_Pharmacy.pdf, there are 3 recommendations that have been identified by evaluation commission.

First recommendation received was in regards consolidation of the potential role of clinical pharmacists in the organizational structure of hospitals, thus supporting the creation of new jobs. For the fulfillment of the recommendation, RSU has taken various actions as in cooperation with the Pharmacists' Society of Latvia and the Pharmacy Department of the Ministry of Health, a proposal for amendments to the Medical Treatment Law has been submitted, where the role of a clinical pharmacist in medical treatment would be defined with legal precision. In 2021, a Clinical Pharmacists Section was established at the Pharmacists' Society of Latvia. The number of hospitals employing a clinical pharmacist has increased (currently three university hospitals, Daugavpils and Vidzeme regional hospitals). Students and graduates of the programme also work in closed-type pharmacies, providing higher levels of pharmaceutical care. During 2019, five graduates of the study programme, in cooperation with their Estonian colleagues, engaged in the Medicines Use Review (MUR) project, where they provided consultations to patients on responsible and safe use of medicines.

Second recommendation received was in regards to the student feedback rate, which is low. Previous expert commission suggested that the quality assurance system of the programme "needs to be reviewed and it needs to be much more transparent. Based on the information gathered during onsite visit, since the recent implementation of mandatory surveys, completion of study course assessment questionnaires within the faculty has increased to nearly 70%. However, there has been no significant increase in the percentage of survey completion in the programme specifically. As stated in the Annex 11, this can be due to the small number of students in the programme (up to 10 students per group) and the ability to resolve their claims, recommendations and current problems by communicating personally with the lecturers and the head of the programme, but expert group believes that students still must be encouraged to reflect in forms of surveys as well. Thus, it can be concluded that this recommendation is considered to be partly-implemented.

Third recommendation received was in regards to insurance of a consistent and fair approach to granting of credit points. For the purpose of implementation of the recommendation received changes have been made in the programme as: 1. Dividing a course and increasing the number of credit points and contact hours for the course "Public Health and Epidemiology"; 2. Credit points and contact hours, semester and final examination in course descriptions are specified correctly and in

compliance with D1, 3. Compliance of contact hours with the number of study course credit points is clarified, 4. The course reading lists include contemporary literature and the availability of mandatory readings in the RSU Library has been improved.

Based on the information provided and gathered, it can be concluded that one of the recommendations is considered to be partly-implemented, while two of them are full-implemented.

According to the Annex 11 that can be found under study programme annexes of Second level professional higher education study programme "Industrial Pharmacy" (further - programme) under a name -11_Anx_Plan_for_implementation_of_recommend_Industr_Pharmacy.pdf, there are 6 recommendations that have been identified by evaluation commission.

First recommendation received was in regards continuance of working on material and technical provisions, in particular, to improve laboratory infrastructure. As observed during onsite visit, the Department and the Faculty of Applied Pharmacy have improved the material and technical provisions – at the Pharmaceutical Education and Research Centre on Konsula Street 21, where there are modern study premises and the world-class pharmaceutical laboratory with advanced and modern equipment.

Second recommendation received was in regards to the promotion of the programme and its internationalization. For the purpose of fulfillment of the recommendation, following actions have been taken: 1. Involving at least 2 foreign visiting lecturers per year; 2. Lecturers with good knowledge of English and experience in industrial pharmacy have also been employed. However, there is a limitation on providing individual study courses and also programmes in English due to the large count of practical classes and placement in drug manufacturing companies.

Third recommendation addressed establishment of communication not only with pharmaceutical factories, but also with manufacturers of cosmetics. As a result of the recommendation, cooperation agreements have been concluded with cosmetic manufacturers - AS "Madara Cosmetics" and AS "Dzintars". At this point of time, there are discussions on the possibilities of working on any placement sections using infrastructure of the manufacturer of cosmetics. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, there was no placement at cosmetics manufacturing facilities, however, there was successful placement in both largest pharmaceutical production facilities – AS Olainfarm and AS Grindeks.

Fourth recommendation received was directed towards student low feedback rates in surveys. Since the recommendation, a functional electronic feedback system has been established and numbers have increased within the faculty in response rates to nearly 70% as the surveys are now mandatory. Specifically, in this programme, student response rates are not stable but fluctuate around 25-50%, which makes it partially-implemented.

Fifth recommendation addressed a consistent and fair approach to granting credit points. For that purpose, a study programme Excel mapping form was created and completed. The head of the study programme and part of heads of study courses mastered the cycle "Formulation and evaluation of learning outcomes for improvement of study programmes" organized by PIC. Learning outcomes of the study programme are formulated in a clear and consecutive way and the planning of contact hours in the curriculum and study course descriptions. The mapping of study courses has been updated, new study courses were included – Preparation of Scientific Papers, the supply of study courses has been supplemented with the course Drug Development. Examinations were introduced in all study courses with the volume of at least 2 CP as the final examination.

Sixth recommendation was to promote changes in academic staff to attract academic staff with good knowledge of English. 1 doctoral student and 1 doctoral candidate are to be employed as permanent teaching staff at the Department of Dosage Form Technology. At the Department of Pharmacology, 2 permanent teaching staff members started doctoral studies and are improving their knowledge of English to reach level B2.

Based on the information provided and gathered, it can be concluded that one of the recommendations is considered to be partly-implemented, while five of them are full-implemented.

According to the Annex 11 that can be found under study programme annexes of Second level professional higher education study programme "Medicine" (further - programme) under a name -11_Anx_Plan_for_implementation_of_recommend_Medicine.pdf, there are 5 recommendations that have been identified by evaluation commission.

First recommendation received was in regards to the workload of medical students in different years of studies. It was stated that the workload should be more balanced by changing the structure of the programme or the layout of study courses. One of the most substantial changes implemented has been an establishment of a new structure of the programme. It increased the number of contact hours (expressed in CP) for a range of essential base courses, such as Human Physiology, Human Biochemistry. This enables students to acquire the necessary amount of knowledge, skills and competences over a longer period of time reducing the study intensity included in one CP. Another change implemented for various courses has been distributed differently among the semesters. In that way also the amount of CP (reduced study workload and tasks) has been reduced for a number of courses. All of those changes were evaluated and approved in 2020 in the corresponding collegiate instances of RSU and in AIC – as content changes to the programme.

Second recommendation received was about low student survey feedback. Since the previous accreditation, mandatory surveys have been implemented as well as an electronic feedback system has been established which is available to the director, lecturers and others involved.

Third recommendation addressed a necessity to assess the pedagogical quality of the supervision of students' practical training. At this point, RSU has managed to ensure that around 50% of lecturers have already participated in PIC activities. Among the strategic tasks of 2023 is the task that each lecturer participates in one of the PIC's educational events at least once a year.

Fourth recommendation addressed a necessity for a consistent and fair attitude to granting of credit points and requested learning outcomes to be written in a generally accepted educational format. According to the information provided, the number of credit points corresponds to the content and amount of contact hours. The curriculum has been revised and updated and contains information on the correspondence of contact hours with course content. Mapping has been performed that increases the quality of meaningful content and compliance to aims of studies. Credit and contact hours, semester and final tests in the course descriptions have correctly and coherently indicated.

Fifth recommendation received was to ensure that new and continuously increasing knowledge and information in medicine is effectively discussed and addressed in the study course of the programme. As it is specified in the Annex 11 and has been clarified during onsite meetings, every year, the content of study courses has been reviewed as well as its content and plan with descriptions are included in the e-learning environment before each semester. Content is also discussed at department meetings, which, depending on the specifics of the department's work, take place once every 1-3 months. Almost all the departments have student research interest groups, whose mentors are the most distinguished in the field and an expert group met some of them onsite.

Based on the information provided and gathered, it can be concluded that all of the recommendations are fully-implemented.

In addition to the 5 recommendations received in the previous cycle of accreditation, there were 1 short-term and 2 long-term recommendations received for the improvement of the programme for the evaluation of changes in the accredited study field.

Short -term recommendation was to provide an explanation where the curriculum and/or which study courses include the writing and defense of three research papers in accordance with Paragraph 35 of CM Regulations No. 512. It has been specified that these are 1. "Research Paper" (2 CP, MF_002); 2. "Surgical Diseases II" (4 CP, KK_036) and 3. "Basics of Paediatrics II" (2 CP, PEK_051) and 4. "Differential Diagnostics and Current Issues in Treatment of Internal Diseases (Endocrinology, Hematology, Pulmonology)" (ISK_212).

First long-term recommendation was to provide an extended justification for how the content of the

study programme conforms not only to student-centeredness, but also as to how the content of the study programme is based on scientific considerations. There have been various things done for that matter such as: 1. Learning outcomes are clearly formulated and known, and the student studies to achieve them; 2. Writing and defense of more than three research papers within the framework of clinical courses; 3. Study courses aimed at recognising, finding and using scientific material and others.

Second long-term recommendation was in the SAR, when providing information on costs of the study programme, to specify not only changes in the study programme as a percentage, but also actual changes. The cost estimate of the study programme with direct and indirect expenditure has been updated, taking into account the annual investments for improvement of the quality of the study programme and the study infrastructure.

Based on the information provided and gathered, it can be concluded that the three recommendations have been fully implemented.

According to the Annex 11 that can be found under study programme annexes of Second level professional higher education study programme "Pharmacy" (further - programme) under a name -11_Anx_Plan_for_implementation_of_recommend_2L_Pharmacy.pdf, there are 5 recommendations that have been identified by evaluation commission.

First recommendation recommended to employ additional younger academic staff with good knowledge of English. 1 doctoral student and 1 doctoral candidate are to be employed as permanent teaching staff at the Department of Dosage Form Technology. At the Department of Pharmacology, 2 permanent teaching staff members started doctoral studies, improving their knowledge of English to reach level B2. Five new colleagues were involved in the study programme as lecturers. All doctoral students of the Doctoral study programme "Pharmacy" are actively involved in the implementation of the programme.

Second recommendation addressed a need to continue to improve study infrastructure with material and technical provisions at laboratories. As observed during onsite visit, the Department and the Faculty of Applied Pharmacy have improved the material and technical provisions – at the Pharmaceutical Education and Research Centre on Konsula iela 21, where there are modern study premises and the world-class pharmaceutical laboratory with advanced and modern equipment.

Third recommendation specified that student survey feedback numbers and general involvement is low. After implementation of mandatory surveys recently, the numbers have increased to 40-60%, but it has in general increased for the faculty to nearly 70%.

Fourth recommendation addresses a need to ensure a consistent and fair approach to granting of credit points. For that purpose, mapping of study programme courses has been performed, according to the results of mapping the curriculum has been supplemented with 1 new elective study course. Lecturers have been trained in the formulation and evaluation of outcomes of study courses. Learning outcomes have been adapted to the existing profession standard. Qualitative and quantitative changes have been made to the programme. Changes have also been made in the number of CPs, reviewing the compliance of study courses with contemporary needs.

Fifth recommendation was in regards maintenance and continuance of strengthening cooperation with employers. For the fulfillment of the recommendation, cooperation agreements have been entered into with pharmacies, pharmacy networks, manufacturers of medicinal products. In academic year 2017/2018, placement agreements were concluded with SIA "Daugavpils reģionālā slimnīca", NRC "Vaivari", VSIA "Strenču psihoneiroloģiskā slimnīca", SIA "Rēzeknes slimnīca", AS "Sentor Farm aptiekas". Representatives of AS "Sentor Farm aptiekas" participated in the Open Door Day, representatives of all the largest pharmacy networks participated in the Career Day.

Based on the information provided and gathered, it can be concluded that the five recommendations have been fully -implemented.

According to the Annex 11.2 Plan for implementation of recommendations made by experts for the inclusion of the study programme in the accredited study direction that can be found under the

Academic doctoral study programme “Health Care” (further – programme), there are 15 recommendations identified by evaluation commission.

The first recommendation was to Ensure that the majority of the study programme’s lectures remain online, based on feedback from students and academic staff. Based on the information provided by RSU, the activities were to organize and ensure a high-quality study process, taking into account the specificities of doctoral studies. Outcomes to be achieved 1) Delivery of lectures in face-to- face and hybrid formats, as well as in video lecture format; 2) Doctoral students have the possibility to participate in the study process remotely. Outcome achieved on the date of the report submission, follow-up action to implement recommendations - 1) Rector’s decree No 1-PB-2/41/2023 on the organization of the study process in doctoral study programmes of Rīga Stradiņš University, 27.01.2023; 2) Rector’s Decree No 1-PB-2/224/2023 on the planning process of study events at Rīga Stradiņš University, 10.05.2023.

Work on recording and saving of video lectures on the RSU e-learning platform for the courses, which form the general theoretical basis, has been started.

Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendation of the programme is fully implemented.

The second recommendation was "The conditions for obtaining doctoral study grants for students in the sub- programme “Psychology” need to be specified more precisely“. Based on the information provided by RSU, the activities were to define the conditions for the receipt of the doctoral study grant and formulate them for all doctoral study programmes. Outcomes to be achieved - Clearly defined conditions for students of doctoral study programmes to receive the doctoral study grant. A targeted, justified, structured and flexible funding allocation plan to ensure materials, IT tools, external services and publicity needed for the implementation of scientific research. Outcome achieved on the date of the report submission, follow-up action to implement recommendations - “Regulations on Grants for Doctoral Studies at Rīga Stradiņš University” approved at RSU Senate meeting of 20.09.2022 (Minutes No 2-S-1/7/2022).

Information on doctoral study grants is available on the website of RSU Department of Doctoral Studies: <https://www.rsu.lv/studiju-iespejas/doktorantura/doktora-studiju-grants> No other changes to the receipt of doctoral study grants are currently intended to be considered. Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendation of the programme is fully implemented.

The third recommendation was to Update the study course description template by introducing the section “Interrelations of the learning outcomes of the study course, sub- programme and study programme“. Based on the information provided by RSU, the activities were to 1) Transfer the mapping carried out during the licensing to the new Programme Management System;

2) Link the register of study courses to the Programme Management System, providing the technical possibility to link individual course outcomes to the programme outcomes (IT); 3) Mapping of the learning outcomes of the programme courses against the learning outcomes of the programme (teaching staff). 4) Publish the new study course descriptions on the RSU E-learning platform. Outcomes to be achieved - Mapping of the study course learning outcomes and the learning outcomes of the sub-programme and the study programme. Outcome achieved on the date of the report submission, follow-up action to implement recommendations - 1) Programme Management System with the Programme Mapping section was created (1 January 2022);

2) Mapping of learning outcomes against study courses (in Excel) was done during the development of the study programme. 3) Introduction of the new template for study course descriptions has been planned, which will allow for the possibility of mapping the learning outcomes in the course description. Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendation of the programme is implemented.

The fourth recommendation was to Update the study methods (the main focus on collaboration

between the students of the three sub- programmes) of the study courses in the study course descriptions, which are simultaneously delivered to the students of the three sub-programmes. Based on the information provided by RSU, the activities were to Update study courses by asking teaching staff to update study course descriptions before the start of each academic year and take into account the feedback from student questionnaires and elsewhere.

Inform teaching staff about the possibility of including study methods in study course descriptions that focus on cooperation between students from the three sub- programmes in the process of learning the study course. Outcomes to be achieved - cooperation between students from the three sub- programmes in the study process of doctoral studies. Outcome achieved on the date of the report submission, follow-up action to implement recommendations - Teaching staff update their study course descriptions before the beginning of each academic year. Inform teaching staff about the current status of the programme and the accreditation process, and continue to develop the implementation of the interdisciplinary model and the individually tailored study process. In implementation of some study courses, it is planned to apply such methods as interactive project work, which include joint discussions on a topic and development of a theme that would provide a different perspective and would support the doctoral students' work on their dissertation. Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendation of the programme is implemented.

The fifth recommendation was The descriptions of doctoral study courses may include references to the relevant databases for the suggested e- books, as well as recommended journals from RSU databases. Based on the information provided by RSU, the activities were to update study course descriptions to integrate the latest publications from RSU electronically subscribed databases binding on the programme students into the study course descriptions and to specify useful and specific scientific journals. Outcomes to be achieved - Maintenance of bibliography and references suitable for research in study course descriptions. Outcome achieved on the date of the report submission, follow-up action to implement recommendations - Study course descriptions are regularly updated. It is planned to add a link to the resources available at RSU Library in the bibliography of each study course description: <https://www.rsu.lv/biblioteka>, that is maintained up-to-date. Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendation of the programme is implemented.

The sixth recommendation was that RSU and LU should review the contract on the transfer of students, taking into account the changes made to the LU programme. Based on the information provided by RSU, the activities were implemented in cooperation of RSU and LU. The concluded agreement was revised and clarifications were made regarding the change of the title of LU programme. Outcomes to be achieved - Correct agreement between RSU and LU on the transfer of students, if necessary. Outcome achieved on the date of the report submission, follow-up action to implement recommendations - RSU has concluded an agreement with the LU that in case of termination of the implementation of RSU doctoral study programme "Health Care" (including the sub-programme "Medicine" or "Pharmacy"), LU undertakes to provide students who are studying in the sub- programme "Medicine" or "Pharmacy" with the opportunity to continue their studies in the doctoral study programme "Medicine and Pharmacy". RSU has found out that according to the information available on AIKA e-platform the title of the doctoral study programme "Medicine and Health Sciences" is new, changed from the doctoral study programme "Medicine and Pharmacy" during the accreditation, as the latter title appears in the documentation - the description and the expert opinion, available on the platform. The new title also appears on the LU website, but an extended description of the study programme is available only under the previous title of the study programme. Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendation of the programme is implemented, because the outcomes were achieved.

The seventh recommendation was: A strategy that could lead to the research mobility of doctoral students would be required. Based on the information provided by RSU, the activities were to Provide mobility opportunities for RSU students during their studies. Inform students about mobility opportunities, motivate them to take advantage of the opportunities and provide all the necessary support for the use of mobility opportunities. Continue implementing recommendations of previous experts (26 recommendations on the list) on increasing mobility statistics. Outcomes to be achieved - Students are given the opportunity to go on exchange studies. Mobility opportunities for doctoral students have expanded: at least one doctoral student has the opportunity for international mobility per year. International mobility has increased by 100% over three years. Outcome achieved on the date of the report submission, follow-up action to implement recommendations - Doctoral students will be repeatedly informed about the various mobility opportunities on offer: <https://www.rsu.lv/starptautiska-sadarbiba/mobilitates-programmas/erasmus-programma-studentiem>, <https://www.rsu.lv/starptautiska-sadarbiba/mobilitates-programmas/erasmus-programma-studentiem> A working group of teaching staff and doctoral students has been established to promote international mobility and research development at RSU, including continuing cooperation in Erasmus+ projects for exchange of doctoral students, preparing Erasmus+ project call KA220-YOU - Cooperation Partnerships in Youth in cooperation with higher education institutions of Italy, Spain, Croatia and Germany and promoting the involvement of doctoral students in COST Action projects. In March 2022, a working group was set up to develop a long-term mobility development strategy and a strategy for involvement in research projects based on participation in international projects. Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendation of the programme is implemented.

The eighth recommendation was The action plan to lower the high rates of student drop-out in the final semesters of the doctoral study programme would be beneficial. Based on the information provided by RSU, the activities were to continue the implementation of the Action Plan already developed, which is being monitored and implemented by the Department of Doctoral Studies with the aim to reduce the drop-out rates in the final months of the doctoral study programme. Outcomes to be achieved – 1) Requirements of the Academic Regulations for Doctoral Studies for successful completion of the programme are fulfilled. 2) The number of excluded students in the final semesters of studies has been reduced. Outcome achieved on the date of the report submission, follow-up action to implement recommendations – when the Department of Doctoral Studies studied the reasons for termination of doctoral studies, it was found that one of the main reasons for termination of studies was lack of publications and non-compliance with the requirements of paragraphs 6.9 and 6.10 of the Academic Regulations for Doctoral Studies. During the doctoral studies, doctoral students have the opportunity to apply for a doctoral study grant and use the grant to pay for editorial correction and publishing of scientific publications in international peer-reviewed editions; doctoral students have the opportunity to receive support for publication of articles from RSU Research Department <https://www.rsu.lv/zinatnes-departamentos>, as well as to improve their skills and competences at RSU Doctoral School <https://www.rsu.lv/petnieciba/doktoranturas-skola>. Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendation of the programme is partly implemented, because the evidence about the decreased rates of student drop-out are not provided.

The ninth recommendation was To hold regular meetings with employers to ensure sufficient cooperation in improving study programmes, updating learning outcomes and developing new specializations. Based on the information provided by RSU, the activities were to: 1. In cooperation with the Heads of the sub-programmes of the study programme, representatives of students, academic staff, industry and sector, RSU management and representatives of administrative departments, to develop an evaluation plan for the focus group on the experience of the

implementation of the StP, the compliance of the content of the StP with the needs of the development of the national economy and topicalities of the sector in order to develop proposals for further development of the StP, as well as to provide an overall written assessment of approbation.

2. Implement the plan. Outcomes to be achieved – Compliance of the content of the StP with the needs of the development of national economy and topicalities of the sector, and other binding issues. Outcome achieved on the date of the report submission, follow-up action to implement recommendations - Work on preparation and planning of the focus group discussion has started. Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendation of the programme is implemented.

The tenth recommendation was to Involve students in the preparation of the applications for scientific research projects on a larger scale. Based on the information provided by RSU, the activities were to continue to implement the strategy developed by RSU Research Department, which defines how and what to administer, organize and who to involve in the preparation of scientific research project applications on a wider scale. Outcomes to be achieved – Extensive involvement of doctoral students in the preparation of applications for scientific research projects. Outcome achieved on the date of the report submission, follow-up action to implement recommendations - Work started on the development of a long- term research strategy with health behavior as one of the focuses and cooperation in the field of psycho-oncology. For example, currently there is an active cooperation with Dr Angelos P. Kassianos, BSc, MSc, PGCert, PhD, FHEA; Lecturer in Health Psychology / Grants and SIG Officer, European Health Psychology Society Executive Committee / Board Member, Cyprus Psychologists' Association, Department of Nursing, School of Health Sciences, Cyprus University of Technology. Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendation of the programme is partly implemented, because there is no evidence provided about the number of the students (newly) involved in the preparation of the applications for scientific research projects.

The eleventh recommendation was to A long-term research strategy for tying the study programme “Psychology” to the demands of medical science is required, as is cooperating with the programmes “Medicine” and “Pharmacy”. Based on the information provided by RSU, the activities were to Continue to implement the plan for the licensing of the study programme and the development plan, which envisages the development of an interdisciplinary programme and scientific research. Outcomes to be achieved – Interdisciplinary synergistic development of the fields of health care and psychology science. Outcome achieved on the date of the report submission, follow-up action to implement recommendations - The fact of creating a study programme with three sub-programmes already constitutes a long-term research strategy for linking the study programme “Psychology” to the requirements of medical science. Achievements to date:

Publications:

Vrublevska, J., Perepjolkina, V., Martinsone, K., Kolesnikova, J., Krone, I., Smirnova, D., Fountoulakis K.,N., Rancans, E. (2022). Determinants of anxiety in the general Latvian population during the COVID-19 state of emergency. *Frontiers in Public health*, 10.DOI: 10.3389/fpubh.2022.854812 (SCOPUS and Web of Science)

Šuriņa, S., Mārtinsone, K., Perepjolkina, V., Koļesņikova, J., Vainik, U., Ruža, A., Vrubļevska, J., Smirnova, D., Fountoulakis, K. N., & Rancāns, E. (2021). Factors Related to COVID-19 Preventive Behaviors: A Structural Equation Model. *Frontiers in Psychology*. DOI: 10.3389/fpsyg.2021.676521 (SCOPUS and Web of Science)

Koļesņikova, J., Perepjolkina, V., Sudraba, V., Mārtinsone, K., Stepens, A. (2020). Relationship Between Personality Disorders Scales, Pathological Personality Traits, and Six Domains of Functioning in Sample with Alcohol Use Disorder. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 11 (498). DOI: 10.3389/fpsyt.2020.00498 (SCOPUS and Web of Science)

Jointly supervised dissertations: Relationship between Cognitive Reserve, Cognitive Functioning and Brain Volumetry in Non-Demented Older Adults (Scientific supervisors Ainārs Stepens, Sara Mondini) (Psychology)

Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendation of the programme is implemented.

The twelfth recommendation was to Analysis of student drop-out and steps to be taken to increase the number of graduates of psychology programmes. Based on the information provided by RSU, the activities were to increase the number of graduates from doctoral study programmes, including the number of graduates from the field of psychology. Outcomes to be achieved – Increase in the number of graduates from doctoral study programmes, including the number of graduates from the field of psychology. Outcome achieved on the date of the report submission, follow-up action to implement recommendations - 1) promotional events for the doctoral study programme “Health Care”; 2) clear admission requirements; 3) clear entrance examinations for applicants who have not obtained a Master’s or Bachelor’s degree in psychology; 4) support for tuition fees (RSU tuition fee discounts); 5) possibility to study in a state-funded study place; 6) possibility to apply for a doctoral study grant;

Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendation of the programme is implemented.

The thirteenth recommendation was It is recommended to set higher quality criteria for the requirements for the doctoral thesis and not to keep conference proceedings as an option in the requirements for successful completion of a four-year doctoral study programme. Based on the information provided by RSU, the activities were to define qualitative criteria for the requirements of the doctoral thesis in order to specify the conditions for the successful completion of the programme that comply with the requirements for the commencement of the promotion process. Outcomes to be achieved – The criteria for the requirements of the doctoral thesis that specify the conditions for successful completion of the study programme and meet the requirements for the promotion process, have been updated. “Regulations on the Activities of the Promotion Councils and the Procedure of Promotion” has been updated in accordance with the Cabinet Regulations No 1001 “Procedures and Criteria for the Conferral of a Doctoral Degree in Science (Promotion)”. Outcome achieved on the date of the report submission, follow-up action to implement recommendations - Participation in conferences with abstracts is important for dissemination of knowledge, but it is not a criterion for the promotion process in regulatory documents.

As currently drafted, the requirements of the Academic Regulations for Doctoral Studies for successful completion of the doctoral study programme comply with the requirements for the commencement of the promotion process, as specified in the “Regulations on the Activities of the Promotion Councils and the Procedure of Promotion”. The document sets out the criteria for the scientific activity according to which doctoral students who have successfully completed their doctoral study programme may start the promotion process.

Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendation of the programme is implemented.

The fourteenth recommendation was In order to strengthen the future research staff in the field of health science at RSU, it is advisable to promote and attract those who have education in biology to the doctoral study programme “Health Care”. Based on the information provided by RSU, the activities were - promotional activities of the doctoral study programme to attract applicants. Evaluate the proposals in the working group. Outcomes to be achieved – Attracting new doctoral students and ensuring effective studies that contribute to the development of science.

Outcome achieved on the date of the report submission, follow-up action to implement

recommendations - Continue to implement all planned promotion activities of the doctoral study programme to attract applicants.

Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the implementation of the recommendation is still in progress, further dynamic should be observed.

The fifteenth recommendation was More LCS experts could be involved in the sub-programme "Psychology". If the external regulatory framework sets a limit on the implementation of all three sub- programmes within one study programme, RSU should consider the possibility of implementing sub- programmes as specializations. Based on the information provided by RSU, the activities were to ensure that the study programme continues to have an adequate number of LCS experts in all sub-programmes. Do everything possible on behalf of RSU so that the external regulation contributes to the introduction of the new doctoral study model. Outcomes to be achieved - The study programme has an appropriate number of LCS experts in all the sub- programmes. Successful introduction of the new doctoral study model. Outcome achieved on the date of the report submission, follow-up action to implement recommendations - Ensure that the study programme continues to have an adequate number of LCS experts in all sub-programmes. Additional information is provided in the additional table.

RSU requirements stipulate that only a LCS expert in the field may be the supervisor of the doctoral dissertation. For example, doctoral theses of the sub-programme "Psychology" are supervised by LCS experts in psychology - S.Mihailova, I.Krone, I.Griškēviča, V.Sudraba, who are not teaching staff in the implementation of the study programme. Monitor and follow changes in the regulatory framework and promote the introduction of such regulatory framework that does not hinder the development of programmes and higher education institutions. Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendation of the programme is implemented.

According to Annex 11. Plan of implementation of recommendations of licencing experts of the doctoral study programme "Health Care" (Recommendations by licencing experts of the doctoral study programme "Health Care", as well as experts in accreditation of consolidated study programmes) that can be found under the Academic doctoral study programme Health Care (further - programme)

The first recommendation was: Please supplement document No. 60-6/257/2021, which certifies that the university guarantees compensation of losses to the students if the study programme fails to be accredited due to activity (action or inaction) of the university or college, or if the programme license is withdrawn and the student does not wish to continue their studies in another study programme, with codes of sub- programmes (Annex 18). Activity of the higher education institution - Supplement document No. 60- 6/257/2021, which certifies that the university guarantees compensation of losses to the students if the study programme fails to be accredited due to activity (action or inaction) of the university, or if the programme license is withdrawn and the student does not wish to continue their studies in another study programme, with codes of sub-programmes (Annex 18 in licencing documents) and to sign again and resubmit to the Quality Agency for Higher Education (QAHE). Outcomes to be achieved - to supplement the doctoral study programme with sub programmes, to sign the certification, which would demonstrate that compensation of losses is guaranteed to the students of the university if the study programme fails to be accredited due to activity (action or inaction) of the university, or if the programme license is withdrawn and the student chose does not wish to continue their studies in another study programme. Result achieved as at ac. year 2021/2022 - The doctoral study programme (DStP) "Health Care" was supplemented with codes of sub- programmes and on 09.11.2021 certification No. 60-6/418/2021 was signed, which certifies that the university guarantees compensation of losses to the students if the study programme fails to be accredited due to activity (action or inaction) of the university or college, or if

the programme license is withdrawn and the student does not wish to continue their studies in another study programme. The new certification replaces the previously submitted document. Sent to QAHE on 09.11.2021. Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendation of the programme is implemented.

The second recommendation was To develop guidelines, criteria, requirements to be met specifically by doctoral thesis supervisors. Activity of the higher education institution - The requirements for doctoral thesis supervisors are specified in the regulations for admission to doctoral studies, which provide that a doctoral thesis supervisor (or two doctoral thesis supervisors) must have the rights of an expert of the Latvian Council of Science (LCS) in the field (sub-field) of science, in which the doctoral thesis will be drafted. The rights of an expert shall be valid throughout the duration of the applicant competition and for at least two months after commencement of studies. The requirements are in force during the entire study process defined in Doctoral Academic Regulations. Doctoral thesis supervisor – habilitated doctor of science or doctor of science, who actively participates in scientific research in scientific discipline or subdiscipline, which is confirmed by publications and expert status in the LCS database. The status of an LCS expert must be active all the time, while the doctoral thesis is supervised (the permissible interval between the expiry of the rights of an expert and the renewal of the rights of an expert is up to 12 months). The doctoral thesis supervisor is approved by an order of the vice-rector for science. The rights of an LCS expert are laid down in CM Regulations No.320 of 09.07.2019 (link). Outcomes to be achieved - Doctoral thesis supervisors meet the qualification requirements set for LCS experts specified by the state to comply with the requirements for admission to doctoral studies. Result achieved as at ac. year 2021/2022 - The requirements for doctoral thesis supervisors are specified in the regulations for admission to doctoral studies and conform to the qualification requirements set for LCS experts by the state.

Individual communication (forms of communication and cooperation) between the doctoral thesis supervisor and the doctoral student is reflected in:

1) Doctoral Academic Regulations: the duties of a doctoral thesis supervisor include providing support and tutorials in drafting a doctoral thesis and in the establishment and implementation of the study and research plan. 2) Doctoral plan (forms of communication, regularity, submission of prepared materials and comments and other matters). Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendation of the programme is implemented.

The third recommendation was - Feedback from students is important for maintaining quality, but the description of the study programme mentions at least 3 feedback mechanisms that creates confusion. We recommend that you select a maximum of two that are actually used. Activity of the higher education institution - The primary feedback reception mechanisms are written surveys and oral surveys at the end of the semester. Other feedback reception mechanisms are also used if necessary. Outcomes to be achieved - Proportionate feedback requirements for students, which provide an opportunity for doctoral students to participate in quality monitoring of the study programme and for lecturers to obtain up-to-date information for action. Result achieved as at ac. year 2021/2022 - Feedback reception mechanisms – oral and written surveys – have been established enabling doctoral students to participate in quality monitoring of the study programme. The study course assessment questionnaire has been updated (approved by RSU Rector's decree No. 1-PB-2/296/2022 of 27.05.2022) and is implemented from the 2nd semester of ac.y. 2021/2022. The questionnaire contains four questions about the content of the study course and the work of the lecturer. Using productive verbal methods, it is analyzed together with paper supervisors what the doctoral student and the paper supervisor want to see the most in the development of research competences and what they want to see in the implementation of a scientific project. At least once a year, a joint meeting with doctoral students is held on the form and structure of the studies. Based

on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendation of the programme is implemented.

The fourth recommendation was To include in the study quality programme a survey of graduates of the doctoral programme with specific questions and open-type questions that could help in the implementation of further improvements and maintenance of relevance of the programme. Activity of the higher education institution - In addition, three open questions on the quality of studies should be included in the current survey of graduates of the doctoral programme. Outcomes to be achieved - A variety of feedback has been obtained on the study process, which helps to assess the programme's relevance and continuously improve its quality. Result achieved as at ac. year 2021/2022 - After the end of each year of studies, the RSU conducts a survey of young graduates asking their opinions on the completed study programme. At the same time, to be able to assess the quality of the knowledge acquired in studies, an opinion is also learnt from the graduates who already use the skills acquired at the university in their daily work. Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendation of the programme is implemented.

The fifth recommendation was To incorporate the most up-to- date editions of the RSU's electronic book database subscriptions into all course descriptions, specify the RSU's subscribed databases that are binding on students in this programme, and also provide useful, course-specific scientific journals in course descriptions. Activity of the higher education institution - To incorporate the most up-to-date editions of the RSU's electronic database subscriptions into course descriptions that are binding on students in the programme, and also specify useful and course-specific scientific journals in course descriptions. Every year of studies, lecturers are urged to update study course descriptions (the Department of Doctoral Studies sends information). Outcomes to be achieved - The course descriptions include the latest editions from RSU's electronic database subscriptions, specifying useful, course-specific scientific journals for students. Result achieved as at ac. year 2021/2022 - By 01.09.2022, all course descriptions of the doctoral study programme have been reviewed and supplemented with the latest editions from RSU's electronic database subscriptions, specifying useful, course-specific scientific journals.

In 2021, all course descriptions of the new doctoral study programme were evaluated in accordance with QAHE recommendations, based on them RSU prepared the form "Expert evaluation of study course descriptions based on criteria". Item 8 of the form includes the following criterion: "Literature is up-to-date and consistent with the objectives of the study course, innovations in science, industry developments and the knowledge, skills and competences needed in the future." All study courses of doctoral study programme were evaluated according to the criteria specified in the form. Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendation of the programme is implemented.

The sixth recommendation was to develop information material for those doctoral students who are currently on study leave and will resume studies already in the new study programme. Activity of the higher education institution - The RSU Doctoral Academic Regulations contain information for doctoral students on study leave. The information also applies to those students who will resume their studies in the new study programme. In addition, the Department of Doctoral Studies draws up an individual study plan for those doctoral students who are on academic leave and have successfully completed part of study courses. Outcomes to be achieved - The information material for doctoral students who are on study leave has been developed to let them successfully resume and continue their studies after academic leave. Result achieved as at ac. year 2021/2022 - By 01.09.2023, an individual study course planning has been created for doctoral students who resume their studies after academic leave in the new doctoral study programme, to let them successfully continue their studies. Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the

recommendation of the programme is implemented.

Recommendations of licencing experts for the improvement of the study programme in the long-term (until accreditation of the study field)

The seventh recommendation was In the programme application, emphasis was placed on teaching staff of study courses, we recommend placing an equally important emphasis on the skills of doctoral thesis supervisors and regular opportunities for raising their competences. We urge you to organize regular seminars once a year for doctoral thesis supervisors to organize a successful doctoral thesis drafting process. It is worth considering attracting lecturers from other universities (e.g. University of Latvia, Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies) to the topics of individual courses, thus enriching the exchange of scientific thought for RSU students, lecturers of the programme and doctoral thesis supervisors. Activity of the higher education institution – In 2019, a seminar for doctoral thesis supervisors was organized, where lecturer prof. Jolanta Aleksejūniene, University of British Columbia, Vancouver (Canada) shared her experience; In 2020, a seminar for doctoral thesis supervisors was organized, where RSU lecturers: Assoc.Prof. Nora Jansone- Ratinika, Prof. Ģirts Briģis, Prof. Māra Pilmane, shared their experiences in supervising doctoral theses; It is planned to continue to implement and introduce regular training and experience exchange activities for doctoral thesis supervisors. Outcomes to be achieved - An annual seminar focuses on one aspect of pedagogy, methodology, mobility for more effective supervision of doctoral thesis. Result achieved as at ac. year 2021/2022 – RSU organizes and facilitates the observation of lecturers as a form of exchange of experience; The Doctoral School ([link](#)) offers focused research competence development seminars and networking events intended both for doctoral students and lecturers; Doctoral thesis supervisors participate in the activities organized by the Ministry of Education and Science, for example, in scientific communication lectures by Mārtiņš Zaumanis. For the development of competences and skills, supervisions of doctoral theses can also benefit from supply of the School of Junior Academics and seminars offered by the RSU Centre for Educational Growth. For example, in the academic year 2021/2022, PIC implemented the thematic cycle “Quantitative research methods” (10 ac/h in total) and “Quantitative research methods and data processing in health care” (24 ac/h in total). Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendation of the programme is implemented.

The eighth recommendation was To develop a specific action plan involving foreign lecturers in the doctoral study programme: what courses, what topics, from which foreign institutions of higher education, in which year of studies. Activity of the higher education institution – The Department of Doctoral Studies plans the involvement of foreign lecturers in the implementation of at least 2 study courses from leading European institutions of higher education. Visiting professors who teach methodology courses will be selected primarily. The project No. 8.2.2.0/20/I/004 “Support for involvement of doctoral students in scientific research and study work” provides for employment of foreign academic staff as teaching staff in the implementation of the study programme. Outcomes to be achieved - An action plan for the involvement of foreign lecturers has been developed. At least two visiting lecturers per year are attracted. Result achieved as at ac. year 2021/2022 - Active work is being carried out to attract foreign lecturers to the implementation of DStP, thus facilitating internationalization (for example, RSU attracted Shulamith Kreitler, Professor Emeritus of Tel Aviv University, clinical and health psychologist). Currently, several high-profile scientists are consultants in drafting doctoral theses (e.g. Professor Henriette Farkas MD, PhD, DSc, Professor of Allergy and Clinical Immunology). There were at least seven courses of visiting lecturers for doctoral students from 2017 to 2020, led by professors from the United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands, Russia and Canada. Discussions are ongoing with Associate Professor Noel Christopher Barengo, M.D., Ph.D., M.P.H. (Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine, Florida International University) on a new free elective course in epidemiology and public health. It is planned to attract foreign visiting lecturers as part of doctoral seminars such as Aldons J. Lasis, Ph.D. (Professor, Medicine, Human Genetics,

Microbiology, Immunology & Molecular Genetics, California) and Prof. Dr. med. Peter P. Nawroth (University Hospital Heidelberg, Department of Medicine and Clinical Chemistry).

There is cooperation with reviewers of doctoral theses from the following countries: in 2020, United States, Australia, Austria, Estonia, Lithuania, Finland, Ukraine and Sweden; in 2021, United States, Belgium, Estonia, Italy, Lithuania, Norway, Poland and Ukraine; 2022 (before 30.06.2022.) Italy and Lithuania.

Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendation of the programme is implemented.

The ninth recommendation was For practical implementation of the doctoral study programme in English and attraction of foreign students to such programme, we recommend establishing cooperation with other relevant Latvian institution(s) of higher education, thus economically justified implementation of such programme would be ensured. Activity of the higher education institution – Since 2018, RSU has concluded cooperation agreements with the Latvian Academy of Art, the Latvian Academy of Sport Education on cooperation in education and science. There are good developments for cooperation with Daugavpils University, RTU, Ventspils University of Applied Sciences, Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies. We consider cooperation agreements to be targeted, also providing for cooperation in the implementation of doctoral studies and possibly acquisition of a “joint degree” from both higher education institutions, as provided for in the conceptual report of the Ministry of Education and Science ([link](#)). Outcomes to be achieved - Cooperation agreements with other Latvian and possibly foreign universities. Result achieved as at ac. year 2021/2022 - Active work is ongoing (the RSU International Department, Department of Doctoral Studies, departments are involved) to conclude cooperation agreements with other Latvian higher education institutions. Possibilities of cooperation with foreign higher education institutions are considered. For example, cooperation with RTU is planned in ac. year 2022/2023 within Erasmus+. Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the implementation of the recommendation continues.

The tenth recommendation was - We recommend that the management of scientific projects be identified as one of the qualification selection requirements for the teaching staff involved in the programme, the same selection criterion would also be binding on the doctoral thesis supervisors. Activity of the higher education institution –The RSU Research Department promotes, supports and administers international, state and RSU-funded projects: 65% (n=13) of the lecturers involved in the doctoral study programme lead or are responsible researchers in a scientific project (source in CVs of lecturers in Annex 6.2). Upon admission to doctoral studies, an additional point is assigned for involvement in projects (in 2021, at least 30% of applicants (n=12) were in a project team or submitted a project for the LCS contest), writing of projects is also included in the doctoral study programme. It is not possible to make scientific project management a key criterion for all lecturers and doctoral thesis supervisors of the programme, because the programme also provides for the acquisition of widely used skills, as well as the main criterion for doctoral thesis supervision is the status of an LCS expert, this point is not taken into account. Outcomes to be achieved - Participation of teaching staff and doctoral thesis supervisors in projects within the framework of RSU science platforms. Result achieved as at ac. year 2021/2022 - Participation of teaching staff and doctoral thesis supervisors in projects within the framework of RSU science platforms is used as one of criteria in selecting teaching staff. Active involvement of lecturers in doctoral seminars and courses, which include project management. Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendation of the programme is implemented.

The eleventh recommendation was To permit the student to use the internal financial resources for doctoral grants of RSU, which are not used for various justified reasons in the current year, in the

next year of studies (years 2, 3 and 4 of doctoral studies), examining the justification for changes in experimental research costs submitted by doctoral students for changes in the research estimate. To improve the exchange of information between the university and students on opportunities such as the use of the free editor's service. Activity of the higher education institution – The state budget for higher education is allocated for a calendar year. Doctoral grants from this funding are also granted for the same period. "Number of study places funded from budget funds of the Ministry of Health at Rīga Stradiņš University in 2022". (In accordance with Agreement protocol No. 6 to agreement No. 48-23/2017/0143 of 22 February 2017 on the preparation of a specific number of specialists and provision of the necessary funding and funding of scientific activity from scientific support funding). This means the use of the grant for specific study places during the calendar year for which the Annex is concluded. RSU's internal regulatory enactments promote the provision of a quality study process, taking into account the amount and periodicity of the granted funding. In internal grants, there is a limit on spending in a calendar year. By summing up the needs of doctoral students, the doctoral grant regulations are updated annually for the improvement of processes, for example, the possibilities for using funds are complemented for 2022. A student may write an application regarding the granting of additional funds if the amount necessary for the research process or expenses on an open access publication exceed the amount of the doctoral grant. Outcomes to be achieved - Targeted, substantiated, structured and flexible funding allocation planning for the provision of materials, IT tools, outsourcing and publicity necessary for the implementation of scientific research. Result achieved as at ac. year 2021/2022 - Targeted, substantiated, structured and flexible funding allocation planning is used for the provision of materials, IT tools, outsourcing and publicity necessary for the implementation of scientific research (examples: purchase of reagents, laboratory services, payment for scientific publications). Funding is granted for a calendar year and a financing allocation plan is drawn up for the relevant period (including doctoral grants). The doctoral grant regulations are updated annually ([link](#)), supplementing the possibilities for using the grant funds. The Department of Doctoral Studies supports candidates for a doctoral degree with the support of Latvian and English editors for preparation of the doctoral thesis. Each year, the RSU (Research Department) launches an internal grant competition for research aimed at developing the incorporation of ideas from existing projects (doctoral candidates may also participate in the competition). Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendation of the programme is implemented.

The twelfth recommendation was We recommend conducting an employee satisfaction and engagement survey more frequently, for example, once every six months, so that sufficiently timely and rapid response and correction of deficiencies can be achieved, as well as introducing the valuable solutions offered by lecturers in the study programme. It is worth considering an online site where employees can submit their suggestions at any time. Activity of the higher education institution – RSU has a number of mechanisms to promote employee engagement and measure satisfaction. Until 2022, the Work Performance Management (WPM) system was used, when at the beginning of each year the immediate (structural unit) superior informed the employee of the priority tasks for the year on the portal. The employee set his/her personal goals in the system. Since early 2022, RSU has begun using the RSU Grow platform. Initially, part of this platform was used to monitor the work performance management – delegate the objectives and mark their implementation. The training section of the RSU Grow platform was later launched. In the training section, information on all training organized by RSU structural units for administrative and academic staff is published together. RSU Grow not only enables everyone to apply for training themselves, but makes it possible for the head to delegate colleagues/subordinates to take part in one of the training activities. This platform makes it easier for everyone to review available training by viewing them by time, content, or form. Since the platform provides the possibility of creating a training catalog that shows all training activities together, including those that are not currently

being implemented, everyone has the opportunity to express interest in currently inactive training, thus also making it possible to identify the wishes of RSU employees and to reinclude the most demanded activities in the content. A staff survey on improvements to the RSU's administrative system takes place once a year.

Students and lecturers can express their views throughout their studies by writing to an email of the Department of Doctoral Studies, where each case is individually considered and a solution offered. RSU employees and students may submit proposals, recommendations and complaints by: e-mail ierosinajumi@rsu.lv; orally, in writing, submitting information to the Quality Assurance and Internal Audit Department. Proposals, recommendations and/or complaints are registered and forwarded to responsible structural units for evaluation, which prepare a reply to the applicant and record in the register the information on the actions taken. Functioning register of non-compliances (quality control). Outcomes to be achieved - To respond and eliminate shortcomings in a timely manner and rapidly, as well as to introduce the solutions and improvements offered in the study programme. Result achieved as at ac. year 2021/2022 - Since 2022, a new system - the growth portal RSU Grow - has been introduced instead of the WPM. It helps heads and employees effectively implement the work performance management process needed to boost employee growth, development of competences, and improvement of job quality in conjunction with the RSU's strategic objectives (for more information see link). Once a year, there is a survey of employees on improvements in the RSU administrative system, for example, in 2022, the survey of employee satisfaction with the work was carried out by KANTAR, a cooperation partner of RSU. After the survey results are collected, its results are presented to employees. Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendation of the programme is partly implemented, because the employee surveys are not organized once every six months, as it was recommended by the experts.

The thirteenth recommendation was To discuss study quality assessment questionnaires with students and, on the basis of proposals provided by students, to improve questionnaires, as well as review the feedback mechanism for students and implementation of useful recommendations. Activity of the higher education institution - Students may submit proposals, recommendations and complaints regarding the implementation of the study process and the quality of studies: by e-mail: atsauksmes@rsu.lv, or submit information orally and in writing to the Student Services or the Student Union. Feedback on students' responses to RSU questionnaires has been provided since January 2018. Twice a year (within two weeks after closing the survey), academic staff and heads of academic structural units should publish the feedback to the students regarding surveys completed and decisions made for improvement of study courses. A new programme evaluation questionnaire was developed for the improvement of surveys in 2020, which was coordinated with the Student Union in August 2020, evaluated at faculties and approved by the Dean's Council in October 2020. Communication with students is also ensured by the Department of Doctoral Studies, listening to students and providing the necessary support. Outcomes to be achieved - To respond and eliminate shortcomings in a timely manner and rapidly, as well as to introduce offered by students in the study programme. Result achieved as at ac. year 2021/2022 - Feedback reception mechanisms - oral and written surveys - have been established enabling doctoral students to participate in quality monitoring of the study programme. The study course assessment questionnaire has been updated (approved by RSU Rector's decree No. 1-PB-2/296/2022 of 27.05.2022) and is implemented from the 2nd semester of ac.y. 2021/2022. The questionnaire contains four questions about the content of the study course and the work of the lecturer. Using productive verbal methods, it is analyzed together with paper supervisors what the doctoral student and the paper supervisor want to see the most in the development of research competences and what they want to see in the implementation of a scientific project. At least once a year, a joint meeting with doctoral students is held on the form and structure of the studies. Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendation of the programme is implemented.

Fourteenth recommendation was We recommend that the incentive remuneration system created be further improved for the promotion of scientific activities of teaching staff. Activity of the higher education institution – An incentive remuneration system is regularly reviewed and tailored to meet the strategic indicators of RSU as a research university. Outcomes to be achieved - Academic staff participates actively in the scientific activities of RSU. Result achieved as at ac. year 2021/2022 – Each year, the remuneration system of RSU academic staff is reviewed and adapted, creating a system of incentive remuneration and urging academic staff to participate actively in the scientific activities of RSU. Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendation of the programme is implemented.

The fifteenth recommendation was Consideration should also be given to cooperation with private medical institutions, given that, in some cases, doctoral students come from a private medical institution, which can, inter alia, provide the doctoral student with material and technical support at the doctoral student's workplace, thereby partly potentially saving research expenditure. Activity of the higher education institution – Cooperation is implemented: Doctoral students who are related to/are working in private medical institutions study at RSU. So far, the cooperation has been very good, except for one case where a private reproductive medicine clinic stopped cooperation for a doctoral student at the end of year 1. Doctoral students are most often related to the following specialities: stomatology, microsurgery, plastic surgery, laboratory, gastroenterology. It is planned to expand cooperation with private medical institutions and industry. Outcomes to be achieved - Popularising intersectoral mobility principles, identifying strategic partners, extending cooperation with private medical institutions and industry. Result achieved as at ac. year 2021/2022 – The extension of intersectoral mobility is constantly implemented. Currently, RSU cooperates with the following private medical institutions and companies: Digestive Diseases Centre "Gastro", Veselības centrs 4, E. Gulbja laboratorija, SIA Ivetas Ābolas un Daces Rakickas zobārstniecības prakse, "Amberdent" dentistry and laboratory, "Dermatology Clinic", Latvian Microsurgery Centre and AS "Veselības centru apvienība". Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendation of the programme is implemented.

Sixteenth recommendation was To the extent possible, we recommend organising a programme course using remote course teaching tools, such as ZOOM or other. Activity of the higher education institution – The form of studies of the doctoral study programme is full-time regular studies, while in accordance with Sub- Paragraph 4.4 of CM Regulations No. 111 of 08.02.2022 "Procedure of Organisation and Implementation of Remote Studies", at the level of higher education in full and part-time studies, remote studies may be implemented up to 50 per cent of the number of contact hours determined for the implementation of the relevant study programme. The new doctoral study programme predicts a >70% study share for focused research, which is on-site studies. However, the education part is now largely remote. This will increase the opportunities for foreign scientists to participate in the study process. Outcomes to be achieved - In accordance with the epidemiological situation in the country, to evaluate possibilities of organising the study process remotely (up to 50% of the study process). Result achieved as at ac. year 2021/2022 – In accordance with the epidemiological situation in the country, the possibility of remote course teaching using tools offered by the RSU IT Department, such as the ZOOM platform, is being evaluated. In the academic year 2021/2022, the education part for doctoral students was basically conducted remotely on the ZOOM platform. In the academic year 2022-2023, it is planned to admit foreign students and ensure the mastering of the educational part remotely.

Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendation of the programme is implemented.

Seventeenth recommendation was - We recommend increasing the role of a doctoral student in

conducting of scientific work and drawing up of a scientific article thus requiring the doctoral student to provide sufficient scientific input for the doctoral student to be the first author of at least two doctoral articles. Activity of the higher education institution – The criteria for conducting scientific work and drawing up of a scientific article are laid down in the RSU Regulations on the Functioning of Doctoral Councils and the Procedure of Promotion (Doctoral Council Regulations). Two publications are necessary to submit a doctoral thesis, if the student wants to defend on the basis of a set of publications, four publications on the subject of the doctoral thesis are necessary. Publications must be anonymously reviewed in a scientific journal or conference proceedings indexed in the SCOPUS, Web of Science or included in ERIH+ database. Being specified as the first author of the article is recommended. If the publications indicated in the doctoral thesis have co-authors, the applicant appends the written consent of the co-authors of all publications included in the doctoral thesis to the use of the publication for the promotion or a certification of the correspondent (principal) author of such publications regarding the personal contribution of the applicant to the preparation of these publications. Only one of the authors of a publication or monograph, who has submitted an application earlier, is recognised as valid in the process of publication or monograph promotion. RSU regularly reviews the standards for doctoral theses comparing them to those of European universities, where the main criterion is not authorship but a high degree of doctoral candidate's contribution/scientific quality (examples: link and link). Outcomes to be achieved - The criteria for obtaining a Doctoral degree, which are in accordance with the laws and regulations of Latvia, are regularly reviewed and updated. Result achieved as at ac. year 2021/2022 In the sub-programmes "Medicine" and "Pharmacy", the proportion of defended papers with sets of scientific articles increases (in accordance with the RSU Regulations on the Functioning of Doctoral Councils and the Procedure of Promotion). Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendation of the programme is implemented.

Recommendations of the evaluation commission of the doctoral study programme "Medicine" as at 08.05.2018 and report on the implementation of recommendations as at academic year 2021/2022 The eighteenth recommendation was Information on doctoral theses and their assessment, such as their share, quality and the achievements of the students themselves, should be made clear and visible. To ensure the quality of the scientific processes of students. Activity of the higher education institution – Academic Regulations III. Doctoral Studies Academic Regulations have been revised and supplemented, an up-to-date version of the Regulations was created and approved by the Senate at its meeting of 17 April 2018, Minutes No. 2-1/17.04.18. Outcomes to be achieved - To review and update the existing version of Academic Regulations III. Doctoral Studies Academic Regulations on a regular basis, to coordinate in the RSU Dean's Council and approve in the Senate. Result achieved as at ac. year 2021/2022 - The Department of Doctoral Studies reviews and updates Academic Regulations III. Doctoral Studies Academic Regulations on a regular basis. The last version of Academic Regulations III. Doctoral Studies Academic Regulations was approved by the Senate on 20 September 2022 (Minutes No. 2-S-1/7/2022). Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendation of the programme is implemented.

The nineteenth recommendation was To ensure a consistent and fair approach to granting of credit points. Learning outcomes should be written in a generally accepted educational format. Activity of the higher education institution –1. To develop an Excel mapping form by integrating the learning outcomes of study programme and study courses. 2. To organize the PIC cycle "Formulation and evaluation of learning outcomes for improvement of study programmes" and attract lecturers for its mastering. 3. To perform the analysis of mutual correspondence (mapping) of learning outcomes of the study programmes, study courses included therein. 4. To review the number of CPs in study courses according to the mapping results. In the register of course descriptions, to clarify the conformity of credit points, contact hours, semester and final examinations with the study

programme plan in course descriptions. Outcomes to be achieved – 1-4 Learning outcomes in the study programme and the study course descriptions are clearly and sequentially formulated in cooperation between the head of the StP and the lecturers. The compliance of contact hours with the number of study course credit points has been clarified. The course reading lists include contemporary literature and the availability of mandatory readings in the RSU Library has been improved. 5. Credit points and contact hours, semester and final examination in course descriptions are specified correctly and in compliance with D1. Result achieved as at ac. year 2021/2022 - On 6 October 2017 (Minutes No. 12-8/12), the Council of Doctoral Studies decided that for all doctoral study programmes should have 1 CP = 8 contact hours. This ratio of CP to contact hours is still maintained and when creating new study courses, lecturers are offered to stick to this ratio.

In the academic year 2018/2019, the number of contact hours was clarified in the study plan according to the credit points. In each subsequent academic year, including in academic year 2021/2022, when drawing up the study plan (D1), the ratio of the credit points specified in the study courses and the number of contact hours is observed, the final examination of the semester in the course descriptions is specified correctly. The individual contribution of the doctoral candidate (e.g. scientific research work, pedagogical work, dissemination of knowledge) is evaluated at the meeting of the Research Activity Evaluation Committee of the doctoral researcher at the end of each year of studies, taking into account the work contribution of the doctoral researcher, appropriate credit points are granted. The number of credit points and evaluation criteria are indicated in the study course descriptions. Mapping of the doctoral study programme has been performed, which allowed the conformity of each study course with the learning outcomes of the study programme to be evaluated, the necessary clarifications have been made. In drawing up the DStP "Health Care", previous recommendations have been taken into account, a mapping of the programme has been performed in conformity with the requirements, the conformity of each study course with learning outcomes of the study programme has been evaluated and the necessary clarifications have been made. Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendation of the programme is implemented.

Recommendations of the evaluation commission of the doctoral study programme "Pharmacy" as at 08.05.2018 and report on the implementation of recommendations as at academic year 2021/2022

The twentieth recommendation was It is necessary to continue to improve the material and technical provision. Activity of the higher education institution - The RSU Strategy provides for the construction of a new building and the Laboratory of Finished Dosage Forms (LFDF) for the needs of the Faculty of Pharmacy. Outcomes to be achieved - New premises and equipment have been obtained to provide the possibility of developing pharmaceutical science. Result achieved as at ac. year 2021/2022 - The new building of the Laboratory of Finished Dosage Forms is scheduled to be commissioned in 2022. New research directions in pharmacy have been developed. Scientific cooperation with LBTU has been established, which provides for the use of medicinal herbs in the creation of veterinary dosage forms. Cooperation with Switzerland and Germany in the drug delivery system within the BBCE project. Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendation of the programme is implemented.

The twenty-first recommendation was Opportunities should be sought to attract external financial resources to fund the programme and grant students scholarships. Activity of the higher education institution - To increase funding for drafting of a doctoral thesis, to amend the Doctoral Study Grant Regulations of Rīga Stradiņš University (version 2). To implement cooperation with other scientific institutions to ensure the availability of the necessary resources for conducting research. Outcomes to be achieved - Cooperation has been established with LIOS (Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis) and the Italian University of Pisa or other universities. Result achieved as at ac. year 2021/2022 - Hardware for the scientific needs of doctoral students has been purchased. Cooperation has been

established with the Italian University of Pisa and cooperation with the Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis (LIOS) in the training of doctoral students. At LIOS, doctoral students have the ability to learn pharmacological research techniques and technologies. Doctoral students carry out specific analyses in LIOS laboratories. Cooperation with Switzerland and Germany in the drug delivery system is implemented within the project of the Baltic Biomaterials Centre of Excellence (BBCE). Doctoral students are involved in projects of the Latvian Council of Science (LCS) and BBCE projects. Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendation of the programme is implemented.

The twenty-second recommendation was To ensure a consistent and fair approach to granting of credit points. Activity of the higher education institution – See paragraph 19. Outcomes to be achieved – See paragraph 19. Result achieved as at ac. year 2021/2022 - See paragraph 19. Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendation of the programme is implemented.

The twenty-third recommendation was Publishing opportunities for students should be extended. Activity of the higher education institution - To amend the Doctoral Study Grant Regulations of Rīga Stradiņš University (version 2). Outcomes to be achieved - The flexibility of publishing opportunities of students and the availability (incl. timeliness) of sources of funding and support have been extended. Result achieved as at ac. year 2021/2022 - Support funding is available from the following source: doctoral grant, project funds and/or RSU funds: Support within SO 8.2.2.0/20/I/004 “Support for involvement of doctoral students in scientific research and study work” was provided to four doctoral students. An RSU doctoral study grant provides for spending of funds to cover the preparation and publication of scientific publications in internationally cited editions. From 2016 to 2021: 2017 EUR 1398.92 (1 publication); 2018 EUR 3969.74 (4 publications); 2019 EUR 13158.64 (10 publications); 2020 EUR 8351.42 (6 publications); 2021 EUR 9629.87 (7 publications). Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendation of the programme is implemented.

The twenty-fourth recommendation was This programme has excellent cooperation with employers who, given the lack of pharmaceutical specialists, are very interested in working with individuals implementing the RSU programme “Pharmacy”. This practice should be continued to further strengthen these links. Activity of the higher education institution - There is currently close cooperation with the Latvian Biomedical Research and Study Centre (LBRSC), the Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis (LIOS) (E. Vāvers reads the course “Use of Laboratory Animals in Scientific Research”), BIOR. To continue cooperation with other scientific institutions and seek new cooperation partners. Outcomes to be achieved - Cooperation in the development of new projects. Result achieved as at ac. year 2021/2022 - There is cooperation with LIOS, LBRSC, Latvian and European universities. It is planned to establish cooperation with the Environmental Solution Institute. Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendation of the programme is implemented.

The twenty-fifth recommendation was To increase the number of scientific publications of doctoral students in psychology. Activity of the higher education institution - To continue to involve doctoral students in local and international research projects/create opportunities to participate in grants, including in RSU’s internal grants. To continue preparing publications using data from NRP and other projects, such as in the National Research Programme (No. VPP- COVID-2020/1-0013) Living with COVID-19: Evaluation of Combatting the Crisis Caused by the Coronavirus in Latvia and Proposals for Resilience of Society in the Future (1.07.2020- 31.12.2020) and National Research Programme (No. VPP-COVID- 2020/1-0011 COVID-19) The Impact of the COVID-19 Epidemic on the Health Care

System and Public Health in Latvia; Strengthening the Preparedness of the Health Sector for Future Epidemics. Outcomes to be achieved - Involvement of doctoral students in at least two research projects and grants to facilitate data acquisition. New international publications every year, according to the number of students, i.e. at least one publication per doctoral student. Result achieved as at ac. year 2021/2022 - In academic year 2022-2023, at least four international publications within the programme "Psychology" indexed in Scopus and Web of Science, where doctoral students are first authors. Maintaining a similar trend in the period according to the chosen thesis defense format. Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendation of the programme is implemented.

The twenty-sixth recommendation was To increase international mobility of doctoral students. International mobility of students would have to be increased by at least 100% by providing logistical and other support, for example, by offering opportunities for shorter-term mobility. Activity of the higher education institution - To set up a working group of psychology lecturers and doctoral students to facilitate the development of international mobility and research at RSU, including through the continuation of cooperation in Erasmus+ projects for the exchange of doctoral students; the preparation of the Erasmus+ project call KA220- YOU - Cooperation partnerships in youth in cooperation with universities in Italy, Spain, Croatia, Germany and the promotion of the involvement of doctoral students in COST Action projects. Outcomes to be achieved - Mobility opportunities for doctoral students have been extended: at least one doctoral student per year has an opportunity for international mobility. The amount of international mobility increased 100% over three years. Result achieved as at ac. year 2021/2022 - Doctoral students will be informed repeatedly on different offered mobility opportunities ([link](#))

A working group has been set up in March 2022 to develop a long- term mobility development strategy and a strategy for involvement in research projects based on participation in international projects. Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendation of the programme is partly implemented, because there is no data provided about the increased rates of international mobility of the students.

The twenty-seventh recommendation was To provide leading RSU psychology researchers with an opportunity to reduce academic load to increase their research productivity. The management team of the higher education institution should discuss more specific working hours in research with the teaching staff. Activity of the higher education institution - To inform the teaching staff about the conditions for the performance of the work (workload). (The workload of lecturers is created in accordance with the conditions in force at RSU and the established work registration system.). Outcomes to be achieved - The teaching staff is aware of the conditions of performance of the work at RSU and take advantage of the opportunities offered by participation in research grants: each lecturer participates in at least one research project. Result achieved as at ac. year 2021/2022 - The teaching staff is aware of the conditions of performance of the work at RSU and participates in research grants (each lecturer participates in at least one research project). Starting from academic year 2022/2023, 120 teaching work units (TWU) instead of the previous 40 TWU (per year) will be calculated for doctoral thesis supervision in doctoral study programme "Health Care", sub-programme "Psychology". The volume of sub-programmes "Medicine" and "Pharmacy" for doctoral thesis supervision remains unchanged - 120 TWU per year. The Regulations on Types and Registration of Work of Academic Staff is updated every year (Regulations on Types and Registration of Work of Academic Staff in Academic Year 2022/2023, approved at the RSU Senate meeting of 15.06.2022, minutes No. 2-S-1/6/2022). Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendation of the programme is implemented.

The twenty-eighth recommendation was To explore the possibility of engaging in research networks at international level. Activity of the higher education institution - To involve doctoral students in international networking projects, including COST Action projects and Erasmus+ projects. Outcomes to be achieved - In proportion to the number of doctoral students, participation in international networking projects has been developed: at least 50% of doctoral students participate in the project during their studies. Result achieved as at ac. year 2021/2022 - An Erasmus+ project for the KA220 call has been prepared. Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendation of the programme is implemented.

The twenty-ninth recommendation was To transform the RSU doctoral study programme in psychology into a visible and internationally recognized school of psychology. Activity of the higher education institution - When evaluating the RSU Development Strategy and doctoral study programme Development Plan, it is not planned to develop the school of psychology separately from the doctoral study programme.

A consolidated doctoral study programme "Health Care" has been created within the framework of the SO project ("Reduction of fragmentation of study programmes and promotion of internationalization of studies at Rīga Stradiņš University"). Outcomes to be achieved - The sub-programme "Psychology" is integrated in doctoral study programme "Health Care". Result achieved as at ac. year 2021/2022 - The sub-programme "Psychology" is integrated in doctoral study programme "Health Care". Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendation of the programme is partly implemented.

The thirtieth recommendation was To apply for international research grants intended for scientific projects. Activity of the higher education institution - To involve doctoral students in international projects. Outcomes to be achieved - In proportion to the number of doctoral students, participation in international research projects has been developed: at least 30% of doctoral students participate in an international project during their studies. Result achieved as at ac. year 2021/2022 - A working group of lecturers and doctoral students has been set up in March 2022 to develop a long-term mobility development strategy and a strategy for involvement in research projects based on participation in international projects. Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the recommendation of the programme is implemented.

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

Many significant changes have been made within the study field and study programmes taken into account recommendations received from the previous accreditation cycle. The changes cover a wide range of areas starting with resource, material and technical base to internationalization of the teaching staff and QA matters. However, there are some aspects that still require more in-depth attention and further improvements to be fully-implemented, thus, experts have evaluated some of the recommendations as partially-implemented. Based on the extensive amount of received recommendations, experts value the input and the ability to implement the majority of the recommendations successfully.

Conclusions for the implementation of recommendations for the Academic doctoral study programme Health Care:

Implementation of 45 recommendations was revised. 5 of the recommendations can be considered as partly implemented, because (1) the evidence about the decreased rates of student drop-out is not provided, (2) there is no evidence provided about the number of the students (newly) involved in the preparation of the applications for scientific research projects. (3) the employee surveys are organized, but in the periodicity one a year, however the recommendation by the experts was to

organize it once every six months, (4) no data provided about the increased rates of international mobility of the students (the recommendation was to increase international mobility of doctoral students. International mobility of students would have to be increased by at least 100% by providing logistical and other support, for example, by offering opportunities for shorter-term mobility), (5) no data provided about the transforming the RSU doctoral study programme in psychology into a visible and internationally recognized school of psychology, as it was recommended by the experts. 2 recommendations can be considered as still being currently implemented, the dynamic of the process should be further observed, regarding the recommendation (1) „For practical implementation of the doctoral study programme in English and attraction of foreign students to such programme, we recommend to establish cooperation with other relevant Latvian institution(s) of higher education, thus economically justified implementation of such programme would be ensured“. The RSU provides information that the active work is ongoing (the RSU International Department, Department of Doctoral Studies, departments are involved) to conclude cooperation agreements with other Latvian higher education institutions. Possibilities of cooperation with foreign higher education institutions are considered. (2) „In order to strengthen the future research staff in the field of health science at RSU, it is advisable to promote and attract those who have education in biology to the doctoral study programme “Health Care” - RSU continues to implement all planned promotion activities of the doctoral study programme to attract applicants.

Strengths:

1. Establishment of a strong and modern material and technical base in the Faculty of Pharmacy;
2. Substantial changes made in granting credit points and establishing learning outcomes;

Weaknesses:

1. In the Faculty of Pharmacy, there is a low response rate in student surveys that fluctuates from 25% to 60% and is unstable despite the fact that student surveys are mandatory.
2. In the study programme “Medicine”, for the recommendation received to ensure an assessment the pedagogical quality of the supervision of students’ practical training, the outcome of the recommendation implementation, is not clearly defined.
3. In the study programme “Industrial Pharmacy”, there is a limitation on providing individual study courses and also programmes in English due to the large count of practical classes and placement in drug manufacturing companies.
4. In clarity in understanding of “Nutrition Science” programme structure of decision-making, which brought a little confusion of how the internal decisions are organized.
5. International links are not established with all geographical regions of Europe.
6. Within the study field “Health Care”, there are variations in the level of cooperation with international partners - with room for improvement for those within rehabilitation.
7. The statistical data from the students' surveys are not used enough for positive improvement and human resources management.
8. Students are aware that there are no consequences if they don't fill in the surveys, even the filling is obligatory. This raises risks in the future implementation of QA using student surveys.
9. 84.5% of the recommendations were fully implemented by RSU, 5 recommendations (11.1%) can be considered as partly implemented, 2 (4.4%) can be considered as still being currently implemented. The weaknesses are based on the partial implementation of the recommendations: (1) the evidence about the decreased rates of student drop-out is not provided, (2) there is no evidence provided about the number of the students (newly) involved in the preparation of the applications for scientific research projects. (3) the employee surveys are organized, but in the periodicity one a year, however the recommendation by the experts was to organize it once every six months, (4) no data provided about the increased rates of international mobility of the students (the

recommendation was to increase international mobility of doctoral students. International mobility of students would have to be increased by at least 100% by providing logistical and other support, for example, by offering opportunities for shorter-term mobility), (5) no data provided about the transforming the RSU doctoral study programme in psychology into a visible and internationally recognized school of psychology, as it was recommended by the experts.

Assessment of the requirement [4]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The majority of the previous recommendations were implemented, but some of the issues still need attention and further improvement but as clarified and believed by the expert group by applying the principle of proportionality, the fully-implemented recommendations substantially outweigh the ones in the process and those that are partially-implemented.

1.7. Recommendations for the Study Field

Short-term recommendations

- | |
|---|
| 1) Graduates' feedback surveys should be organized on a regular basis. |
| 2) Standard questionnaires should be developed for the feedback surveys. |
| 3) Students should be informed of the existing complaint and proposal mechanism, which is established at the RSU. |
| 4) The similar response rates should be reached among the faculties in the students' feedback surveys. |
| 5) Additional attention should be given to the remuneration (increase in hourly rate) of the teaching staff (especially the visiting staff) in order to facilitate motivation and interest. |
| 6) It is recommended to eliminate the shortcomings, related with the partial implementation of the recommendations from the previous evaluation period: provide the data about the rates of student drop-out, to provide the data about the number of the students (newly) involved in the preparation of the applications for scientific research projects, to organize the employee surveys once every six months, to provide the data about the rates of international mobility of the students, to provide the data about the transforming the RSU doctoral study programme in psychology into a visible and internationally recognized school of psychology, as it was recommended by the experts. |
| 7) Continue to revise and update study course descriptions and reading lists, addressing changes related to the new ECTS credit system, with the goal of ensuring accuracy and alignment with the evolving educational landscape, and implement these revisions within the next assessment period to facilitate a smooth transition to the new credit system. |

Long-term recommendations

- | |
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| 1) It is recommended to conduct research to identify potential partner institutions for exchange programmes in regions where collaborations are lacking. |
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2) For Rehabilitation, Nutrition, Audiology and Speech Therapy programmes, assessment of efforts to establish multiple cooperative agreements with partner universities is recommended.

3) Develop and implement a strategic plan to address the inequality in students' involvement in scientific research between faculties. Recommend initiatives to promote equal opportunities for students across all faculties to engage in meaningful scientific research, implementing necessary adjustments within the next assessment period to ensure a fair and inclusive environment that fosters research opportunities for all students.

4) Develop and implement a strategic plan to enhance the utilization of statistical data from student surveys for positive improvement and human resources management within the next assessment period.

5) Create initiatives to ensure that students are aware of the importance of survey participation and the consequences of non-compliance. Implement these changes within a specified timeframe to leverage survey data for quality improvement and strengthen the effectiveness of future quality assurance processes.

II - "Physician's Assistant " ASSESSMENT

II - "Physician's Assistant " ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1. The First level professional higher education study programme "Physician's Assistant" (41721) aims to implement mastering of students' knowledge, skills and competences ensuring the preparation of medical practitioners for further comprehensive work in the field of health care, creating a free, responsible and creative personality, developing critical thinking (SAR, p.785). The inclusion of the study programme "Physician's Assistant" programme in the study field "Health Care" is justified and follows the aim of the given study programme, the learning outcomes to be achieved, the content of the programme from the qualification to be awarded.

2.1.2. The "Physician's Assistant" (41721) is a full time, 3 year study programme, implemented in Latvian language containing 120 CP/180 ECTS. The study programme "Physician's Assistant" place of implementation is Liepāja branch of RSU, that is the only place to offer the particular study programme. The qualification to be obtained is Physician's Assistant (paramedic), which is first level professional education. The admission requirement is secondary education (SAR, p. 785-787). The code of the study programme - 41721- indicates the thematic field of education "Health and Social Welfare", the thematic field of "Health Care", group of "Medical Treatment" according to the classification of Latvian education. The aim (to implement mastering of students' knowledge, skills and competences ensuring the preparation of medical practitioners for further comprehensive work in the field of health care, creating a free, responsible and creative personality, developing critical thinking (SAR, p.785, 792), objectives (to ensure the preparation of medical practitioners, including professional theoretical and practical knowledge and skills; to develop students' ability to obtain information actively, evaluate and use of critical theoretical and practical knowledge in prehospital and hospital period; to facilitate professional development and intellectual potential through development of research in the study programme), and the nine updated learning outcomes of the study programme (SAR, p. 785-786, 788-790) correspond to "Physician Assistant" first (1st) level professional higher education, to the fourth (4th) level of professional qualification and 5th level of EQF/LQF (Annex 24.1_AnxDiploma and supplement_1LPSP Phys_Assist, Annex 17.1. Compliance of

the First Level Professional Study Programme “Physician’s Assistant” with the State Education Standard). The study programme “Physician’s Assistant” is also referred to “Paramedic” in SAR (p. 792, 793, 797) corresponding to the international title of the profession used in some European countries.

2.1.3. Since the previous accreditation of the study field, the definitions of the parameters - the aim and tasks (objectives) and learning outcomes (results) of the study programme have been updated. Regarding the learning outcomes, the previous 12 have been integrated into nine (9) learning outcomes. (SAR, p. 788-791). These corrections are analysed, justified and would be supported.

2.1.4. The number of enrolled students since the beginning of academic year 2016/2017 towards academic year 2022/2023 has been quite stable, somewhat increasing the last number of enrolled first year students to 43. The challenge has been the numbers of drop-out students in the first year of studies (40%-60%), although a positive trend has been lately observed with 21% drop-out first year students in academic year 2021/2022 (SAR, p. 795-796). The reasons for the high number of drop-out students have been recognized, including poor academic performance and difficulties combining studies with work and family life (SAR, 796), but how to solve the issue has not been clearly presented, so a more clear and visible plan could be developed and presented in the Development Plan (Annex 4.1). This is necessary since the graduates are very well employed in the health care institutions and are needed in Latvian society (SAR, 794-795). For instance, personal study paths could be tailored for students to support the continuation of their studies and completing the study programme of a “Physician’s Assistant”.

2.1.5. Not applicable.

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

The study programme “Physician’s Assistant” (41721) complies with the study field of “Health Care” and the descriptive indicators comply with the external regulatory framework. The title, the qualification to be obtained, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and the admission requirements are interrelated and comply with the requirements of the regulatory enactments of the Republic of Latvia. The corrections made during the reporting period related to the aim, objectives and learning outcomes are justified and would be supported.

The study programme is economically and socially justified. The number of drop-out students has decreased, but still needs action.

Strengths:

1. The graduates are very well employed in the health care institutions, and they are needed in Latvian society.

Weaknesses:

2. The number of drop-out students has decreased, but still needs action. For instance, personal study paths could be tailored for students to support the continuation of their studies and completing the study programme of a “Physician's Assistant”.

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1. The content of the study programme “Physician’s Assistant” (41721) is topical; it has been gradually developed since 2016, and the development is a systematic and on-going process in

collaboration with academic staff, students, graduates, industry professionals, and employers. The content of the study courses is interconnected and complementary, corresponding to the objectives of the programme and learning objectives as indicated in the Mapping of the Study Courses for the Achievement of the Learning Outcomes of the First Level Professional Higher Education study programme “Physician’s Assistant” (SAR, Annex 18.1). At the end of the study programme, a state examination is implemented to assess the theoretical knowledge, practical skills, and competence of students and their ability to use the acquired knowledge and skills in the professional activity of a physician’s assistant, in accordance with the objective of the study programme. The state examination is adopted by the State Examination Board and approved by the Council of the Faculty of Public Health and Social Welfare. The structure of the state examination includes two parts: a complex theoretical exam, a test that students take electronically in the RSU e-studies (Moodle) environment using the LockDown Browser and a practical exam related to a situational task / clinical case. Furthermore, a submission and defence of qualification papers (QPs) – the QP defense — is organised in person. The study programme contains placements in each study year (in total 20 CP/ 30 ECTS) to develop students’ practical knowledge and skills. (SAR, Annex 17.1) Students have supervisors from practice to support their placement learning. Regarding the competencies of entrepreneurship, the expert group found that a course titled “Business Basics and Project development” (2CP/ 3 ECTS) contains topics related to entrepreneurship along with possibilities of placement in the private sector. The expert group found based on the map of the study courses and study course descriptions (SAR, Annexes 18.1, 20.1) and discussions with the academic staff, employers, students and graduates that the study programme complies with the State Education Standard and the Industry-Specific Regulatory Framework (SAR, Annexes 17.1., 17.2). In the discussion with the employers, issues related to continuing education for Physician’s assistants was raised.. Currently, the completion of the study programme “Physician’s Assistant” gives the opportunity to continue studies, obtaining the qualification of emergency medicine physician’s assistant or outpatient physician’s assistant, as well as to continue studies in one of the study programmes of the study field “Health Care”, recognising the previously acquired study courses (SAR, Annex 17.1). In the future, there might be a need for a master’s level paramedic education, similarly as in some European countries.

2.2.2. Not applicable.

2.2.3. The study methods in the study programme “Physician’s Assistant” are based on the principles of student-centred learning, including lectures, classes, seminars with case analyses, work in small groups, students’ independent work, studies on the e-platform, simulation-based classes. (SAR, p. 799-801). The RSU Library offers modern databases and support to be capable of using them, which are available to students and academic staff. Students confirmed that the independent studies, both at theoretical studies and at placements, are supervised by academic staff, placement supervisors, and learning tools such as placement logbooks. Students’ learning outcomes are evaluated by means of formative (during the daily teaching and learning activities) and summative (examination after each course) assessment with different forms of examinations, including written, oral, OSCE (the Objective Structured Clinical Examination), and at the end of the study programme, the state examination test. (SAR, p. 800-801).

2.2.4. The internship in the study programme “Physician’s Assistant” gives students an opportunity to test and use the theoretical knowledge and skills learned in a clinical learning environment. Study placements are coordinated with the relevant study courses in the curriculum in each study year. Placement and the search for placement places are organised in coordination by the RSU Liepāja branch. Lecturer/ placement supervisors are invited to participate in a meeting of placement supervisors. Documents related to placement supervision are given to supervisors electronically.

Newly appointed supervisors are individually oriented to the supervisory task by the programme director. (SAR, p. 801-803, Annex 9) The graduates and employers mentioned that it would be beneficial for students to have more simulation practices before placements so that they would be more fit for practice and self-confident at the beginning of the placement. The internship complies with the requirements of regulatory enactments (Annexes 17.1 Compliance of the First Level Professional Study Programme "Physician's Assistant" With the National Education Standard, 18.2 Compliance of the study programme with the professional standard (mapping), 24.1 Sample Diploma and Diploma Supplement).

2.2.5. Not applicable.

2.2.6. Students prepare their Qualification paper (8CP/ 12 ECTS) as a part of the state examination on the topics, which they choose independently or in consultation with the academic staff, in line with the thematic areas: communication in a professional environment, knowledge of various groups in society about health and disease-related issues, experience and opinions of various groups in society about health-related issues, emergency care at the pre-hospital stage, and the role of a physician's assistant as a medical practitioner in patient care at the hospital stage. (SAR, p. 803-805, Annex 22) Overall, the topics of the final thesis can be considered relevant.

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

The content of the studies is topical and relevant for the study programme "Physician's Assistant" (41721) . Teaching and learning methods are student-centred, and well equipped teaching and learning environments are in use. The internships are well coordinated by RSU Liepaja Branch, and the placement supervisors are regularly invited to the meetings to discuss the issues related to placement supervision. The topics of Qualification papers are relevant for the study programme.

Strengths:

1. Relevant content of the studies.
2. Student-centred teaching and learning methods are used in the study process.

Weaknesses:

1. There is a need for more simulation practices before placements for students to have better practical skills.

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1. For the implementation of the programme at the Liepāja branch, the RSU provides appropriate, well-technically equipped classrooms and simulation centres with a number of simulation mannequins/ dolls designed to practise professional skills and competences needed in the placement study period and in working life. The equipment makes it possible to have studies on-site and remotely via Zoom and the Teams platform. The consultation services of the Medical

Education Technology Centre (MITC) and the Centre for Educational Growth (PIC) are available to the academic staff of the Lepāja branch in planning their teaching activities. The library provides academic staff and students with all necessary study literature, e-books, and access to scientific databases to be able to utilise the latest achievements in the study field in teaching and learning processes.

2.3.2. Not applicable.

2.3.3. It is planned to fund the programme from state budget funds and the funds of individuals and legal entities setting the tuition fee in accordance with the state budget funding without social security of EUR 5705 per year of studies. The tuition fee can be subject to discounts in accordance with internal norms and regulations. The number of students planned to be achieved in the study programme in three years of studies is 72 students, enrolling 28 students in the first year, planning a drop-out of 6 students in the second year of studies, with the number of students remaining the same in the third year. This number of students is necessary to ensure a high-quality study process and to make the study programme cover its implementation (academic staff, department resources, scholarship costs, fixed costs, overheads), as well as development costs. An average of 73 students currently study in the programme during the academic year, which provides a positive financial result. In order to ensure positive profitability further, the minimum number of students in the group prescribed in RSU internal laws and regulations - 15 - must be admitted to the study programme. Take into account that the number of drop-out students has varied between the academic years 2016/2017 and 2021/2022 in the first (11-22 students), second (3-6 students) and third study year (1-5 students). The drop-out numbers of the students (1st, 2nd, 3rd study year) being in the academic year 2021/2022 21 students. Monitoring the numbers of drop-out students, examining the reasons, and preparing a plan on how to decrease the number of drop-out students is also important from a financial point of view (SAR, p. 806-807, Annex 16). The budget of the Liepāja branch is sufficient for full implementation of the programme.

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

Sufficient material and financial resources for the implementation of the Physician's assistant programme. The current number of students is around 73 in the academic year, which provides positive financial results.

Strengths:

1. Very good premises and equipment, library resources, e-learning and simulation environments for implementation of the study programme.

Weaknesses:

None.

Assessment of the requirement [6]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Very good premises and equipment, library resources and e-learning and simulation environments for implementation of the study programme.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1 Altogether, 34 lecturers are involved in the implementation of the programme, 16 lecturers are employed in the main job (the position of an elected lecturer, acting lecturer, or adjunct lecturer (staff employees)), and 18 are guest lecturers (specialists from other organisations and experts in the field). Out of 16 lecturers employed in the main job, 3 are elected lecturers, 9 are acting lecturers, while 4 are adjunct lecturers, 3 lecturers hold a doctoral degree, and the rest hold a master's or bachelor degree. (SAR, 807-809, Annex 24.7) The qualifications of the teaching staff comply with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme and it enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses.

2.4.2. Many changes in the teaching staff have happened due to feedback summaries related to the feedback questionnaires and also changes in teachers' personal life situations. In addition, the programme director has changed several times for the above mentioned reasons. The Development Plan for the programme indicates that activities have been taken to attract new qualified teaching staff to ensure the quality of the study process. For example, in the academic year 2021/2022 5 new teaching staff members and, in the academic year 2022/2023 3 other new teachers for the following study courses - "Clinical Pharmacy", "Oral Diseases", "Infectious Diseases", "Special Medicine", "Physiology", "Microbiology" have been appointed. Experts from a regional hospital are also involved in the provision of placements in the academic year 2022/2023. (SAR, p. 809-80, Annex 4.1) Despite changes in the staff composition, experts conclude that changes in the composition of the teaching staff do not negatively affect the quality of the implementation of the study programme and the compliance of the study programme with the requirements specified in regulatory enactments.

2.4.3. Not applicable.

2.4.4. Publications of academic staff are available in Annex 6.4 (Results of the scientific activity of the academic staff of RSU Liepāja branch and a list of publications by Journal Impact Factor (IF) ZDIS Pure 01.01.2017-25.03.2023). Since 2017, 40 publications have been entered in ZDIS Pure for 47 lecturers involved in two study programmes of the Liepāja branch within the study field "Health Care": the First level professional study programme "Physician's Assistant" and the Joint first level professional study programme "Medical Massage". 12 lecturers have data on one or more publications - the most productive lecturers have published 7-15 publications in the six years period. The most publications were prepared in 2021 (11), 2019 (9), and 2020 (7). The need to improve the number of publications among the academic staff has been recognized and set as a development activity in the Development Plan for the programme as follows: "Increase in the number of publications of lecturers involved in the study programme in local and international peer reviewed editions." (Annexes 4.1, 6.4) The expert group found that some of the interviewed teachers felt that they don't have time for research due to teaching and other responsibilities. Thus, it is recommended to consider the work profile and workload of teachers from the point of view of publishing goals. The average length of service at RSU of elected lecturers involved in the implementation of the study programme is 4 (assistant) and 12 years (assistant professor) (Annex 24.7),

2.4.5. The lectures in the programme represent several branches of science. The cooperation of lectures is carried out in various events and meetings organised by the RSU Liepāja branch during the study year and at the end of the study year, such as staff meetings, scientific conferences, and courses for further education. (SAR, p. 811) This multisided cooperation ensures the interconnection

of the study courses and the achievement of the aims of the “Physician’s Assistant” study programme.

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

The study programme is implemented by highly qualified academic staff and lecturers from placement and other collaborative organisations with extensive experience in practical and scientific work in the field of the study programme. The teachers are supported by the RSU PIC and MITC. Lecturers supplement and improve their knowledge by participating in international conferences and seminars and utilizing the knowledge achieved in the implementation of the curriculum of “Physician's Assistant”. The number of publications is currently reasonable; the need for improvement has been recognised, although the lack of time for scientific work was expressed.

Strengths:

1. Highly qualified lecturers and good management of the curriculum process.
2. Very good scientific potential for lecturers.

Weaknesses:

1. Time management; lecturers have a lack of time for research work.

Assessment of the requirement [7]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The qualifications of the academic staff of the Physician’s Assistant study programme fulfils the requirements specified in the relevant regulatory acts.

2.5. Assessment of the Compliance

Requirements

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Annex 17.1. 17.1_Anx_Compl_with_Nat_Ed_Stand_Phys_Assist (3).pdf confirms the compliance of the First Level Professional Study Programme “Physician’s Assistant” with the State Education Standard study programme, it complies with Cabinet Regulation No. 141 Regulations regarding the State Standard for First Level Professional Higher Education adopted 20 March 2001, which was in force until 1.7 2023. Considering that since 21.06.2023 these rules have been superseded by Cabinet Regulation No. 305 “Regulations on the state standard of professional higher education”, the programme should be compared with the current regulations. However, taking into account that the newly approved state standard does not inherently contradict the standard with which the comparison was made, the requirement can be assessed as fully compliant.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Annex 18.2_Anx_Compliance_with_professional standart_Phys_Assist.pdf

Compliance of the study programme with the professional standard (mapping) confirms the compliance of the study programme with the professional standard "Occupational standards for physician's assistants / paramedics" (agreed at the meeting of the tripartite Cooperation Council for Vocational Education and Employment of 10 August 2022, minutes No 4).

- 3 3 - The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in all languages in which the study programme is implemented, and they comply with the requirements set forth in Section 561 , Paragraph two and Section 562 , Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Annex 20_Anx_Study_course_description_Phys_Assistant.pdf confirms that study course descriptions are prepared with relevant language and comply with requirements set forth in Section 561 , Paragraph two and Section 562, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Annex 20_Anx_Study_course_description_Phys_Assistant.pdf confirms that study course descriptions are prepared with relevant language and comply with requirements set forth in Section 561 , Paragraph two and Section 562, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

24.1_Anx_Diploma and supplement_1LPSP Phys_Assist (5) (2).pdf the sample of the diploma and its supplement is issued for completing the study programme in accordance with the CM Reg. 202 "Procedure for Issuing State-Recognized Higher Education Certificates".

RSU is recommended to follow the amendments in regulatory acts to ensure the compliance with latest regulations.

Cabinet Regulation No. 305 Regulations Regarding the State Standard for Professional Higher Education adopted 13 June 2023.:

<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/342818-noteikumi-par-valsts-profesionalas-augstakas-izglitibas-standartu>

- 5 5 - The academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements set forth in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 6 6 - Academic study programmes provided for less than 250 full-time students may be implemented and less than five professors and associated professors of the higher education institution may be involved in the implementation of the mandatory and limited elective part of these study programmes provided that the relevant opinion of the Council for Higher Education has been received in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 7 7 - At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of an academic doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field of science. At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a professional doctoral study programme in arts (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 8 8 - The teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme are proficient in the official language in accordance with the regulations on the level of the official language knowledge and the procedures for testing official language proficiency for performing professional duties and office duties.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

24.4_Anx_Certification_Regarding_Latvian_Language_of_the_Acade confirms that “ the official language skills of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of study programmes of the study direction “Health Care” comply with the Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No. 733 of 7 July 2009 “Regulations Regarding the Extent of the Knowledge of the Official Language, the Procedures for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language and the State Fee for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language”.

- 9 9 - The teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language, if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Annex 24.8_Anx_Study contract sample_Health Care study direction.pdf confirms that the sample of the study agreement complies with the mandatory provisions to be included in the study agreement.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Annex 24.2_Anx_Agreement_on_continuing_the_acquisition_of_education confirms that the First level professional higher education study programme “ Physician’s Assistant” students will be provided with the opportunity to continue their studies in the short cycle professional higher education study programme at RSU Read Cross Medical College (RSU SKMK).

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Annex 24.3 24.3_Anx_Certification_of_Compensation_of_Losses_to_Students confirms that guaranteed compensation for losses in case of given circumstances.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Annex 17.2 Compliance of the Study Programme “Physician’s Assistant” with the Industry-Specific Regulatory Framework confirms compliance with Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 268 Regulations on the Therapeutic Expertise of Medical Personnel and Students Acquiring the First-Or Second-Level Professional Higher Medical Education and the Extent of Their Theoretical and Practical Knowledge, Medical Treatment Law

Assessment of the requirement [8]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Study programme fully complies with regulatory enactments.

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

The title of the study programme “Physician’s Assistant” (41721), the qualification to be obtained, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and the admission requirements are interrelated and complies with the requirements of the regulatory enactments of the Republic of Latvia, but the study programme is recommended to follow the amendments in regulatory acts to ensure the compliance with latest regulations Cabinet Regulation No. 305 Regulations Regarding the State Standard for professional Higher Education adopted 13 June 2023. The corrections made during the reporting period related to the aim, objectives, and learning outcomes are justified and would be supported. The study programme is economically and socially justified. The number of drop-out students has decreased but still needs action. The content of the studies is topical and relevant for the study programme “Physician’s Assistant”. Teaching and learning methods are student-centred, and well equipped teaching and learning environments are in use. The study programme has sufficient material and financial resources for its implementation. The expert group found that the study programme “Physician’s Assistant” is implemented by highly qualified academic staff and lecturers from placement and other collaborative organisations with extensive experience in practical and scientific work in the direction of the study programme. The teachers are supported by the RSU PIC and MITC. Lecturers supplement and improve their knowledge by participating in international conferences and seminars and utilizing the knowledge achieved in the implementation of the curriculum of “Physician's Assistant”. The number of publications is currently reasonable; the need for improvement has been recognised, although the lack of time for scientific work was expressed.

Strengths:

1. The title of the study programme “Physician’s Assistant”, the qualification to be obtained, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and the admission requirements are interrelated and comply with the requirements of the regulatory enactments of the Republic of Latvia.
2. Relevant content of the studies.
3. Student-centred teaching and learning methods.
4. Very good premises and equipment, library resources, e-learning and simulation environments for implementation of the study programme.
5. Highly qualified lecturers and good management of curriculum process.
6. There is very good scientific potential for lecturers.

Weaknesses:

1. The number of drop-out students has decreased but still needs action.
2. There is a need for more simulation practices before placements for students to have better practical skills.
3. Time management; lecturers have a lack of time for research work.

Evaluation of the study programme "Physician's Assistant "

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Physician's Assistant "

Short-term recommendations

Increase the number of simulation practices before placements for students to have better practical skills.

Consider the work profile and workload of academic staff (lecturers) to invest time also in research work.

The study programme is recommended to follow the amendments in regulatory acts to ensure the compliance with latest regulations Cabinet Regulation No. 305 Regulations Regarding the State Standard for Professional Higher Education adopted 13 June 2023.

Long-term recommendations

The number of drop-out students has decreased but still needs action. It is recommended that personal study paths be tailored for students to support the continuation of studies and completing the study programme of "Physician's Assistant".

II - "Medical Massage " ASSESSMENT

II - "Medical Massage " ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1. The Joint First level professional higher education study programme "Medical Massage" between Riga Stradins University Liepaja Branch and Red Cross Medical College of Riga Stradins University code is in accordance with the Latvian Education Classification is 41722 (short cycle professional higher education) and Level 4 professional qualification (according to the current amendments in the external regulatory framework level 5 professional qualification) (5th level of EQF/LQF) according to SAR, Part II, Paragraph 3.1.2.

The last three digits of the code 722 are included in the thematic area of education "Health Care", in the group of education programmes "Medical Services", which shows the compliance of the study programme with the study field. The diploma issued is the short cycle professional higher education diploma with Massage Therapist qualification. The study programme therefore complies with the study field.

2.1.2. The title of the study programme "Medical Massage" is related to the title of the study field

“Health Care” and corresponds to the professional qualification to be obtained – Massage Therapist. The title of the study programme reflects and accurately shows that the study process includes classic massage, other types of massage for various diseases and massage with medical devices.

According to the SAR (Part II, Paragraph 3.1.2.) the aims of the study programme are:

1. To ensure the possibility to obtain short cycle professional higher education in accordance with CM Regulations on the state standard for the short cycle higher education.
2. Prepare qualified massage therapists, who are able to meet the demands of the public health sector for massage professionals.

The competences included in the Professional Standard are related to LQF Level 5. The study programme has been developed based on the Professional Standard with the following objectives:

1. Provide students with professional knowledge and skills by developing the ability to use different types of massage independently.
2. Promote improvement of the health and functional condition of patients, quality of life and well-being related to health.
3. Observe the norms and requirements of professional ethics.
4. Promote the development of professional competences of students that meet labour market requirements.

Defined learning outcomes are:

1. Describes the general constitution plan of a person, the correlations between the system of organs and the functioning thereof, as well as possible changes in the case of abnormalities, naming the main investigative methods using medical terminology.
2. Is able to plan and organise the working environment, prepares the necessary equipment, materials and aids for carrying out the procedure.
3. Is able to perform an assessment of the health condition of the customer and prepare him or her for massage informing them of the massage procedures, their progress and impact, evaluating the contraindications of massage for each customer individually.
4. Understands different types of massage and is able to choose the appropriate type of massage for the customer, taking into account the health condition of the customer, the required intensity and duration of the procedure.
5. Performs classical massage techniques and auxiliary techniques, uses equipment necessary for the work of the massage therapist also in cases of unpredictable changes; understands and respects professional ethics and confidentiality in communication with the customer, forms a gracious, understanding and professional dialogue with the customer, employers and colleagues.
6. Is able to assess the results of the massage, takes responsibility for the results of their professional activities and improves their professional activity, including in the event of unpredictable changes.
7. Participation in the development of the field, shows that one understands the place of the profession in the specific field in a wider social context.
8. Complies with labour protection, fire safety and environmental protection requirements, performs infection control measures and provides first aid.
9. Complies with the requirements of regulatory enactments in the field of medical treatment, prepares record-keeping, accounting and financial documents necessary for professional activity.

The aims, objectives and learning outcomes described above are interrelated and mutually complementary. The study programme is implemented after Secondary education.

The study programme is implemented in Rīga Stradiņš University Liepāja Branch and Rīga Stradiņš

University Red Cross Medical College with a duration of studies of 2 years (80 CP / 120 ECTS) which corresponds to provisions of Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 322 and is optimal for the achievement of learning outcomes of the study programme.

The implementation language of the study programme in accordance with the Education Law Section 9 is Latvian language.

2.1.3. According to the SAR (Part II, Paragraph 3.1.1) introduced corrections include: update and different formulation of the aim of the study programme; restructuration and different formulation of study programme objectives; Revision and update of learning outcomes.

The corrections mentioned above are justified because they provide clearly interrelated study programme aims, objectives and learning outcomes.

2.1.4. According to the SAR (Part II, Annex 16) the dynamics of the number of students indicate relatively difficult to predict trends regarding the number of dropouts and the number of graduates. The number of admitted students is easier to predict and falls within the range of 25-30 students. The economic justification of the study programme is related to the labour market demand for massage therapists, this in turn is related to the interdisciplinary patient centred care approach in modern healthcare (Latvian Health Guidelines 2021-2027).

In the context of the economic justification, the aspect of the local region is also important, the development programme of Liepāja State City and South Kurzeme 2022-2027 includes measures for the development of health care services at all levels and the recruitment of the necessary human resources.

The internships of the study programme are organised in cooperation with both state and private sector institutions (Assessment interview findings). This is relevant to the economic justification because it demonstrates a practical approach to preparing students for employment in the field. Additionally this enhances the employability of graduates. If graduates have exposure to real-world scenarios and hands-on experience in both public and private healthcare settings, they are likely to be more competitive in the job market.

2.1.5. According to the SAR (Part II, Paragraph 3.1.5.) the joint study programme has uniform requirements regarding the implementation, final examinations and the awarding of professional qualifications. The unified content is approved by the Joint Study Programme Quality Council which also monitors the implementation process. Organisational and administrative matters of the study process are managed by each institution separately in accordance with the regulatory documents.

The Quality Council reserves the right to make changes in:

1. Thematic planning of the Study Programme.
2. The content of the Study Programme.
3. Content of evaluation and testing.
4. Research directions.

The Quality Council supervises and prepares recommendations for the quality of studies, it also plays a central role in the cooperation of the teaching staff of both institutions. The joint study programme is implemented in each of the partner institutions separately, based on a unified study programme plan.

Taking into account the various aspects of mutual cooperation between both institutions, it can be concluded that there is no disjunction between the University and the Liepāja Branch which ensures a quality study process.

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

By analysing the previously defined indicators, it can be concluded that the study programme corresponds to the study field. Cooperation between the institutions is implemented at a sufficient level to ensure the quality of the study process.

Strengths:

1. The study programme provides high-quality education and training for healthcare specialists, which is especially important in the regional context.

Weaknesses:

1. Relatively high number of dropouts who discontinue their studies "at their own will."

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1. The development of the content of the study programme is an on-going process to provide topical, interconnected, and complementary study courses that correspond to the objectives and achievement of learning outcomes, as indicated in the changes at the beginning of academic year 2023/ 2024 to reduce the fragmentation of the studies. (SAR, p. 715, Annexes 18.1, 19, 20) The study programme consists of part A (compulsory courses) 76 CP / 114 ECTS and part C (free elective courses) 4 CP / 6 ECTS, but no part B (limited elective courses), which would be necessary to include when updating the curriculum. The total volume is 80 CP / 120 ECTS.

The courses are located logically in the curriculum, starting from basic knowledge such as "Anatomy", "Physiology" and "Pathophysiology", skills and competencies and progressing to more complex and demanding learning outcomes for massage therapists, which are achieved in industry-specific study courses such as "Classic Massage (1st year) and "Special Types of Massage (2nd year). (SAR, p. 715) The course descriptions are revised and updated annually by the head of the study course and approved by the Council meeting of the Faculty. (SAR, p. 714) The Medical Massage study programme complies with the national regulations "Compliance of the First Level Professional Study Programme "Medical Massage" with the National Education Standard", "Cabinet Regulation No. 305 Regulations Regarding the State Standard for First Level Professional Higher Education adopted 13 June 2023" (Annex 17.1) and "Compliance of the study programme "Medical Massage" with the occupational standard" (Annex 18.2).

2.2.2. Not applicable.

2.2.3. The teaching and learning methods of the study programme are based on the principle of student centeredness. Studies are implemented using lectures, classes, small groups, placement learning, and student independent work. Additionally, e-learning environments are used for the purposes of learning materials and submitting independent assignments and study examinations. Simulations are in use and supported by the MITC. (SAR, p. 716-717) The assessment is criteria based, which is informed to students at the beginning of the study course. The state examination includes the theoretical part, and after passing, it continues as a practical examination. Defense of qualification papers is carried out on-site or remotely. The composition of the state examination board includes members of the teaching staff of the partner college of the joint programme and representatives of employers and associations. (SAR, p. 718) The joint study programme Quality Council ensures the quality flow of the study programme by means of thematic planning, changes in the study programme or examination works and research directions of students. The joint study programme is implemented separately in the partner institutions, but the teachers collaborate in

many phases of the process. (SAR, 711). Overall, the criteria is well met.

2.2.4. Placement learning is an important part of the study programme and is related to all learning outcomes of the study programme. The study programme contains three placements in second, third and fourth semesters. The placement places are based on agreements and supervision. The placement supervisor needs to have a valid certificate from a massage therapist, issued by the Latvian Association of Physical Medicine. The skills and competencies achieved are demonstrated in the State Examination. RSU provides placements for RSU students, and the Medical College provides placements for its students (SAR, p. 720). The organisations of the placements is based on placement agreements and the procedure for organising placements. The placements are assessed by the study programme director and the offers. These processes ensure that the internship is compliant with regulatory enactments. (SAR, 719-720, Annex 9.1. Description of the organisation of student placement, Annex 9.2. Information about contracts and other evidence of provision of placement for students in companies).

2.2.5. Not applicable.

2.2.6. Students of the study programme "Medical Massage" prepare a Qualification Paper (QP) (8 CP / 12 ECTS) according to the RSU Regulations on requirements for final papers of students. The development of the thesis is complemented by the course "Research methods and digital literature". Students can choose the topic for the QP when the topical and relevant topics are introduced to them, or choose the topic based on their own interests. The topics in the academic years 2021/2022 included QPs such as "Opinion of floorball players and medical specialists about the inclusion of leg massage in the process of knee joint pain treatment" and "Doula experience and opinion of massage usage in prenatal period". The process of preparing the QP is supported by the study programme supervisor (SAR, p. 720-721, Annexes 20, 22). Overall, the topics of the final thesis can be considered relevant.

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

The content of the study programme "Medical Massage" is relevant and topical progressing logically from basic knowledge towards more complex knowledge, skills and competences. Placements are an essential part of the studies and they are well organised. The topics of Qualification papers are relevant and topical.

Strengths:

1. The content of the study programme is topical, the courses are interconnected corresponding to the objectives of the programme.
2. The study implementation methods are appropriate regarding the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme.

Weaknesses:

None.

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1 According to the SAR (Part II, Study Programme Medical Massage, Paragraph 3.3.1) the material and technical provision of the study programme include: mobile massage couches with head support, massage chairs for neck and back massage area, massage chairs for massage in a sitting position, closets of different sizes for equipment storage, medical devices for performing special massages, containers and refrigerators for massage oils, mobile stands for equipment storage.

The equipment for special types of massage also includes: myostimulation massage devices, high frequency devices, ultrasound massage devices, vacuum massage devices.

Study process is organised in auditoriums (lectures) and practice classrooms (practical classes). All rooms are spacious and easy to oversee, this gives the ability to follow the activities of all students. The expert was provided the possibility to verify this aspect during the assessment visit. Ergonomic principles are observed during the practical classes at all times.

The informational base of the Liepāja Branch includes an on-site library (with a total of 12 000 information units) and full access to the library of the University for e-resources. A list of recommended study e-books is published on the library's website; this list is updated regularly.

The teaching staff of the Liepāja Branch have access to Centre for Educational Growth (PIC) resources which greatly facilitates improvements in the process of teaching. This was unanimously acknowledged by members of the teaching staff during the on-site assessment visit.

The expert therefore concludes that the provision is adequate for the implementation of a quality study process.

2.3.2. Not applicable.

2.3.3. According to the SAR (Part II, Study Programme Medical Massage, Paragraph 3.3.3) the study programme is financed from the state budget and the funds of private and legal entities. Given the current situation (high inflation and rising prices of energy resources) the financial results of the study programme are negative, the average earnings are EUR 2423 per student while the average expenses constitute EUR 2666 per student. It is planned to improve the financial results by increasing the tuition fees. Additional state funding may be available as well.

Funding is used for personnel compensation, attracting guest lecturers, taxes, maintenance of IT infrastructure, purchase of inventory and equipment and expenses for study visits. The profitability of the study programme is planned to be achieved by keeping the existing number of students while simultaneously increasing the tuition fee. Presumably this will also facilitate the development of the study programme.

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

The provision and resources of the study programme are mostly sufficient to ensure a quality study process. Some deficiencies in the financial indicators are present, these are related to external factors and presumably are short-term.

Strengths:

1. Strongly developed informational base, including a wide range of materials for the improvement of pedagogical competences of the teaching staff (PIC access).

Weaknesses:

1. Negative financial results (average earnings per student - EUR 2423, average expenses per student - EUR 2666) of the study programme may potentially cause profitability issues.

Assessment of the requirement [6]

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

The study programme provision in both material and technical aspects is sufficient for the implementation process and ensures the achievement of learning outcomes. The informative provision includes a variety of different resources available for both the students and academic staff. Some financial deficiencies are present and these may very well be short term, however, they have the potential to impact the number of admitted students due to an increase in study fees.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1. The first level professional study programme “Medical Massage” is implemented by 26 lectures; of them, 2 are elected to academic positions at RSU and hold a PhD; others have a Master’s degree or other relevant education such as Medical Doctor or Master's degree in Business Administration. Additionally, several visiting lecturers will teach specific content of individual courses. Concerning the continuing education of the academic staff, 12 of them have participated in the in-service educational training provided by the PIC at RSU. (SAR, p. 726, Annex 24.7). The qualification of the teaching staff enables the achievement of the study programme and relevant study courses.

2.4.2. The study programme implements the assessment questionnaires of students to get feedback about the quality of teaching. The SAR (p. 728) shows the process and evidence of the termination of the contract with the teacher due to quality issues in the teaching or personal life situation of a teacher. The provision of teaching staff is monitored on a regular basis, and the composition of teaching staff for the academic year is planned in advance (SAR, p.728). The study programme takes measures to ensure the quality of the study programme and compliance with the requirements of the specified regulatory enactments.

2.4.3. Not applicable.

2.4.4. Results of the scientific activity of the academic staff of RSU Liepāja branch and a list of publications by Journal Impact Factor (IF) ZDIS Pure 01.01.2017-25.03.2023 (Appendix 6.4), show that the total number of publications is 40 and varies between the years from 3 to 11. The impact factors of the journals where the articles are published vary from 0 to high impact factor journals, with the highest impact factor being 12,074. Concerning the publication activity of the academic staff, introduced in the SAR (p. 725-728) which varies from 0 to 7 in the six years period. The experts found in the discussion with the academic staff that there is a lack of time for research and publishing. Thus, it is recommended to consider the work profile and workload of teachers from the point of view of publishing goals.

2.4.5. Mutual cooperation among the teaching staff has been established by the means 1) talks on mastering topics, strengthening and supplementing what is mastered in each of the study courses to promote the achievement of outcomes of the study programme, 2) development of examinations, 3) observations of teaching in cooperation with The Red Cross Medical College of Rīga Stradiņš University (RSU SKMK); and 5) participating in workgroups within RSU and in national workgroups. (SAR, p. 729-730) This ensures the achievement of the study programme aims and the interconnection of the courses.

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

The study programme is implemented by highly qualified lecturers with relevant experience in practical and scientific work in the field of the study programme. Measures are taken and feedback is utilised to ensure the quality of teaching in the study programme. The study programme takes measures to ensure the quality of the study programme and compliance with the requirements of the specified regulatory enactments. The academic staff's publication activity varies, and the experts found in the discussion with the academic staff that there is a lack of time for research and publishing. Thus, it is recommended to consider the work profile and workload of teachers from the point of view of publishing goals.

Strengths:

1. Highly qualified teachers and good management of the teaching and learning process.

Weaknesses:

1. Time management; lecturers have a lack of time for research work.

Assessment of the requirement [7]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The qualification of the academic staff of the study programme meet the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements specified in the relevant regulatory acts.

2.5. Assessment of the Compliance

Requirements

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Annex 17.1_Anx_Compl_with_Nat_Ed_Stand_Med_Message confirms compliance with the State Education Standard corresponding to Cabinet Regulations No 305 of 13 June 2023 "Regulations on National Standard for Professional Higher Education"

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Annex 18.2_Anx_Compliance_w_Occupational Standard_Med_Massage confirms compliance with the Professional Standard for massage therapists.

(Agreed at the meeting of the Tripartite Cooperation Sub-Council 10.02.2021: available:

<https://www.psk.lu.lv/uploads/VOd9CsV5/MasierisPS-149.pdf>)

- 3 3 - The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in all languages in which the study programme is implemented, and they comply with the requirements set forth in Section 561 , Paragraph two and Section 562 , Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Annex 20_Anx_Study_course_description_Medical_Massage confirms that study course descriptions are prepared in the relevant languages and comply with requirements set forth in Section 561 , Paragraph two and Section 562 , Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Annex 24.1._Diploms_Arstnieciska_masaza_eng confirms that sample of the diploma complies CM Reg. 202 "Procedures for the Issuance of State-recognised Documents of Higher Education", Paragraph 9.

- 5 5 - The academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements set forth in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 6 6 - Academic study programmes provided for less than 250 full-time students may be implemented and less than five professors and associated professors of the higher education institution may be involved in the implementation of the mandatory and limited elective part of these study programmes provided that the relevant opinion of the Council for Higher Education has been received in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 7 7 - At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of an academic doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field of science. At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a professional doctoral study programme in arts (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 8 8 - The teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme are proficient in the official language in accordance with the regulations on the level of the official language knowledge and the procedures for testing official language proficiency for performing professional duties and office duties.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Annexes

24.7_pielik_Akademiska personala sastava analize_Arstn_mas and

24.4_Anx_Certification_Regarding_Latvian_Language_of_the_Academic_Staff confirm that the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme are proficient in the official language.

- 9 9 - The teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language, if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Annex 24.8_pielik_Studiju liguma paraugs_StV Veselibas aprupe confirms that the sample of the study agreement complies with the mandatory provisions to be included in the study agreement.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Annex 24.2_pielik_Apliecinajumi_par_parnemsanu_eng confirms that opportunities to continue education in another study programme will be provided in case termination of the given study programme.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Annex 24.3_Anx_Certification_of_Compensation_of_Losses_to_Students confirms guaranteed compensation for losses in case of given circumstances.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Annex 15_pielik_kopigas_programmas_atbilstiba_Arstn_mas confirms compliance with the requirements prescribed in Section 551, Paragraphs one, two, and seven of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Annex 17.2_Anx_Compl_w_the_field-specific_regulatory_framework_Med_Massage confirms compliance with Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 268 Regulations on the Therapeutic Expertise of Medical Personnel and Students Acquiring the First- Or Second-Level Professional Higher Medical Education and the Extent of Their Theoretical and Practical Knowledge

Assessment of the requirement [8]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The study programme complies with requirements of the Law on Higher Education Institutions and other regulatory enactments (Professional Higher Education Standard, professional standard and other regulatory enactments).

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

The joint study programme equips students with a comprehensive theoretical knowledge and practical skills, graduates are well-prepared to assess and address various musculoskeletal issues, promoting overall well-being and contributing to the holistic approach of healthcare.

The study programme emphasises the importance of evidence-based practices. Graduates are equipped with the expertise to apply therapeutic massage techniques in clinical settings, contributing to the management and alleviation of pain, stress, and other types of dysfunction. Overall, the study programme serves as a valuable option to keep a stable number of healthcare professionals especially on a local (regional) level.

In the expert's opinion, the most important weaknesses of the study programme are negative financial indicators and study dropouts who discontinue the studies at their own will.

Overall, taking into consideration that RSU has a plan to increase funding, good cooperation with the partner, compliance of the programme with the regulatory framework and labor market requirements, experts believe that the programme can be assessed as excellent.

Evaluation of the study programme "Medical Massage "

Evaluation of the study programme:

Excellent

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Medical Massage "

Short-term recommendations

Additional input in measures (advertising campaigns) to promote the study programme are recommended.

Study dropout analysis with additional attention to the reasons (especially for the reason "at one's own will") could be useful.

Long-term recommendations

It is recommended to follow the latest information on compliance with all regulatory enactments.

II - "Dental Hygiene " ASSESSMENT

II - "Dental Hygiene " ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1. The aim of the First level Professional higher education programme (PHESP) "Dental Hygiene" is to train qualified health care specialists as part of a dental team and to train a specialist who educates the public in the prevention of oral diseases and participates in the planning, organization and evaluation of dental care in collaboration with the dental team (SAR, p. 147). The PHESP "Dental Hygiene" complies with the aim of the study field "Health Care" to provide excellent, research-based and inclusive education of health care professionals to promote sustainable development of public health and well-being, realizing everyone's potential throughout life (SAR, p. 22). The inclusion of the PHESP "Dental Hygiene" in the study field "Health Care" is justified and follows from the aim of the given study programme, the learning outcomes to be achieved, the content of the programme and qualification to be awarded.

2.1.2. The First level PHESP "Dental Hygiene" is a full-time study programme with the implementation duration of two years and the amount of 80 CP (Latvian credits)/120 ECTS. The language of instruction – Latvian. The admission requirements of the PHESP "Dental Hygiene" – specialized secondary education (dental assistant, dental nurse, dental technician, nurse or feldsher). The qualification to be obtained – Dental Hygienist.

The code of the study programme according to the classification of Latvian education – 41724, where the first part of the code 41 indicates that the type of the PHESP "Dental Hygiene" is the first level professional higher education study programme (Level 4 professional qualification) and the digits of the second part of the code 724 indicate that the thematic area of education is Health Care, but the group of educational programmes is Dentistry.

In the sample diploma (Annex 24.1_pielik_Zobu Hygienists_eng), page 2, the professional qualification level is indicated incorrectly (Level 5 professional qualification is indicated, but it should be Level 4 professional qualification level that is indicated) and in point 3.2. it is written that: "First (1st) level professional higher education corresponding to the fifth (5th) level of professional qualification and 5th level of EQF/LQF (24.1_pielik_Zobu Higienists_eng); here, the level of professional qualification obtained in the programme is indicated incorrectly; according to the Regulations on the Latvian Education Classification of 13.06.2017 (Reg. of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 322) first (1st) level professional higher education corresponds to the forth (4th) level of professional qualification and 5th level of EQF/LQF. In the sample diplomas (Annex 24.1_pielik_Zobu Higienists_eng) different admission requirements are indicated in Latvian and English (in Latvian: specialized secondary education (dental assistant, dental nurse, dental technician, nurse or feldsher), but in English: general secondary education).

The learning outcomes of the PHESP "Dental Hygiene" (results of the study programme) partially correspond to Level 5 of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (LQF), which is described in the Cabinet Regulations No. 322 "Regulations on the Classification of Education in Latvia" (June 13, 2017), because according to the Cabinet regulations, knowledge, skills and competence must be indicated, but only skills and competences are indicated in the SAR of the PHESP "Dental Hygiene". Despite that, content-wise, the aim of the PHESP "Dental Hygiene" is coordinated with the objectives and the learning outcomes of the study programme.

The name, code, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements of the PHESP "Dental Hygiene" are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation, as well as the language of implementation are reasonable and justified.

2.1.3. During the accreditation period, some changes have been made to the parameters of the PHESP "Dental Hygiene": the objectives of the PHESP "Dental Hygiene" have been clarified in accordance with the occupational standard for a dental hygienist updated/submitted in 2022; the learning outcomes have been clarified according to the aim and objectives; the aims of study courses have been updated to comply with outcomes of the study programme; according to the amendment of 11.10.2022 in Article 1, paragraph 8 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions,

which provides that until 31.12.2024 the transition to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) should be implemented, according to which credit points shall be awarded in whole numbers, the changes have been made to the programme, changing the amount of credit points and correcting the content and names of 11 study courses; the revised study programme was mapped according to the new Occupational Standard “Dental Hygienist” (coordinated at the meeting of the Tripartite Cooperation Subcommittee on Vocational Education and Employment, December 14, 2022, minutes No. 7). The corrections made to the parameters of the study programme within the assessment of the study field are justified and would be supported.

2.1.4. To comment on the economic and social justification of the study programme “Dental Hygiene”, it is important to understand that this is a young profession, and it is still developing. Indeed, as explained in SAR (p.156-158), and very well presented during interviews and clinics’ site visits, in Europe, education of dental hygienists developed rapidly only after the second world war. In Latvia, the first School of Dental Hygienists started its pedagogical activity in the Medical Academy of Latvia in 1995. However, it was only in 2007, that the Dental Hygienists study programme at RSU was transformed into a 2-year training programme with dental hygienist’s qualification awarded at the first level professional higher education with a content of 80 CP/120 ECTS. The study programme is currently in the process of transformation in the process of Bachelor’s education adding another 1-2 years of studies as declared in SAR 9 p. 156 and conformed to experts during site visit. Study content at least at Bachelor level is required for integration of dental hygienists in public health care in changing market circumstances and in interdisciplinary teams. The market is attracting substantial numbers so much so that by 2022, the total number of dental hygienists educated by RSU in Latvia will reach 502.

It was very clear during the on-site visit of facilities and premises that RSU has invested heavily over the years in “Dentistry” and “Dental Hygiene” with the intention of developing interdisciplinary teams of dentists and dental hygienists. Furthermore, The Latvian Associations of Dental Hygienists (LAD), which was established in 1997, is very active in Europe. Indeed, in 1998, the association got involved in the International Federation of Dental Hygienists (IFDH) as the 23rd country and the first country from Eastern Europe. LAD follows the European Dental Hygienists Federation, which in 2020, developed common recommendations for the common Bachelor’s programme in Europe, so as to improve and harmonize dental hygiene study programmes across Europe respecting regional, socio-economic and cultural differences.

Study programme “Dental Hygiene” is self-funded and yet it attracts substantial numbers. There are opportunities to work mostly in private practice. In fact, there is a demand for dental hygienists to work in private dental practices (as explained by the many dentists - academics and practitioners during interviews and clinic site visits) in teams with dentists. Some have contracts with the National Health Service for the care of children and young people up to 18 years.

Dentists are increasingly acknowledging the importance of dental hygienists in the field of oral health in terms of health promotion and prevention of disease and dental caries/irreparable damages. They are the dentists themselves that are pushing for the involvement of dental hygienists in interdisciplinary teams - and therefore unlike in some other specializations in medicine there are no turf wars.

Employability following completion of the study programme is very high with recent graduate surveys demonstrating more than 90% employment. In addition, remote regions and rural areas suffer from a shortage of dental specialists more than urban areas. During the site visit interviews with faculty and employers, as well as stated in SAR (p. 594) that according to the Register of Medical Practitioners, there is also a shortage of specialists in the dental subspecialties - orthodontists, pediatric dentists, periodontists, endodontists and prosthodontists. This puts more pressure on the health system on the need to encourage capable, motivated dental professionals to move on to postgraduate training programmes and to attract new lecturers to the study process to ensure sustainability of the study programme “Dental hygiene”. Employers are actively involved in

the Faculty Council, thereby contributing to the discussion of having the study programme maintaining a high quality.

The study programme is work-in-progress as RSU is planning to transform the course to Bachelor level and therefore requiring investment in composition of staff to accommodate changes. This is seen as a massive future potential in Latvia to improve dental care to be practiced safely using high level clinical and professional care at European and global level. This is also crucial so that Latvia can have dental hygienists working autonomously in their practices. There are also opportunities to work in oral health care teams, specialized periodontology clinics, hospital oncology departments, elderly care at institutions, and other public health care services. Nevertheless, this should not detract more dental hygienists having the opportunity to work more in hospitals and social care institutions.

2.1.5. Not applicable.

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

The inclusion of the First level PHESP “Dental Hygiene” in the study field “Health Care” is justified and follows from the aim of the given study programme, the learning outcomes to be achieved, the content of the programme and the degree and qualification to be awarded.

The name, code, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements of the First level PHESP “Dental Hygiene” are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation, as well as the language of implementation are reasonable and justified.

The corrections made to the parameters of the First level PHESP “Dental Hygiene” within the assessment of the study field are justified and would be supported.

Strengths:

- 1) The importance for this study programme is in view of the prevention and health promotion involved in dental hygiene.
- 2) Dental hygiene is in demand mostly in private practice to work within interdisciplinary teams with dentists in private practice.
- 3) Dentists are increasingly acknowledging the importance of dental hygienists in the field of oral health in terms of health promotion and prevention of disease and dental caries/irreparable damages. They are the dentists themselves that are pushing for the involvement of dental hygienists in interdisciplinary teams - and therefore unlike in some other specializations in medicine there are no turf wars.
- 4) RSU has recognised the market potential in dental health and acted upon investing in this field which is now bearing its fruit.

Weaknesses:

- 1) The study programme is self-funded and not state-funded. This puts pressure on RSU to make sure that courses opening are filled through their marketing strategy. (Fortunately, though demand is greater than supply).

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1. The First level professional higher education study programme “Dental Hygiene” (80 CP/120 ECTS) includes study courses, which enable students to master main tasks of professional activity and perform duties in accordance with the profession standard coordinated at the meeting of the Tripartite Sub-council for Co-operation in Vocational Education and Employment on 14 December 2022, minutes No.7 (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.1.).

The learning outcomes of the First level professional study programme “Dental Hygiene” are in line with the 5th level of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (LQF), corresponding to the descriptions

of the levels of the European Qualification framework (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.1., Annex 18.1, Table 1). The mapping results (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.1., Annex 18.1, Table 2) demonstrate the evident links between the learning outcomes of the study programme and study courses. The content of the study courses is derived from the aims and learning outcomes of the study course, which in turn are derived from the purpose and outcomes of the programme. The plan for full time studies in First level professional study programme “Dental Hygiene” (SAR, Part II, Annex 19) is constructed in a logical way, starting from the fundamental sciences in the first semester, such as Microbiology, Immunology, Virology, Dental Anatomy and Cariology, etc. These subjects are followed by more specific and relevant subjects such as Dental Roentgenology in the second semester and even more specialty-related in later semesters, for example, Paediatric Dentistry in fourth semester. There is also the subject Civil and Environmental Protection, First Aid in the plan, which is in line with the general requirements for all study programmes. The programme includes mandatory (A part), limited elective (B part) study courses, however, there are no elective (C part) courses (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.1, Annex 19 „Plan for full time studies in first level professional study programme Dental Hygiene.), as it is required according to Law on Higher Education Institutions - Section 55, part 1, point 2 support c. The study programme “Dental Hygiene” complies with the Cabinet of Ministers Regulations’ No. 305 “Regulations on the State Standard of the Second Level Professional Higher Education” (13 June, 2023). Study programme indicators, such as the strategic objective, learning outcomes, volume of the programme, duration of implementation of the study programme, parts of the study programme and volume thereof (however no mentioned C part study courses in the study plan, in Annex 19 „Plan for full time studies in first level professional study programme Dental Hygiene), volume of contact hours, compulsory content in accordance with the requirements of a standard, compliance with the requirements set out in the Environmental Protection and Civil Protection and Disaster Management Law, Qualification to be awarded, opportunities to continue the studies, basic principles and procedures for the evaluation of the acquisition of the study programme, description of the study internship, are in line with the standard. The study programme “Dental Hygiene” ensures content compliance with the regulatory requirements.

The study plan is in line with the scientific trends, it reflects the most relevant research areas in Dental Hygiene, such as focusing on Public Health and Epidemiology, or Gerostomatology. Literature sources in some of the descriptions, could be updated (there are some published in 2015) (SAR, Part II, Annex 20.1). Procedure of „Placement regulations for second year students of the programme “Dental Hygiene” of the Faculty of Dentistry of Riga Stradins University in institutions serving elderly people”, study programme “Dental Hygiene” (approved at the Council meeting of the Faculty of Dentistry Min. No. 5-ZF-1/8/2022). The content of the study programme reflects the needs of industry and labor market, it can be illustrated by the study programme’s content compliance with the industry-specific regulations (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.1., Annex 17.2. Compliance of the study programme with the industry-specific regulations).

Sustainability is being integrated in the study programme: collaboration with the study programme “Nursing” in the hospital environment, dental public health aspects are used, minimal invasive methods are used too. However, some changes are needed in the opinion of the study programme director - sustainability should be included in the curriculum. Erasmus+ mobility is being implemented by the Erasmus+ blended intensive course. Collaboration among the faculties is common. Teachers are involving students in scientific activities in an interdisciplinary manner. Strengths named by the students - lectures are offering guidance, there is a constant contact with the teachers. However, disbalance in the workload was mentioned by the academic staff.

“Dental hygiene” places are self-financed. The RSU would like to have more state funded places.

2.2.2. Not applicable.

2.2.3. SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.3. indicates a wide variety of the methods contributing to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study courses, as well as the study programme learning outcomes, such as interactive lectures, practical interactive classes or

seminars, use of different technology, which was facilitated by Covid-19 pandemics. However even before that RSU actively used the Moodle environment in the learning process. Low-tech approach to learning – teachers adapt technology integration into the teaching process based on students' abilities and needs. This becomes particularly important, taking into account each student's digital competences. There are some examples provided of using digital skills in the study courses ``Periodontology – Preclinic and Clinic”, “Periodontology’ and “Clinical Placement”, a digital patient periodontal examination chart (Periodontal Chart online - www.perio-tools.com (periodontalchart-online.com) and a periodontal risk assessment chart (Periodontal Risk Assessment (PRA) - www.perio-tools.com). Each teacher chooses the most appropriate methods within his/her study course, according to the knowledge and skills to be learned. The study methods, such as lectures, presentations by visiting lecturers, discussions, oral presentations, role plays can be used during lectures and classes, and methods such as essays, reports, check-yourself tests, summaries and / or notes from books, reports, research projects, additional reading tasks, reflection on a video/film, making posters, brochure, infographics are used in the implementation of independent work.

In the context of RSUs student-centered approach, the student's independent learning is promoted by clearly formulating the learning outcomes, the student is given the opportunity to familiarize with the learning outcomes of study courses, which can contribute to their self-assessment of their learning outcomes. Emphasis is placed on making the learning outcomes of study courses linked to the results of study programme studies. The formulation of learning outcomes and their accessibility to students (in e-studies under the course description) ensure that the student and the lecturer have a common understanding of what requirements the student needs to meet, what knowledge and skills should be learned so that the student can follow his/her the progress and monitor his/her learning experience independently. Examples of methods which are used in classes/seminars are provided, such as case reports, group work, laboratory experiments, etc. The methods used focus on promoting the aim of the study course through practical tasks.

Overall, it can be said that different methods of implementation and assessment of studies promote the fulfillment of aims and outcomes of study programme. A lot of work is ongoing for standardization and objective assessment of types of examination, as well as development of interactive study materials (H5P).

Study course descriptions are clear, however, the hours distribution of the students' independent work is not reflected in the description (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.1., Annex 20.1 Study course descriptions), only contact hours are described. During the on-site visit the graduates mentioned they are not surveyed on the regular basis, the contacts with RSU are not frequent. The President of the Association of Dental Hygienists of Latvia said that they participate in the employer surveys on a regular basis. During the past several years there were 5-6 surveys. However there was no feedback given back after the surveys from the University side. Employers indicated the diagnostic skills of the graduates are really good, the graduates are independent, they have a wider profile knowledge. Newly graduated specialists can provide for the patients some new technology-based knowledge. The employers believe the graduates are up to date with the newest information. In the employers' opinion, communication skills are essential, also teaching kids and teaching parents. Recently graduated students have really good communication skills, in the opinion of the employers.

2.2.4. In two years of studies 24 ECTS in total (4 internships) are devoted to the internships. Regulations are developed for each internship, there is a student's internship logbook and a report on the performance of the given assignments (the materials are uploaded to the RSU e-learning environment). Annex 9 (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.4) provides internship assignments in the internship report. The tasks included in the internship are directly related to the study material previously learned by the student, clinical skills obtained in pre-clinic and clinic, as well as knowledge and skills for promotion of health and education (since 2022 also health literacy), they are related to the learning outcomes and achievable. The organization and results of the internship are analyzed at Study programme meetings, as well as reported at Faculty of Dentistry Council

meetings. Strengths and weaknesses observed during internship, as well as recommendations of students are taken into account. Internship in the clinical environment takes 12 ECTS credits, half of all the scope of the internship, it takes place in the environment of clinical departments of the RSU Institute of Stomatology in all four semesters, as well as during summer internship in one of the dental clinics throughout the territory of Latvia. 6 ECTS credits are devoted for oral health promotion internship, which is essential for achieving learning outcomes in the Dental hygiene study programme. Students of the study programme “Dental Hygiene” often combine the study process at RSU with working at dental clinics because they have previously obtained dental assistants or dental nurse’s education. Thus, already existing employers offer internship sites to students and often also a workplace as dental hygienists after graduation. If students have difficulties finding an internship site, the study programme administration helps to find them in cooperation with the Board of the Latvian Association of Dental Hygienists and the Institute of Stomatology of RSU. The internship is compliant with the regulatory enactments (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.1., Annex 17.1. Compliance of the Study Programme With the State Educational Standard and Annex 17.2. Compliance of the study programme with the industry-specific regulations), with the State Educational Standard and industry-specific regulations.

During the on-site visit the administrative staff of the Faculty of Dentistry explained that the intermediate assessment is organized in preclinical level, and then in the clinical level as the final examination, the same pattern in the “Dentistry” and “Dental Hygiene”. Dental hygienists are providing educational and motivational interviewing practices in periodontology, orthodontic clinical training of “Dentistry” following the newest requirement in “Dental Hygiene” and Dentistry practices. Dental hygienists are going to the hospitals to teach the hospital staff to care about the patients’ dental hygiene. The facilities are sufficient in opinion of the Faculty administration: 48 units for practical training is enough, but more (now 16) pre-clinical simulators are needed, for more sophisticated training.

The system providing the patients having certain systemic pathology should be created, to ensure the accessibility of the most complicated cases for “Dental hygiene” practical training. Log-book introduction would be useful in “Dental Hygiene” internships. Students said they understand their limitations of the competence and they are aware of the cases when the patients need some additional consultations, for example, of periodontologist or other specialists. Students said they had no possibility to visit the clinics, for example oncology or others, to see the patients having systemic oral pathology. Interprofessional education is needed in a more wide context, for example, going outside to the kindergartens in “Dental Hygiene” study programme.

2.2.5. Not applicable.

2.2.6. The process of students’ final theses preparation is clearly stated and laid down in the Regulations on Writing and Defence of Qualification Paper, Student’s Research Paper, Bachelor’s Thesis and Master’s Thesis (approved by Senate on 22.02.2022). In accordance with the requirements of these regulations, Methodological guidance on the development and defense of students’ qualification papers were developed (approved at the at FD Council meeting on 15 June 2020). Thematic directions of qualification papers of students are defined in accordance with development of the dental industry and market, and topics and specialization directions of projects implemented by lecturers of the study programme. Specific topics are offered to students, however, they can also choose them themselves and formulate together with scientific supervisors of qualification papers in the study programme. Overall, directions of qualification papers can be broken down into the following blocks (based on the research guidelines developed by the International Federation of Dental Hygienists in 2014) (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.6. Annex 22. Topics of students’ final papers.): Professional development opportunities for dental hygienists (Global education models, Legislation to create and operate practices, Environmental health and Economics). At patient level: Promoting oral health in relation to various chronic diseases. Oral healthcare – new diagnostic, prevention and treatment methods in dentistry. Changing patient

behavior in dental practice. At population level: Evaluation of the availability and quality of healthcare services in dentistry. Epidemiology. Oral health and quality of life. Development and evaluation of various educational and prevention projects for the population in different age groups (including those with special needs).

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

The study plan is in line with the scientific trends, it reflects the most relevant research areas in "Dental Hygiene". Study course descriptions are clear, however, the hours distribution for the students' independent work is not reflected in the description, only contact hours are described. Literature sources in some of the descriptions, could be updated. In the context of RSUs student-centered approach, the student's independent learning is promoted by clearly formulating the learning outcomes, the student is given the opportunity to familiarize with the learning outcomes of study courses, which can contribute to their self-assessment of their learning outcomes. However, there are no elective study courses (no C part), it restricts students' possibilities to choose the courses. Emphasis is placed on making the learning outcomes of study courses linked to the results of StP studies. Internship in the clinical environment takes 12 ECTS credits, half of all the scope of the internship takes place in the environment of clinical departments of the RSU Institute of Stomatology in all four semesters, as well as during summer internship in one of the dental clinics throughout the territory of Latvia (agreements are concluded). 6 ECTS credits are devoted to an oral health promotion internship, which is essential for achieving learning outcomes in the Dental hygiene study programme.

Thematic directions of qualification papers of students are defined in accordance with development of the dental industry and market, and topics and specialization directions of projects implemented by lecturers of the study programme. Specific topics are offered to students, however, they can also choose them themselves and formulate together with scientific supervisors of qualification papers in the study programme.

Intermediate assessment is employed in pre-clinical level, and then in the clinical level as the final examination. Dental Hygienists are providing educational and motivational interviewing practices in periodontology, orthodontic clinical training of Dentistry, following the newest requirement in Dental Hygiene and Dentistry practice. Dental hygienists are going to the hospitals to teach the hospital staff to care about the dental hygiene of the patients. The facilities are sufficient in the opinion of the Study programme director: 48 units for practical training is enough, but more (now 16) pre-clinical simulators are needed, for more sophisticated training.

Sustainability is being integrated in the study programme: collaboration with the Nursing programme in the hospital environment, dental public health aspects are used, minimal invasive methods are used too. However, some changes are needed in the opinion of the study programme director - sustainability should be included in the curriculum. Erasmus+ mobility is being implemented by the Erasmus+ blended intensive course.

Strengths named by the students - lecturers are offering guidance, constant contact with the teachers is being kept. The system providing the patients having certain systemic pathology should be created, to ensure the accessibility of the most complicated cases. Log-book introduction would be useful. Students said they understand their limitations of the competence and they are aware of the cases when the patients need some additional consultations, for example, of a periodontist or other specialist. Students said they had no possibility to visit the clinics, for example oncology or others, to see the patients having systemic pathology. Interprofessional education is needed in a more wide context, for example, going outside to the kindergartens in "Dental Hygiene" study programme.

Strengths:

- 1) Different methods of implementation and assessment of studies promote the fulfillment of aims and outcomes of the study programme. A lot of work is ongoing for standardization and objective assessment of types of examination, as well as development of interactive study materials.
- 2) Interprofessional training is an example of the excellent practice, it is implemented by the successful collaboration between “Dentistry” and “Dental Hygiene” study programmes in the clinical training.

Weaknesses:

- 1) Lack of the system providing the patients having a complex pathology for the “Dental Hygiene” students.
 - 2) Lack of sustainability knowledge in the curriculum of the “Dental Hygiene” study programme.
 - 3) Lack of pre-clinical simulation work places for the students’ training.
 - 4) Lack of elective courses in the study plan of the study programme.
 - 5) The hours distribution of the students’ independent work is missing in the study course description.
 - 6) Some literature sources in the study course descriptions are outdated.
- Lack of the possibility for the students to visit the clinics in the hospital, to see the patients having systemic pathology in the clinical environment.
- 8) Lack of interprofessional education in other than clinical environments, but in society.
 - 9) Lack of regular graduate surveys and lack of the University’s feedback for the employers with regard to the changes implemented in the study programme “Dental Hygiene”.
 - 10) Lack of the possibility for the students to visit the rural areas during their studies in the study programme “Dental Hygiene”.
 - 11) The skills of educating kids and their parents about maintaining good oral health are insufficient.

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1. The First level professional higher education programme "Dental Hygiene" (41724) is provided by necessary infrastructure, information resources relevant to the field of study and technical equipment required for achieving programme learning outcomes.

The buildings are equipped with teaching classrooms, spaces for group work, library, laboratories relevant to the specifics of the programme. The technological equipment, Internet connection, Wi-Fi coverage, etc. is in full compliance with the programme's needs as well as with data safety principles.

Library resources of the University are considerable, they are focused on informational support and provision of teaching and research activities of the academic staff, researchers, and students of the programme. The provision of e-resources for the "Dental Hygiene" study programme includes four ebook databases and eight full-text journals databases. The collection has been formed in accordance with the Universal Decimal Classification (UDC). Collection of the library consists of approximately 560,500 physical units, including around 252,200 books (data as at 1 January 2023). Library resources are regularly supplemented with both new procurements and donations

corresponding to the profile, as well as books published by RSU. The subscribed databases provide access to around 500,000 subscribed electronic resource units (458,458 e-books and 41,607 e-journals). The Library provides lecturers and students with access to Latvian and international electronic resources. In total, more than 30 online e-resources are available (<https://www.rsu.lv/biblioteka/resursi>). (Annex 23.2_Anx_Evaluation of the Library Resources_Faculty of Dentistry StP.).

The Faculty of Dentistry, including the “Dental Hygiene” study programme has many modern equipped simulatory rooms for the effective conduct of theoretical and practical classes: 3 rooms with training dummies and 2 rooms with simulators are available for student pre-clinic training. The programme plans and purchases new modern equipment every academic year. In recent years, the material and technical base has been replenished with the latest Powder Jet equipment, Kavo ultrasonic scanners, low-speed teeth polishing equipment and a Foti diagnostic camera (for diagnosing caries). This equipment allows students to master the use of the latest technologies and improve their knowledge.

The RSU Institute of Stomatology with all its infrastructure operates as a clinical base unit. <https://www.rsu.lv/sia-rsu-stomatologijas-instituts>. Students have access to study laboratories in both the pre-clinic and the clinic (RSU Institute of Stomatology serves as a clinical base unit for student training).

All resources are available to students and teaching staff. This has been confirmed during the interview with the Directors of the Study programmes, students and teaching staff. The Director of the programme confirmed that the programme is fully equipped, it has all necessary equipment, modern, technically designed classrooms, and technical provision.

2.3.2. Not applicable

2.3.3. The First level professional higher education study programme “Dental Hygiene” (41724) is planned to be financed from the funds of individuals setting the tuition fee of EUR 4800 in the first year of studying and 5100 EUR for the second year. The programme “Dental hygiene” doesn't have state budget places. The cost per 1 student in the academic year of the study programme “Dental Hygienist” is EUR 4938. The planned total number of students is at least 39 students, with 21 students admitted in the first year of study, and 3 students on average dropping out in the second year of study. Currently there are no additional funding sources available for financing the study programme. According to SAR (page 170) the minimum number of students for it to be profitable could be 40 students. Currently, an average of 43 students are studying in the study programme per academic year.

The average income per student for 2022-2023 is EUR4577, and average cost per student is EUR 4871. Funding is distributed as follows: remuneration of academic staff – 53%; department resources – 17%; other direct expenditure – 4%, fixed costs – 4%; overheads – 22%. It is evident that the programme has sufficient students to generate sufficient income.

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

The infrastructure, informative provision (library resources), financial provision, material and technical fully comply with requirements of the study programme “Dentistry” and demonstrate achievements of programme learning outcomes. The funding available to the study programme and the use of funding ensures full implementation of the study process, the study programme has the minimum number of students to ensure the profitability of the study programme and facilitates the development of the study programme.

It has to be noted that The First level professional higher education study programme “Dental Hygiene” places are self-financed. The RSU would like to have more state-funded places.

Strengths:

1) Programme is provided by necessary infrastructure and technical equipment required for

achieving programme learning outcomes.

2) The University has well- equipped simulatory rooms for improving practical skills, working spaces for students, including free access to the library's resources.

Weaknesses:

1) Lack of state-funded study places in the "Dental Hygiene" study programme

Assessment of the requirement [6]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The study provision, informative provision material and technical provision, financial provision with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and ensuring the achievement of learning outcomes is fully compliant.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1. The qualification of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme "Dental Hygiene" complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements set forth in the regulatory enactments (SAR, p. 171-172) and 24.7_Anx_Analysis_Academic_staff_Dental_hig.pdf.). This enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses. The members of staff include not just academically qualified but also highly-professionally-qualified staff that participate in the implementation of the study programme "Dental Hygiene" of the Faculty of Dentistry. In other words, RSU lecturers and specialists are also highly experienced for dental clinical placements, in collaboration with 43 employees, who together with RSU's 27 permanent lecturers ensure effective implementation of the programme, as well as the required level of education and training of dental hygienists. Annex 24.7 shows that 5 of the 27 academic staff representatives are professors, 2 are associate professors, 6 assistant professors, 7 lecturers, as well as 7 assistants. SAR (p.172) and confirmed by interviews with various stakeholders during on- site visit, academic staff at RSU in dental hygiene conforms to the application and selection procedure as regulated by the Regulations of Rīga Stradiņš University on Academic Staff Positions, (Regulations on Academic Elections at Rīga Stradiņš University) and Rīga Stradiņš University Process "Elections of Academic Staff".

2.4.2. The composition of teaching staff in the study programme "Dental Hygiene" is mainly stable. As highlighted in SAR section 2.4.1. stability is also achieved by having lecturers having both academic work experience as well as practical work experience in dentistry and dental hygiene. In the reporting period under assessment, there have been minor changes in permanent lecturers and invited teachers of study programme "Dental Hygiene". Nevertheless, the study programme is work-in-progress as RSU is planning to transform the study programme to Bachelor level and therefore requiring investment in composition of staff to accommodate changes.

The changes were mainly related to ensuring succession - and filling vacant positions after retirement, as well as interaction across generations. In addition, the interaction with dentists who increasingly see the potential of dental hygienists as part of interdisciplinary dental team services has increased. A major challenge is finding individuals more interested in academic work in view of the massive discrepancies between university remuneration and what one can earn from the private sector.

Ratio of the number of students and teachers in the study programme "Dental hygiene": 47

students and 43 teachers (information on students in Annex 16, on teachers in Annex 24.7). The ratio of the number of students and teachers is 1.1. Within the framework of the dental hygienist study programme a teacher shall be ensured in clinical and pre-clinical study courses: student ratio 1:8.

2.4.3. Not applicable.

2.4.4. As identified in Annexes 6.2 and 6.4 6.2_Anx_Biographies_teaching_staff_2LPSP_Dentistry_EN_831pages.pdf and 6.4_Anx_Ac_staff_publications_IF factor_Facult_Dentistry.pdf, each member of the academic staff in has published in peer-reviewed editions over the last six years, including international editions or possess five years of practical experience in dentistry in accordance with the Law on Higher Education Institutions. The Faculty of Dentistry has experienced academic members of staff and with the invitation of international colleagues ensures adequate coverage of the profession from both practical and academic perspective.

2.4.5. According to the SAR (p. 163) and interviews during on-site visit visibly demonstrated that teaching staff-lecturers in the study programme "Dental Hygiene " mainly collaborate within the Faculty of Dentistry. However, a mechanism of mutual cooperation has been established not only with the Faculty of Dentistry, but also as part of RSU's framework with other RSU departments.

Association of Dental Hygienists, as well as the owners of the dental clinics and other employers participate in university on a regular basis. For example, there were 5-6 surveys over the past five years. However, there was no feedback given back after the surveys from the University side. Employers stated they accepted several students for internships, with good feedback so much so that about 20 percent have been retained for employment after graduation.

As discussed in SAR (p.177-178), as well as confirmed during interviews in site visit, the mechanism for mutual cooperation between teaching staff-lecturers that has been created within the Dental Hygiene study programme and within the Faculty of Dentistry is that "Dental Hygiene" lecturers, who are involved in teaching professional dentistry study courses meet in Zoom or face-to-face meetings on a regular basis (at least 1-2 times per month) to discuss latest news in individual dentistry areas

(Periodontology, Prevention of Dental Diseases, Paediatric Dentistry, Public Health Care in Dentistry). The staff set new aims for the acquisition of a new dental technology - a method that can be used to train students in several study courses (ICDAS index - in 2019, ICON method in 2021). In addition, in 2022, a group of lecturers of the study programme "Dental Hygiene" participated in the development of the standard profession of dental hygienists (version 3). Furthermore, lecturers regularly participate in the development of new projects and in the implementation of Nordplus projects (meeting in working groups). Cooperation has also developed with the RSU Department of Nursing and Obstetric Care within the framework of the multi-professional study course "Promotion of Health for Families" (2020-2022). Last but not least, the director of the study programme "Dental Hygiene" regularly participates in the meetings of heads of departments of the Faculty of Dentistry and in the meetings of the Faculty Council. Lecturers and also students are informed about the latest news. Meetings with students from both study courses take place once a semester. Each course has a "group of active students" who participate in and support all activities organized by the study programme, such as voluntary participation in different oral health promotions events - campaigns "Fields enter cities" - 8 September 2018, "Gingival Health Week" - 7-12 May 2019, "Researchers' Night at RSU" - autumn 2018, 2019, "World Oral Health Day" - 20 March 2022.

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

The qualification of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme "Dental Hygiene" complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study

programme and the requirements set forth in the regulatory enactments.

Strengths:

- 1) The teaching staff and leaders of the study programme “Dental Hygiene” have demonstrated that they are committed to the profession and to developing it.
- 2) The community of dental hygienists in Latvia are fully aware of the potential of the profession in improving interdisciplinarity in dental care and in working autonomously as practitioners.

Weaknesses:

- 1) The discrepancies in the higher remuneration in private practice as practitioners or even professionally in hospitals, and academia is a barrier for recruiting teachers.

Assessment of the requirement [7]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The qualifications of the academic staff and those of the visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting docents, visiting lecturers and visiting assistants are compliant with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements set out in the respective regulatory enactments as specified in the documentation (SAR) and site visits as well as 24.7_Anx_Analysis_Academic_staff_Dental_hig.pdf.

2.5. Assessment of the Compliance

Requirements

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The First level PHESP “Dental Hygiene” complies with the State Professional Higher Education Standard – Cabinet of Ministers’ Regulations No. 305 “Regulations on the State Standard of the Professional Higher Education” (13 June, 2023).

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The First level PHESP “Dental Hygiene” complies with the professional standard of dental hygienist registered in the National Centre for Education coordinated at the meeting of the Tripartite Sub-Council for Co-operation in Vocational Education and Employment of 14 December 2022, minutes No.7 (Annex 18.2_profesijas_standarta_kartejums_Zobu_Hig_ENG.pdf).

- 3 3 - The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in all languages in which the study programme is implemented, and they comply with the requirements set forth in Section 561 , Paragraph two and Section 562 , Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The RSU has provided the study course descriptions for the The First level PHESP "Dental Hygiene" (Annex 20_Anx_Study_course_description_Dental_Hygiene.pdf). The descriptions of the study courses are fully compliant with the requirements set forth in Section 561, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions. The descriptions of the study courses: define the requirements for the commencement of the acquisition of the study course; determine the aims for the implementation of the study course and the planned learning outcomes; outline the content of the study course necessary for the achievement of learning outcomes, contain the study course topic layout, mandatory and supplementary literature, indicate other sources of information; describe the organization and tasks for the students' independent work; determine the assessment criteria of learning outcomes; however the hours distribution of the students' independent work is missing in the study course description.

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

The sample of the diploma and its supplement (Annex 24.1_pielik_Zobu Higienists_eng) are issued for completing the study programme in accordance with the Cabinet of Ministers' Regulation No. 202 of 16.04.2013 "Procedures for Issuing State-Recognized Higher Education Certificates", however in the sample Diplomas different admission requirements are indicated in Latvian and English (in Latvian: specialized secondary education (dental assistant, dental nurse, dental technician, nurse or feldsher), but in English: general secondary education).

- 5 5 - The academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements set forth in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 6 6 - Academic study programmes provided for less than 250 full-time students may be implemented and less than five professors and associated professors of the higher education institution may be involved in the implementation of the mandatory and limited elective part of these study programmes provided that the relevant opinion of the Council for Higher Education has been received in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 7 7 - At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of an academic doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field of science. At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a professional doctoral study programme in arts (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 8 8 - The teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme are proficient in the official language in accordance with the regulations on the level of the official language knowledge and the procedures for testing official language proficiency for performing professional duties and office duties.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The RSU has provided annexes

(24.4_AnxCertification_Regarding_Latvian_Language_of_the_Academic_Staff.pdf, 6.2_AnxBiographies_teaching_staff_1LPSP_Dental_Hygiene_EN_195pages.pdf and CV_papildinformacija_Zobu_Hig.zip) confirming that the language proficiency of the teaching staff is compliant with Cabinet Regulation. No. 733 "Regulations Regarding the Extent of the Knowledge of the Official Language, the Procedures for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language and the State Fee for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language".

- 9 9 - The teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language, if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The sample of the study agreement is fully compliant with the Law on Higher Education Institutions Section 46, paragraph 2, and the Cabinet Regulations No 70 of 23.01.2007 "The Mandatory Provisions to be included in the study agreement" (24.8_AnxCStudy contract sample_Health Care study direction.pdf).

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

In Annex 24.2_pielik_Apliecinajumi_par_parnemsanu_eng.7z it is stated that RSU confirms that it guarantees compensation for losses to those studying in the study programmes of the RSU's study field "Health Care", if the study programme is not accredited due to RSU's activity or inaction or the license of the study programme is revoked and the student does not want to continue their studies in another study programme (RSU's letter NO. 3-12/1670 of 23.11.2009 to the Ministry of Education and Science, as well as the certificate within the framework of the 2023 accreditation documentation).

However, the documents available to the experts do not contain any document indicating exactly which RSU study programme could be studied by students of the The First level PHESP "Dental Hygiene".

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

RSU has provided the confirmation that students are guaranteed compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the license of the study programme is revoked. It is ensured based on the Section 55(8) of the Law on Higher Education Institutions and Cabinet regulations No 795 of 11 December 2018 "Regulations on Licensing of Study Programmes", Paragraph 13.4. The relevant document can be found in Annex - 24.3_AnxCertification_of_Compensation_of_Losses_to_Students.pdf.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Assessment of the requirement [8]

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

There are errors in both the Latvian and English languages in the diploma and its annex.

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

The inclusion of the First level PHESP "Dental Hygiene" in the study field „Health Care " is justified and follows from the aim of the given study programme, the learning outcomes to be achieved, the content of the programme and the degree and qualification to be awarded. The study plan is in line with the scientific trends, it reflects the most relevant research areas in Dental Hygiene. The infrastructure, informative provision (library resources), financial provision, material and technical fully comply with requirements of the study programme "Dental Hygiene" and demonstrate achievements of programme learning outcomes. The main strengths identified by the expert group are:

The importance for this study programme is in view of the prevention and health promotion involved in dental hygiene.

Dental hygiene is in demand mostly in private practice to work within interdisciplinary teams with dentists in private practice.

Dentists are increasingly acknowledging the importance of dental hygienists in the field of oral health in terms of health promotion and prevention of disease and dental caries/irreparable damages.

They are the dentists themselves that are pushing for the involvement of dental hygienists in interdisciplinary teams - and therefore unlike in some other specializations in medicine there are no turf wars.

RSU has recognised the market potential in dental health and acted upon investing in this field which is now bearing its fruit.

Different methods of implementation and assessment of studies promote the fulfillment of aims and outcomes of the study programme.

A lot of work is ongoing for standardization and objective assessment of types of examination, as well as development of interactive study materials.

Interprofessional training is an example of the excellent practice, it is implemented by the successful collaboration between "Dentistry" and "Dental Hygiene" study programmes in the clinical training.

Programme is provided by necessary infrastructure and technical equipment required for achieving programme learning outcomes.

The University has well- equipped simulatory rooms for improving practical skills, working spaces for students, including free access to the library's resources.

The teaching staff and leaders of the study programme "Dental Hygiene" have demonstrated that they are committed to the profession and to developing it.

The community of dental hygienists in Latvia are fully aware of the potential of the profession in

improving interdisciplinarity in dental care and in working autonomously as practitioners. However there are some weaknesses identified, the main of them the study programme is self-funded and not state-funded. This puts pressure on RSU to make sure that courses opening are filled through their marketing strategy. The discrepancies in the higher remuneration in private practice as practitioners or even professionally in hospitals, and academia is a barrier for recruiting teachers. Lack of interprofessional education in other than clinical environments, but in society. Lack of regular graduate surveys and lack of the University's feedback for the employers with regard to the changes implemented in the study programme "Dental Hygiene".

The main strengths are related with the importance of the profession of dental hygienist, its constant demand, especially in the private practice. Dentists are increasingly acknowledging the importance of dental hygienists in the field of oral health in terms of health promotion and prevention of disease and dental caries/irreparable damages. Interprofessional training is an example of excellent practice, it is implemented by the successful collaboration between "Dentistry" and "Dental Hygiene" study programmes in the clinical training. The community of dental hygienists in Latvia are fully aware of the potential of the profession in improving interdisciplinarity in dental care and in working autonomously as practitioners.

The main weakness is that the study programme is self-funded and not state-funded. This puts pressure on RSU to make sure that courses opening are filled through their marketing strategy. Also, there are discrepancies in the higher remuneration in private practice as practitioners or even professionally in hospitals, and academia is a barrier for recruiting teachers. There are some weaknesses related with the content of studies, such as lack of the system providing the patients having a complex pathology for the "Dental Hygiene " students, lack of sustainability knowledge, lack of pre-clinical simulation work places for the students' training and others.

Evaluation of the study programme "Dental Hygiene "

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Dental Hygiene "

Short-term recommendations

The system, providing the patients having a complex pathology for the "Dental Hygiene" students, should be created.
Sustainability knowledge in the curriculum of the study programme should be provided.
Elective part (C part) should be included in the study plan of the study programme.
The hours distribution for the students' independent work should be indicated in the study course description.
The literature sources in the study course descriptions should be updated.
To provide the students the possibility to visit the clinics in the hospital, to see the patients having systemic pathology in the clinical environment.
To improve interprofessional education in other than clinical environments, but in society.
Graduate surveys should be implemented regularly, the feedback should be given by the RSU afterwards.
To provide the students the possibility to visit the rural areas during their studies.

To improve the skills of the students to educate kids and their parents, about maintaining good oral health.

Preparation for the transition to Bachelor degree should ensure sufficient staff and find ways to overcome the challenge of the discrepancy in the remuneration academia-professional duties.

There should be feedback from the university side of surveys to participant stakeholders outside university.

Long-term recommendations

The number of preclinical workplaces for the students of Dental Hygiene study programme should be increased.

The number of state-funded study places should be increased.

Ensuring to put in place satisfying the demand for Dental Hygienists not only in the private sector but also in hospital settings.

II - "Medical Engineering and Physics " ASSESSMENT

II - "Medical Engineering and Physics " ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1. The joint professional bachelor study programme "Medical Engineering and Physics" (42527) complies with indicators, conditions and criteria of the study field of "Health Care". The length of the implementation of the study programme, which is 4 years, is evaluated as sufficient for acquiring the necessary skills and way of thinking to enter the labor market. The joint study programme is implemented in cooperation with Riga Technical University (RTU). At RTU the study programme is included under the study field of Mechanics and Metal Processing, Heat Power Engineering, Heat Technology, and Mechanical Engineering in accordance with their official website - <https://www.rtu.lv/en/studies/all-study-programmes/open/medical-engineering-and-medical-physics?id=18>.

2.1.2. According to the SAR p. 405, the title of the study programme is "Medical Engineering and Physics" in the study field of "Health Care" with education classification code 42527. First two numbers - 42 stand for second level professional higher education (fifth level professional qualification and professional Bachelor's degree) or second level professional higher education (fifth level professional qualification), which is implemented after general or vocational secondary education. The last 3 numbers (527) standing for Medical engineering according to the classification of Latvian education which can be accessed here: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/291524-noteikumi-par-latvijas-izglitiba-klasifikaciju>. As it is a professional study programme, after graduation, students obtain a qualification and a Professional Bachelor's degree in Medical Physics. According to the SAR p.405, the aim of the programme is to prepare qualified specialists – holders of a Professional Bachelor's degree in medical physics and medical physical technology engineers (according to the professional standard for a medical physical technology engineer) for professional work in the area of medical engineering and medical physics with professional knowledge in the composition of medical equipment, apparatus and instruments, physical and technical operating principles, manufacturing technology, terms of use and safety; with

practical skills in work with medical equipment – purchase, installation, operation, adjustment and quality assurance, as well as skills for the planning and supervising of radiation technologies and dosimetry of patients and staff. To prepare for experimental research activities. To prepare students for continuing with professional Master studies.

According to the information provided in the SAR p.408, the general admission requirement of this programme is secondary education. The programme is implemented in two languages - Latvian and English. For the study programme that is implemented in English, there is an additional requirement of English language level of at least B2 level. According to SAR p.411, the enrolment of students to the joint programme is ensured by Riga Technical University (hereinafter RTU). Applicants are admitted to full-time undergraduate programmes based on the results of the centralized examinations (CE) in Mathematics, Latvian Language, one Foreign Language, and the final grades in individual subjects obtained in the secondary education document, and the entrance examination results. If, in addition to these CEs, the applicant has a CE in Physics or Chemistry, the results of these CEs are taken into account in the ranking calculation.

It has been stated in the SAR p.408, that after successful completion of the studies, students are awarded with a Professional Bachelor's Degree of Medical Physics. According to the SAR p.408, the study programme is a full-time study programme with 180 CP to be gathered during the study process of 4 years and 6 months. In the opinion of the experts, the title, code, degree and also the professional qualification to be obtained of the study programme, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation as well as the implementation language, are reasonable and justified.

2.1.3. According to SAR p.411, minor changes have been made within the study programme parameters. First of all, since the previous accreditation, the outcomes of the programme have been reviewed and clarified reducing the amount of outcomes to 9 based on QAHE instructions. Secondly, the number of CPs of the programme changed from 181 to 180, reducing the volume of placement by RTU from 26 CP to 25 CP. Thirdly, the code in the RTU accreditation phase changed from 42 526 (other engineering sciences) to 42 527 (Medical engineering). Based on the opinion by the expert group, the corrections made to the study programme's parameters within the assessment of the study field are analyzed, justified and would be supported.

2.1.4. According to SAR p.414, medical physicist is a healthcare professional with specific education for the use of the concept of physics in medical equipment and is competent to practice independently in one or more subsectors of medical physics: radiation oncology or radiotherapy, diagnostics and invasive radiology, nuclear medicine and radiation safety. However, medical physicists also work in many other areas that use sophisticated technologies and equipment – audiology, neurology, neurophysiology, cardiology. In accordance with the Radiation Safety Law and the laws and regulations subordinate thereto, there are approximately 500 medical institutions using medical devices with sources of ionizing radiation in Latvia. Radiation monitoring data show that the use of ionizing radiation devices is increasing both in diagnosis and treatment. In 2006, only 20% of all radiation exposure was generated by medical equipment.

According to information provided in the SAR p.415, there is shortage of medical physics professionals in the world and also in Latvia (<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/297537-specialitates-profesijas-kuras-prognoze-butisku-darbaspeka-trukumuu-n-kuras-darba-latvijas-republika-var-uzaicinat-arzemniekus>). It means that there is a substantial need to have a study programme that helps to prepare specialists in demand of the labor market. As current number accessible shows - all graduates are actively employed in the labor market.

According to the data provided in the SAR pp.415-416, the dynamics in the number of students are stable with a slight increase in the last few years. There is a noticeably higher number of first year students enrolled than the number of graduates of the programme. Based on the information

accessible, approximately 15% of students leave their studies in the first years for various reasons such as poor academic performance or hardship combining studies with work. According to the statistics provided in the SAR p.416, it can be concluded that the majority of study places are state funded budget places. Substantially small number of study places are self-financed. In the last few years, there has been a slight increase in international students enrolled in the programme, which is a positive trend that needs to be continued as comparing the amount of students still is considered to be small. According to the information accessible in the SAR p.417, international students are admitted to the programme every two years and study for a tuition fee. These students come from different countries – Uzbekistan, Russia, Azerbaijan, and several other Asian countries – Sri Lanka, India according to the data of RTU.

2.1.5. Based on the opinion of an expert group, this joint study programme combines two strong universities that have managed to combine their specialties of academic knowledge in one study programme to bring the greatest benefit for the future specialists. RTU has been known for its great strength and focus on technology and innovations that includes development of substantial scientific solutions for humankind. The joint study programme is formed as medical study courses are implemented by RSU as a university rich in tradition and experience, which has the necessary theoretical, material and technical base, whereas engineering study courses are implemented by RTU.

As stated in the SAR p.417, RSU provides students with the theoretical base of medical study courses (RSU implements 10% of the total programme offering medicine-related study courses such as “Anatomy”, “Physiology”, “Cell Biology”, “Health Economics”, “Basics of Employment Protection and Civil Protection”, “Medical Instruments, Equipment and their Application”, “Medical Ethics”, “Medical Terminology in English”), as well as the engineering technical base – equipment used by the Department of Clinical Skills and Medical Technologies (DCSMT) of the Faculty of Medicine (FM) of RSU – imitated simulated hospital wards with equipment.

Based on the opinion of the expert group, the development and implementation of the joint study programme is justified and ensures a quality study process.

As clarified during on-site visit, QA matters are mainly dealt with by Joint Quality Council, which ensures successful communication on crucial matters in regards to the implementation and organizational questions of the study process.

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

Almost all of the indicators of the study programme are in compliance with the existing preconditions of the implementation of the study programme. The study programme “Medical Engineering and Physics” complies with the study field indicators, conditions and criteria. In the opinion of the experts, the title, code, degree and qualification to be obtained of the study programme, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation as well as the implementation languages, are reasonable and justified. The study programme is implemented in Latvian and English. The qualification obtained differs based on the implementation languages, which has to be unified and thus adjusted accordingly. The degree obtained from a Professional Bachelor’s degree in Medical Physics. It is in accordance with the Latvian classification the code 42527 Medical engineering is under the thematic area of education “Engineering and Technology”. There is a stable demand for the programme within the local market, however, it would be necessary to attract more international students in the future as there is a great opportunity to provide study programme in English. The majority of students are able to study in state-funded places. The goals, objectives, learning outcomes are in line and in compliance.

Strengths:

1. The majority of students can study in state-funded places.
2. Unique joint study programme that ensures students with the best set of knowledge from two universities.

Weaknesses:

1. Comparably low demand of the programme in English from international students;
2. Qualification obtained differs based on the implementation language and has to be unified;

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1. The strategic aim of programme is to ensure professional studies that are relevant to economic, cultural, national defense and security, and social needs, based on the theoretical foundations of the sectoral sciences, and that are consistent with occupational standards (if approved by the Tripartite Cooperation Sub-Council for Professional Education and Employment) and applicable in practice.

The assessment of the compliance of the study programme with the standard has been evaluated by mapping the study programme against the standard. The mapping process and a summary of the mapping of the part of the study programme "Medical Engineering and Physics" implemented by RSU (Annex 17.1. and 18.2).

The study programme is designed to develop knowledge and skills sequentially, starting with general courses and progressing to industry-specific courses focused on product creation. The programme develops and educates highly qualified and socially responsible medical engineering and physics specialists with the knowledge, skills, and competences to work with medical equipment, apparatus, and instruments, including their design, physical and technical principles of operation, manufacturing technology, conditions of use, and safety (SAR p. 418).

The curriculum begins with broad classes and progresses to product creation-focused industrial courses. The programme trains highly qualified and socially responsible medical engineering and physics specialists in medical equipment, apparatus, and instruments' design, physical and technical principles of operation, manufacturing technology, conditions of use, and safety. Gained theoretical and practical knowledge by demonstrating anatomical structures and functions, integrating individual skills into a wellness concept, and comprehending functional diagnostic methods. They can use anatomy and physiology to analyze human body functioning and limitations, know the indications and contraindications for the most essential assistive technology, and compensate for functional limitations. Teaching staff monitors sector developments, labor market trends, and scientific advances. Teaching professionals with medical engineering and physics experience administer study programme courses (SAR p. 419).

The study programme ensures the attainment of the level 6 professional qualification and promotes students' competitiveness in the labor market. The programme ensures the achievement of learning outcomes in accordance with the knowledge, skills and competences at level 6 of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) as defined in the Classification of Education in Latvia and RSU programme at level 6 of the EQF and professional Bachelor's study programme "Medical Engineering and Physics" with the National education standard (Annex 18.1 and 17.1).

The total amount of the joint professional Bachelor's study programme "Medical Engineering and Physics" is 180 CP / 270 ECTS, which meets criteria set by the National education standard. Updated study programme content aligns with programme goals, meets standard requirements for medical physical technology engineers, and incorporates current scientific trends since last accreditation. In collaboration with industry professionals, the study programme was improved to give students comprehensive professional knowledge, practical skills, and the ability to independently analyze

information, make decisions, and understand professional ethics. Students study and investigate sector-relevant topics since the study process is organized. Student final paper topics and ideas come from medical institutions and medical equipment service centers (SAR p. 419).

To comply with legal regulations, the study programme now consists of A (compulsory part) courses (118 CP / 177 ECTS), B (restricted electives) courses (19 CP / 28,5 ECTS), professional specialization courses (11.5 CP), humanities and social studies (4 CP / 6 ECTS), and languages (4 CP / 6 ECTS). From 26 CP / 39 ECTS to 25 CP / 37.5 ECTS the placement volume changed. The Department of Occupational and Environmental Medicine of the Faculty of Medicine of RSU consolidated the mandatory study courses "Occupational Safety" and "Civil Protection" into "Basics of Employment Protection and Civil Protection". The Health Management Lecturer Group of RSU's Faculty of Medicine replaced the study subject "Economics" in all study programs with "Health Economics". The RTU study course "General Metrology" was replaced with a more specialized course "Medical Equipment Technology Measurements," and the study course "Radiation Safety in Medicine" was replaced with "Radiation and Environmental Safety in Medicine," which reviewed course content requirements under the Environmental Protection Law and Civil Defence Law. The following study courses were removed from Part A: "Computer Science (Basic Course)" and "Basics of Communication", however "Basics of Nanomedicine" and "Medical Instruments, Equipment and Systems, their Application" were added. "Anatomy and Physiology" has been increased from 2 CP / 3 ECTS to 4 CP / 6 ECTS, and "Design of Medical Equipment" has been increased from 3 CP / 4.5 ECTS to 4 CP / 6 ECTS. By combining "Medical Instruments, Equipment and Systems" (3 CP / 4.5 ECTS), "Technique for Physiological Measurements" (2 CP / 3 ECTS), and "Measurement technique in Medicine" An extended study course of 8 CP / 12 ECTS was devised and implemented in two semesters (RTU). Students at RSU regularly take the course "Medical Instruments, Equipment and Systems, their Application" to gain practical knowledge of measuring and technology applications in clinical medicine (SAR p. 420).

RSU implements the "Medical Engineering Business" specialization module and the study programme offers the following specialization modules with 11 CP / 16.5 ECTS courses in Part B (limited electives): specialization "Medical Equipment"; specialization "Medical Physics and Nanomedicine"; specialization "E-Medicine"; specialization "Medical Electronics"; specialization "Biomechanics and Assistive Technology"; specialization "Medical Materials" and specialization "Medical Engineering Business" (SAR p. 420).

The analysis of the study programme and the provided information show a correlation between course content, learning outcomes, goals, and other indicators, as well as the aims and achievable learning outcomes of the programme.

The expert considers that the course content is current and relevant to the field and labor market. The programme's conformity with scientific trends shows that study courses are updated to reflect sector, labor market, and scientific trends. However, experts consider that currently, several part B study courses proposed by RSU (specialization direction – medical engineering business) are not implemented, and the list contains subjects that are already in Section B. It is recommended to give students more options for the courses in Section C.

2.2.2. Not applicable.

2.2.3. When starting a study course, the assessment criteria and methods for the relevant year are presented to students. Learning outcomes are assessed in accordance with Section 15(1) of the Law on Higher Education Institutions and the RSU Academic Regulations I (web: https://www.rsu.lv/sites/default/files/imce/Documents/academic-regulations_i_01032023.pdf)

Joint professionals Bachelor's study programme "Medical Engineering and Physics" implementation includes lectures, practical classes, company field excursions, and independent studies, covering medical engineering, physics, and related fields. The joint programme performed by RSU employs

varying study methods based on course objectives and duties. The study programme's courses are student-centered since they take into account students' prior knowledge, abilities, and experience, allowing for customized learning. In small groups, teachers collaborate with students. This allows optimal study approaches. Students learn theoretical and practical skills during the learning process. Lectures, seminars, discussions, practical lessons, individual and group work, and student presentations are employed during study. Joint lectures are held for multiple groups of students, while practical classes are held separately. Interactive classrooms encourage students to discuss lecture themes, make decisions, and solve problems (SAR p. 422 - 423).

The study methods aim to enhance students' ability to analyze circumstances and problems, assess their progress logically, make decisions, and develop communication skills. In lectures, seminars, and practical sessions, manikins, models, interactive boards, multimedia projectors, posters, and diagrams are employed. The study course "Anatomy" uses study materials, literature, e-learning, internet anatomy resources, and licensed syllabi. Students can freely improve their knowledge and skills by working with electron microscopy circuits and histological preparations in "Cells and Tissue Microstructure" (SAR p. 423).

Taking the "Basics of Employment Protection and Civil Protection" course can help students organize and perform duties independently, including hospital department placements. All study courses in the curriculum connect to study goals, tasks, and learning outcomes (SAR p. 423).

Exam content and volume align with syllabus and professional qualification skills and knowledge requirements. All credit point requirements are in each study course description. Starting students receive short information material with the most crucial information about organizing and implementing studies (SAR p. 423).

To ensure graduates' knowledge, competences, and skills are integrated, study courses are designed to reflect current challenges through lectures, practical work, and modern study methods (e.g., specialized software, solution-oriented methods). Individualize student care: Each course has handouts, electronic materials, and presentations; each lecturer has a tutorial time, which students are informed of when starting the course, and students can apply for individual tutorials in the e-learning system; and the individual approach is used in selecting topics for independent work, study projects, and Bachelor's projects (SAR p. 423).

Study curriculum implementation includes regular mutual feedback. Lecturers provide regular comments on submitted tests, exams, projects, reports, placement reports, and presentations. Teaching staff survey students' satisfaction with course material, wishes, and proposals at the end of the course. Students contribute to study process improvement by filling out surveys for course and programme evaluation. The assessment of study courses comprises student involvement in classes, individual and group work, discussions, and independent work (SAR p. 423).

Assessment results are designed to meet course learning aims and provide feedback to students. RSU study courses are implemented according to the RSU Code of Ethics and Academic Regulations I. Attending and taking interim exams in required, restricted, and free electives is required. Students' knowledge and skills are assessed in practical classes, practical work protocols, colloquiums, and exams in the final assessment of study courses. The student can take course examinations twice during a session or extension, and the second exam is examined by the commission invited by the academic structure unit head, unless it is electronic. The student goes through the exmatriculation after the session extension if they fail the exam (SAR p. 423).

Assessment of the joint study programme, the study course/ module implementation methods has a list of methods used to contribute to the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study courses and the aims of the study programme. In this case of a joint study programme, the methods are logical, clear, transparent and used to deliver such a study programme. The student-centered principles are taken into account in the implementation of the study process. The criteria is well met.

2.2.4. The placement is implemented in accordance with the placement agreement on ensuring a

place of placement or according to the decision of the higher education institution regarding the provision of placement opportunities. The placement is implemented in the amount of 25 CP. The placement agreement is concluded between the higher education institution and the employer. The placement agreement or the decision of the higher education institution on the provision of placements includes the placement aims and objectives, the planning of the placement, the procedure for evaluating the placement achievements, as well as the duties and responsibilities of the parties. The student achieves the placement objective based on the acquired learning outcomes and previous work experience, if any. Representatives of the organizations with which the placement agreement has been concluded participate in defining the aims and objectives of the placement and in evaluating the placement (Annex 17.1).

Internship placement is a crucial component of the study programme, aimed at enhancing students' professional abilities and knowledge in line with professional standards. Placement in the 25-CP professional Bachelor's degree "Medical Engineering and Physics" is guaranteed by RSU. The placement should prepare the study for an engineering project and Bachelor's thesis. According to the RTU Institute of Biomedical Engineering and Nanotechnologies (IBEN) placement guidelines, placement is organized in four phases to gradually attain this goal and combine theoretical information gained during studies with real-life challenges: basic skills acquisition placement; clinical placement; scientific research placement and designer's technological placement. The placement is offered by RTU, students can also express their wishes. The opportunities and organization of the practice for both students in both English and Latvian are the same. As a partner institution, the RSU Page 424 SAR: Placement in the professional Bachelor's study programme "Medical Engineering and Physics" is intended in the amount of 25 CP, its implementation is ensured by RSU.promotes, helps to solve problems related to the organization of clinical practice in English and Latvian students (Annex 9; SAR p. 425).

The internship is foreseen during the study programme, the opportunities and provision of internship offered to students, are well organized and work is effective in achieving learning outcomes. The organization of the internship and goals are related and contribute to the achievements of the learning outcomes. The internship complies with the requirements of regulatory enactments. This refers equally to both, RSU and RTU Universities involved in study programme implementation.

It is clear that for the study programme implemented in English, there are no differences in internship in a foreign language, for foreign students (Annex 9, RTU).

2.2.5. Not applicable.

2.2.6. A Bachelor of professional higher education graduate must be able to formulate and analyze information, problems, and solutions, as well as perform professional, innovative, and research activities using theoretical foundations and skills. A Bachelor's thesis on an industrial issue is required at the end of the programme. Many final papers address clinical placement issues. About 80% of Bachelor's theses and engineering projects address medical physicists', physicians', and clinicians' difficulties. Students build research abilities by regularly studying literature and online resources, leading to effective study papers and placement reports. A year is spent on each graduation paper. In the first half-year, the student should choose a topic and organize time for writing each chapter, planning experiments, etc. To pass a diploma paper, such as a Bachelor's thesis or engineering project, the student must submit two documents: a justification for the topic's task, and a work task signed by the student, paper supervisor, advisors, and study programme director. Bachelor's thesis writing requires students to exhibit specialized knowledge and skills for the career. The assessment commission has the RSU study programme director. The future plan involves additional involvement in debating Bachelor's theses subjects and selecting reviewers, currently handled by the RTU study programme director. The RTU Rector appoints a National Examination Board (NEB) (including two medical engineering and physics professionals) to evaluate

Bachelor's theses and engineering projects, which are publicly defended. After each Bachelor's thesis defense, the NEB publishes a report assessing the quality, relevance, and average student assessment of the Bachelor's theses and engineering projects (SAR p. 425 - 426).

Students' final papers are current, aligned with programme goals, and provide learning outcomes that meet industry needs. The National Examination Board praises professional work's quality and feasibility. Some topics of defended Bachelor's theses and engineering projects are: "Integrated textile electrode size and placement influence on electromyography signal"; "Device for wrist physiotherapy"; Optical Stimulation technique for Atomic force microscopy" and others (Annex 22).

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

The strategic aim of the programme is to train qualified specialists - professional bachelors in medical physics and engineers of medical technologies, in accordance with the occupational standard for engineer of medical physical technologies, professional activity in the fields of medical engineering and medical physics possess. Many final papers address clinical placement issues. About 80% of Bachelor's theses and engineering projects address medical physicists', physicians', and clinicians' difficulties. ing professional knowledge of the equipment used in medicine, the construction of apparatus and instruments, their physical and technical principles of operation, manufacturing technology, conditions of use and safety, with practical skills in work with medical equipment, their purchase, installation, use, adjustment and quality management, and in the planning and monitoring of radiation technology, patient and staff dosimetry, prepare for experimental research activity, prepare students for the continuation of studies at professional Master's level. The analysis of the study programme and the provided information shows a correlation between course content, learning outcomes, goals, and other indicators, as well as the aims and achievable learning outcomes of the programme. Course content is current and relevant to the field and labor market. The programme's conformity with scientific trends shows that study courses are updated to reflect sector, labor market, and scientific trends. However, currently, students need more options for the courses in section C. Assessment of the joint study programme, the study course/ module implementation methods has a list of methods used to contribute to the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study courses and the aims of the study programme. In this case of a joint study programme, the methods are logical, clear, transparent and used to deliver such a study programme. The student-centered principles are taken into account in the implementation of the study process. The internship is foreseen during the study programme, the opportunities and provision of internship offered to students, are well organized and work is effective in achieving learning outcomes. The organization of the internship and goals are related and contribute to the achievements of the learning outcomes. The internship complies with the requirements of regulatory enactments. Students' final papers are current, aligned with program goals, and provide learning outcomes that meet industry needs. The National Examination Board praises professional work's quality and feasibility and topics of defended Bachelor's theses are related to engineering projects.

Strengths:

1. Placement is organized in four phases, in accordance with the general guidelines for placement of the RTU Institute of Biomedical Engineering and Nanotechnologies (IBEN).
2. The study programme is very attractive and meets the need of the job market for this type of professionals.
3. The study programme is a joint study programme between two renowned universities of Latvia, RTU and RSU, which provides a multidisciplinary environment for studying for students and gives them more opportunities for professional development.
4. Many final papers address clinical placement issues. About 80% of Bachelor's theses and

engineering projects address medical physicists', physicians', and clinicians' difficulties.

Weaknesses:

1. The list C of optional courses contains the same subjects as list B, which is compulsory. There is a very limited number of elective courses.

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1. The infrastructure, informative provision (library resources), material and technical fully comply, financial provision partly comply with requirements of the Joint professional bachelor study programme "Medical Engineering and Physics" (42527) and demonstrate achievements of programme learning outcomes.

The RSU student portal MyRSU contains all the necessary information about studies and the process thereof, as well as different services provided by the university: electronic schedules of classes, e-courses with study materials (e-studies), recordings of video lectures, assessments, application forms, financial information, RSU student's private email and access to Office365, self-service printing management, questionnaires about the study course, descriptions of study courses, application for a written statement about the student's status, documents regulating the studies (internal and external regulatory enactments), online databases. The e-learning platform of RSU is used for independent studies, which includes study course descriptions, presentations, tasks, tests, mandatory and recommended readings. The "Library for Students" section of the student portal provides access from any location to the electronic databases.

The RSU Library and its branches provide equipped computer classes and office equipment that can also be used by students of the joint bachelor study programme "Medical Engineering and Physics". A registered user may use the offered electronic resources (subscribed databases) outside the library premises, as well as receive individual passwords that allow the use of library resources from home or workplace. There are also opportunities to receive consultations by applying in advance and agreeing on the time of consultation. The RSU Library also provides support to students with disabilities. The Library has an electronic reader of electronic editions BRUNO, which makes printed publications available in audio format, storing educational materials in audio format, and listening for visitors with impaired vision, language development problems, or dyslexia (SAR, page 426-427). Library resources of the University are considerable, they are focused on informational support and provision of teaching and research activities of the academic staff, researchers, and students of the StP. Students and staff have full access to the international electronic library databases. Resources of the Information Centre of the Library are freely available to any RSU student and lecturer. The collection has been formed in accordance with the Universal Decimal Classification (UDC). Library resources are regularly supplemented with both new procurements and donations corresponding to the profile, as well as books published by RSU. The subscribed databases provide access to around 500,000 subscribed electronic resource units (458,458 e-books and 41,607 e-journals). The Library provides lecturers and students with access to Latvian and international electronic resources. In

total, more than 30 online e-resources are available (Annex No. 23.2).

Experts have lauded the modernity of RSU study premises, highlighting their well-equipped facilities tailored to the needs of the curriculum. To ensure specific needs of each study course, the material base is located in departments and scientific institutes of RSU. The RSU Medical Education Technology Centre (METC) offers a new and innovative approach to medical education as part of the “Simulated hospital” project. This project also provides the technical base and necessary materials for the implementation of classes of the study course “Medical Instruments, Equipment and Systems, their Application”. Experts commend the programme provision of essential technical resources. The course aims to develop students’ knowledge and understanding of the practical use of medical instruments, devices and systems in clinical medicine. In the METC “Simulated hospital” environment, students of the programme “Medical Engineering and Physics” master the modern technologies behind simulation-based medical education during practical classes (i.e. modern manikins, simulated environment elements, debriefing systems, etc.).

As regards RTU and the provision of resources in the study programme “Medical Engineering and Physics”, the Institute of Biomedical Engineering and Nanotechnology has:

- the only laboratory of medical diagnostic equipment in the north-western region of Europe
- equipped with the widest range of equipment;
- laboratory for characterizing materials and nano objects, including threshold photoelectron and exo electron spectroscopy, infrared and FTIR spectroscopy, FTIR ATR spectroscopy
- surface analysis; XPS, AES, SIMS spectroscopy; AFM, STEM and optical microscopy; micro and
- nano indentation methods;
- radiation dosimetry apparatus;
- apparatus for evaluating the quality and safety of medical diagnostic equipment;
- apparatus for measuring bioelectric signals for analysis;
- biochip laboratory;
- powder materials laboratory;
- machine tools and 3D printing equipment for prototyping;
- electronic components and instruments for the assembly and testing of electronic devices;
- other equipment.

All resources from the RSU side are available to students and teaching staff. This has been confirmed during the interview with the Directors of the Study programmes, students and teaching staff. During the StP evaluation it was confirmed that the programme is fully equipped, it has all necessary equipment, modern, technically designed classrooms, and technical provision. Necessary library resources and databases are available for students.

2.3.2. Not applicable.

2.3.3. The Joint professional Bachelor's study programme “Medical Engineering and Physics” Latvian language flow, in RSU is currently profitable and the programme's profitability can be ensured at the minimum number of students in the programme, which is 21 students. 97 students are currently studying in the programme (SAR, page 428).

The university didn't provide data on the average cost/income per student and the minimum number of students per programme to ensure cost-effectiveness (with separate information for each language stream) after request for additional information. Therefore, the available data was used for the analysis (average revenue/costs per 1 CP).

Joint Professional Bachelor's study programme “Medical Engineering and Physics” English language flow is not profitable currently and its profitability at the existing revenues from 1 CP can be achieved with a minimum student population of 29 students. Currently, 20 students are studying in the programme. However, in order for the study programme to cover implementation and development costs, it is planned to increase the revenue from 1 CP to EUR 154.55 by reviewing

study fees (SAR, page 428).

Professional Bachelor's study programme "Medical Engineering and Physics" for Latvian and English language flow is implemented in cooperation with RTU.

The Latvian flow is financed from state budget funds and private and legal entities. The planned revenue from 1 CP is EUR 142.15 per student, part of which RSU receives from the state budget, the rest is mutually settled with RTU. Payments from natural or legal persons related to the implementation of the study programme are received by RTU. RTU calculates the distribution of the fees received, according to which mutual settlements are made. The average number of students in the study course is 25 students (SAR, page 428).

The average revenue per 1 CP is 142.15 euro in the Latvian language flow, and average cost per 1 CP is 113.17 euro. Funding is distributed as follows: academic staff – 56%; department resources – 2%; other direct costs – 4%; fixed costs – 3%; overheads – 35% (SAR, page 429).

The English flow is also implemented in cooperation with RTU. The study programme is funded by private and legal entities. Payments from natural or legal persons related to the implementation of the StP are received by RTU. RTU calculates the distribution of the fees received, according to which mutual settlements are made. The planned revenue of 1 CP is EUR 111.3, which RSU receives from RTU, the lead partner of the study programme. The revenue from 1 CP does not cover the costs of implementing the programme. In order to cover the implementation and development costs of the StP, the revenue from 1 CP is planned to be increased to EUR 154.55. The average number of students in the study course is 20 students (SAR, page 429-430).

The average revenue per 1 CP is 111.3 euro in the English language flow, and average cost per 1 CP is 136.0 euro. Funding is distributed as follows: academic staff – 67%; department resources – 3%; other direct costs – 2%, fixed costs – 5%; overheads – 23% (SAR, page 430-431). It is evident that the revenue from 1 CP does not cover the costs of implementing the English language flow programme.

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

Joint Professional Bachelor's study programme "Medical Engineering and Physics" Latvian language flow:

The infrastructure, including informative resources such as library materials, financial support, and technical resources, wholly align with the demands of the study programme, showcasing tangible accomplishments in meeting programme learning objectives. The allocated funding for the study programme is effectively utilized to guarantee the comprehensive execution of the educational process. Furthermore, the programme maintains an optimal student enrolment size, ensuring its financial viability while fostering the continual growth and enhancement of the study curriculum.

Professional Bachelor's Degree Programme "Medical Engineering and Physics" English language flow:

The infrastructure, including informative resources such as library materials and technical resources, align with the demands of the study programme, showcasing tangible accomplishments in meeting programme learning objectives.

But it should be taken into account that English stream is not profitable currently and its profitability at the existing revenues from 1 CP can be achieved with a minimum student population of 29 students. Currently, 20 students are studying in the programme. However, in order for the study programme to cover implementation and development costs, it is planned to increase the revenue from 1 CP to EUR 154.55 by reviewing study fees.

The university didn't provide data on the average cost/income per student and the minimum number of students per programme to ensure cost-effectiveness (with separate information for each language stream) after request for additional information. Therefore, the available data was used for

the analysis (average revenue/costs per 1 CP).

Strengths:

1. Advanced material and technical base for student training; plenty of high-quality library resources.

Weaknesses:

1. English flow is not profitable currently and its profitability at the existing revenues from 1 CP can be achieved with a minimum student population of 29 students.

Assessment of the requirement [6]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Advanced material and technical base for student training; plenty of high-quality library resources.

English flow is not profitable currently and its profitability at the existing revenues from 1 CP.

However, in general, experts assess that the overall availability of resources allows assess this requirement as fully compliant.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

elective part of the professional Bachelor's study programme "Medical Engineering and Physics") of RSU departments and assistants from different RSU structural units: Language Centre, Department of Morphology, Department of Public Health and Epidemiology, Department of Humanities, Department of Human Physiology and Biochemistry, Department of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, Health Management Lecturer Group, Department of Clinical Skills and Medical Technologies (SAR p. 431). The faculty members are also from Riga Technical University.

The teaching staff are also actively involved in research and scientific work. In 2020, the ZDIS Pure system: <https://science.rsu.lv/> has been introduced in Rīga Stradiņš University to provide visibility of all the teaching and research staff scientific results and achievements.

From January 2017 to October 2022, 19 Bachelor's study programme "Medical Engineering and Physics" teaching staff attended over 110 continuing education activities at the Centre for Educational Growth (PIC). The "Medical Engineering and Physics" professors spent 2585 hours on continuing education (SAR p. 433).

The information in the self-assessment report and annexes was supported by the site visit interviews that confirmed adequate capacity and capability of the staff of achieving the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme across the study programme. There is a transparent mechanism for academic promotions. The self-assessment report mentions a fair distribution of professors and other levels of the academic hierarchy, as well as visiting professors.

2.4.2. The information provided in the SAR, which was corroborated by interviews with the various stakeholders including management, staff and students showed that there have been no significant changes in the composition of heads of study courses during the accreditation period under assessment within the Joint professional bachelor study programme "Medical Engineering and Physics", the teaching staff/student ratio -1 teacher/1.6 students. The staff of Riga Technical

University (RTU) are responsible for recruiting students. It is to be noted that over this period, the teaching staff have achieved more experience as part of their professional as well as scientific/research growth. Several members of the teaching staff that lecture on the Joint professional bachelor study programme “Medical Engineering and Physics” were promoted to full Professor (1) Associate Professors (2) whereas two lecturers successfully read for PhDs. There is also sufficient academic activity as part of research projects, scientific activities including active participation in scientific conferences, as well as continuous professional development that assures continuous improvement and up-to-date quality of the study programme. These achievements and professional/academic/scientific growth ensure the quality of the implementation of the study programme and the compliance of the study programme with the requirements specified in regulatory enactments.

2.4.3. Not applicable.

2.4.4. According to the SAR Annex 6.2. Biographies of the teaching staff members (in Europass Curriculum Vitae format) Joint Professional Bachelor’s study programme “Medical Engineering and Physics” and Annex 6.4 Results of the scientific activity of the academic staff of RSU Faculty of Medicine and a list of publications by Journal Impact Factor (IF) demonstrates that members of the academic staff contributing to the Joint Professional Bachelor’s study programme “Medical Engineering and Physics” have been active over the past six years in scientific research and have published in peer-reviewed journals – some of high impact factor. Furthermore, several members of the academic staff have practical experience and this is in accordance with the Law on Higher Education Institutions. The number of publications is sufficient and rising.

2.4.5. The SAR as well as the site visit interviews with teaching staff members, and information gathered corroborated by interviews with management shows active participation in joint discussions, namely regarding updates of existing programmes as well as development of new modules that need to happen to keep in pace with the fast-changing field of medical engineering and physics. During these discussions, there is also the active participation of the directors of the RTU-RSU joint programme, who are responsible in organizing other meetings with other stakeholders as required to implement changes and ensure quality for example with RTU/RSU administration, other structural units, as well as the Study Quality Council.

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

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

The qualification of the teaching staff members who are involved in the implementation of the study programme satisfies the requirements for the implementation of the study programme as well as the requirements that are outlined in the regulatory enactments. Furthermore, it enables the achievement of the goals and learning outcomes of the study programme as well as the study courses that are relevant to the study programme. In order to ensure that changes in the composition of the teaching staff do not have a negative impact on the quality of the implementation of the study programme and the degree to which the study programme complies with the requirements specified in regulatory enactments, the RSU takes measures on purpose. Over the course of the past six years, every single member of the academic staff has contributed to publications that have been subjected to peer review. These publications have included international editions, as required by the Law on Higher Education Institutions. A mechanism for mutual

cooperation of the teaching staff in the implementation of the study programme has been established; it ensures the achievement of the aims of the study programme and the interconnection of study courses within the study programme.

Strengths:

1. The various stakeholders involved in the joint RSU-RTU professional Bachelor's study programme "Medical Engineering and Physics" are actively involved in ensuring the quality of the study programme - in-keeping with the fast developments of the field in medical engineering, physics, medical devices etc.
2. The faculty is active in professional practice and in scientific research.
3. The faculty has good networks internationally thereby ensuring up-to-date teaching, learning and research in the subject area of medical engineering and physics, which is a fast developing field.

Weaknesses:

None.

Assessment of the requirement [7]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The qualifications as provided by the following annexes indicate compliance with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements set out in the respective regulatory enactments.

24.7_Anx_Analysis_Composition_Academic_Staff_Med_Eng_Phy.pdf

6.2_Anx_Biographies_teaching_staff_KP BSP_Medical_Engineering_and_Physics_EN_119pages.pdf

6.4_Anx_Ac_staff_publications_IF factor_Facult_Medicine.pdf

2.5. Assessment of the Compliance

Requirements

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Annex - 17.1_Anx_Compl_with_Nat_Ed_Standard_Med_Eng_Phy.pdf confirms that the study programme complies with National Education Standard corresponding to Cabinet Regulations No 305 of 13 June 2023 "Regulations on National Standard for Professional Higher Education" <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/342818-noteikumi-par-valsts-profesionalas-augstakas-izglitiba-standartu>.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The joint study programme complies with "Occupational Standard for Medical Physical Technology Engineer" (agreed at the meeting of the Tripartite Sub-Council for Professional

Education and Employment of 15 December 2021, Minutes No 7 (Available online (only in Latvian): <https://registri.visc.gov.lv/profizglitiba/dokumenti/standarti/2017/PS-200.pdf>) RSU implements 8 study courses of the joint study programme, which are mapped against the occupational standard. The rest of the occupational standard is covered by the study courses implemented by RTU as specified in the Annex
18.2_Anx_Compliance_w_profession_stand_joint_StP_Med_Eng_Phy_RSU courses conv.pdf

- 3 3 - The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in all languages in which the study programme is implemented, and they comply with the requirements set forth in Section 561 , Paragraph two and Section 562 , Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The study course descriptions are prepared in English and Latvian that can be accessed under annexes -

20_Anx_Study_course_description_Med_Engineering_Physics.pdf and

20_pielik_Kursu_apr_Med_inzenierija_fizika.pdf. Descriptions comply with regulations set forth in Law on Higher Education Institutions. The study materials can be accessed and are prepared in both implemented languages.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The provided Diploma sample - 24.1_Anx_Diploma and supplement_Joint StP Med_Eng_Phy_RTU data.pdf complies with the procedure by which state-recognised documents of higher education are issued according to Cabinet Regulation No. 202 "Kārtība, kādā izsniedz valsts atzītus augstāko izglītību apliecinošus dokumentus".

- 5 5 - The academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements set forth in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 6 6 - Academic study programmes provided for less than 250 full-time students may be implemented and less than five professors and associated professors of the higher education institution may be involved in the implementation of the mandatory and limited elective part of these study programmes provided that the relevant opinion of the Council for Higher Education has been received in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 7 7 - At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of an academic doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field of science. At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a professional doctoral study programme in arts (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 8 8 - The teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme are proficient in the official language in accordance with the regulations on the level of the official language knowledge and the procedures for testing official language proficiency for performing professional duties and office duties.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Based on the acquired information onsite as well as relevant annexes:

24.4_Anx_Certification_Regarding_Latvian_Language_of_the_Academic_Staff.pdf and 6.2_Anx_CV_ENG_visas_programmas.7z, it can be evaluated that the language proficiency of teaching staff is compliant with Cabinet Regulation. Nr. 733 " Regulations Regarding the Extent of the Knowledge of the Official Language, the Procedures for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language and the State Fee for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language".

- 9 9 - The teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language, if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

As one of the implementing languages of this programme is English, it is required for the teaching staff to have at least B2 level English. The attached documents:

6.2_Anx_CV_ENG_visas_programmas.7z and

24.5_Anx_Certification_Regarding_the_English_Language_Knowledge.pdf confirm the English language skills of the teaching staff members. Their skills were also assessed during onsite visits and the expert group confirms that they are at least on B2 level.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Sample of attached study agreement 24.8_Anx_Study contract sample_Health Care study direction.pdf complies with Cabinet Regulation. Nr. 70 "Studiju līgumā obligāti ietveramie noteikumi".

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

RSU has provided confirmation that students will be provided with opportunities to continue their education in another higher education institution if the implementation of the study programme is terminated. The agreements are specified in the annexes under "24.2_pielik_Apliecinajumi_par_parnemsanu_eng.7z". It is specified that in case of discontinuation of this study programme, students are planned to be able to continue their studies at Professional Bachelor's study programme at RTU.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

RSU has provided confirmation that students are guaranteed compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the study programme's license is revoked. It is ensured based on the Section 55(8) of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education and Cabinet of Ministers No 795 of 11 December 2018 "Regulations on Licensing of study programmes", Paragraph 13.4. The relevant document can be found under Annexes -

24.3_Anx_Certification_of_Compensation_of_Losses_to_Students.pdf.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The joint study programme complies with the requirements prescribed in the legal regulations based on the annex -15_Anx_Conformity_joint_StP_with_requirements_Med_Eng_Phy.pdf

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Assessment of the requirement [8]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Study programme fully complies with regulatory enactments.

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

All of the indicators of the study programme are in compliance with the existing preconditions of the implementation of the study programme. The Joint professional bachelor study programme "Medical Engineering and Physics" (42527) complies with the study field indicators, conditions and criteria. The joint study programme complies with the requirements prescribed in the legal regulations. RSU implements 8 study courses of the joint study programme, which are mapped against the occupational standard. The rest of the occupational standard is covered by the study courses implemented by RTU.

In the opinion of the experts, the title, code, degree to be obtained of the study programme, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation as well as the implementation languages, are reasonable and justified. The study programme is implemented in Latvian and English. There is a high demand for the programme from Latvian students, but unfortunately comparably low demand for the programme in English from international students, therefore English stream is not profitable currently. The goals, objectives, learning outcomes are in line and in compliance.

The strategic aim of the programme is to train qualified specialists - professional bachelors in medical physics and engineers of medical technologies, in accordance with the occupational standard for engineer of medical physical technologies, professional activity in the fields of medical engineering and medical physics possessing professional knowledge of the equipment used in medicine, the construction of apparatus and instruments, their physical and technical principles of operation, manufacturing technology, conditions of use and safety, with practical skills in work with medical equipment, their purchase, installation, use, adjustment and quality management, and in the planning and monitoring of radiation technology, patient and staff dosimetry, prepare for experimental research activity, prepare students for the continuation of studies at professional Master's level. The analysis of the study programme and the provided information shows a correlation between course content, learning outcomes, goals, and other indicators, as well as the aims and achievable learning outcomes of the program. Course content is current and relevant to the field and labor market. The programme's conformity with scientific trends shows that study

courses are updated to reflect sector, labor market, and scientific trends. However, currently, students need more options for the courses in section C. Assessment of the joint study programme, the study course/ module implementation methods has a list of methods used to contribute to the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study courses and the aims of the study programme. In this case of a joint study programme, the methods are logical, clear, transparent and used to deliver such a study programme. The student-centered principles are taken into account in the implementation of the study process.

The internship is foreseen during the study programme, the opportunities and provision of internship offered to students, are well organized and work is effective in achieving learning outcomes. The organization of the internship and goals are related and contribute to the achievements of the learning outcomes. The internship complies with the requirements of regulatory enactments.

Students' final papers are current, aligned with programme goals, and provide learning outcomes that meet industry needs. The State Examination Board praises professional work's quality and feasibility and topics of defended Bachelor's theses are related to engineering projects. The qualification of the teaching staff members who are involved in the implementation of the study program satisfies the requirements for the implementation of the study program as well as the requirements that are outlined in the regulatory enactments. Furthermore, it enables the achievement of the goals and learning outcomes of the study program as well as the study courses that are relevant to the study programme.

In order to ensure that changes in the composition of the teaching staff do not have a negative impact on the quality of the implementation of the study programme and the degree to which the study program complies with the requirements specified in regulatory enactments, the RSU takes measures on purpose. Over the course of the past six years, every single member of the academic staff has contributed to publications that have been subjected to peer review. These publications have included international editions, as required by the Law on Higher Education Institutions. A mechanism for mutual cooperation of the teaching staff in the implementation of the study programme has been established; it ensures the achievement of the aims of the study programme and the interconnection of study courses within the study programme.

While the weaknesses, such as the low demand for the English stream and the limited number of elective courses, present challenges, they do not detract significantly from the programme's overall value. By addressing these weaknesses through targeted strategies, such as marketing efforts to increase international student enrollment and expanding the range of elective courses, the program can further enhance its appeal and effectiveness. Overall, the "Medical Engineering and Physics" study programme remains a strong option for students seeking education and careers in this specialized field.

The main strengths:

1. High demand of the programme from local students, after graduation, nearly all of the graduates are successfully employed and in demand.
2. Advanced material and technical base for student training; plenty of high-quality library resources.
3. Placement is organized in four phases, in accordance with the general guidelines for placement of the RTU Institute of Biomedical Engineering and Nanotechnologies (IBEN):
4. The various stakeholders involved in the joint RSU-RTU professional Bachelor's study programme "Medical Engineering and Physics" are actively involved in ensuring the quality of the study programme - in-keeping with the fast developments of the field in medical engineering, physics, medical devices etc.
5. The faculty is active in professional practice and in scientific research.
6. The faculty has good networks internationally thereby ensuring up-to-date teaching, learning and research in the subject area of medical engineering and physics, which is a fast developing field.

Main weaknesses:

1. Comparably low demand of the programme in English from international students.
2. English stream is not profitable currently and its profitability at the existing revenues from 1 CP can be achieved with a minimum student population of 29 students.
3. The list C of optional courses contains the same subjects as list B, which is compulsory. There is a very limited number of elective courses.

Evaluation of the study programme "Medical Engineering and Physics "

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Medical Engineering and Physics "

Short-term recommendations

To address the implementation and development costs of the study programme, it is advisable to consider increasing the revenue from 1 CP accordingly.

Qualification obtained differs based on the implementation language and has to be unified. Currently, the qualification given is "Medical physical technology engineer" in the study programme implemented in Latvian and "Medical Device Engineer" in the programme implemented in English.

Long-term recommendations

Recommended to start initiatives to actively promote the programme in English and attract a greater number of students from other countries within the next assessment period, ensuring broader international participation and enhancing the overall visibility and appeal of the studies.

Increase the number of elective courses within the programme, aiming to provide students with a more diverse and customizable educational experience. Implement the recommended increase within the next assessment period.

II - "Audiology and Speech Therapy" ASSESSMENT

II - "Audiology and Speech Therapy" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1. The Professional bachelor study programme "Audiology and Speech Therapy" (42722) is compliant with the study field "Health Care" as clearly identified in 17.1_Anx_Compl_with_Nat_Ed_Stand_Audiol_and_Speech_Ther -Table 1. Compliance assessment of the Cabinet Regulations No 512 according to the sample of Annex 6 to The Guidelines for the Development of Self-assessment Report of the Study Direction of AIKA.

The evaluation of the assessment of compliance with the standard is based on mapping the study programme against the standard as in Annex 18.2 and confirmed by the description of the programme (paragraph 3.1.3. Economic and social rationale of the study programme and section 3.2 Study content and implementation). The learning outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills and

competences are specified at level 6 of the European Qualification Framework (EQF) as defined in the Latvian Qualifications Framework. This is confirmed in Annex 18.1 by the mapping of the learning outcomes of the programme against the level 6 of the EQF. Compliance of the study programme with the profession standard "Standard of the Profession of Audiologist-Speech Therapist" was agreed at the meeting of the tripartite Cooperation Council for Vocational Education and Employment of 25 November 2015, minutes No 8 and available online: <https://registri.visc.gov.lv/profizglitiba/dokumenti/standarti/ps0308.pdf>

Similarly, SAR (p.265) states that the study programme "Audiology and Speech Therapy" corresponds to the study field "Health Care", with degree – professional bachelor's degree in health care and professional qualification of an audiologist/speech therapist.

The code "42722" of the study programme describes the level of higher education and compliance with the study field "Health Care". The first part of the code "42" denotes second level professional higher education (fifth level professional qualification and professional bachelor's degree) or second level professional higher education (fifth level professional qualification), to be implemented after completing general or professional secondary education. Study duration in full-time studies is four years, and compliance with level 6 of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) / Latvian Qualifications Framework (LQF) has been established in Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 322 (only in Latvian). The second part of the study programme code "722" according to Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 322 is "Medical services": "72" refers to the thematic area of education "Health Care".

2.1.2. The aim of the Professional bachelor study programme "Audiology and Speech Therapy" is to train speech and language therapists with the highest level of professional Bachelor's education in health care by ensuring high quality professional higher education and to provide health, educational and social care institutions with qualified and competitive speech and language therapists in accordance with the needs of the national healthcare and rehabilitation system and the requirements of the professional standard for the speech therapist [SAR, p. 260 and 17.2_Anx_Compliance_with_Field-Specific_Regulations_Audiology_and_Speech_Therapy.pdf].

The study programme aims to ensure high-quality and modern professional studies in the training of audiology and speech therapists. It provides medical and specialty-specific knowledge and skills required for carrying out professional work in the specialty of audiology and speech therapy, using modern educational methods, using high quality teaching and methodological tools, and using modern information technologies.

SAR (p. 267) shows that the duration is 4 years full time and the study content matches the requirements of the degree and professional qualification. It is in accordance with the standard for the profession of an audiologist/speech therapist (available only in Latvian), ESLA research of the guidelines on Speech and Language Therapy Education in Europe (available only in English) and RSU Development Strategy 2022-2027 (available in Latvian, in English).

2.1.3. Annex 18.1-Table 1 (Changes in study programme parameters) shows that study aims, tasks and learning outcomes have been revised and refined in accordance with the recommendations of Higher Education Quality Agency (AIKA). The learning outcomes of the study programme were evaluated and updated in accordance with the requirements of the qualification framework of Latvia (LQF/EQF) and the latest guidelines for drawing up the self-assessment report of the study field of the Higher Education Quality Agency (AIKA) Guidelines for the Preparation of the Self- Assessment Report of a Study Field (20.09.2021). Annex 18.1, Table 2 shows that the learning outcomes of the study programme were mapped in relation to the results of study courses and reflect the conformity of the content of study courses with the objectives of the study course and the results to be achieved.

There needs to be further improvement of the study process and promotion of acquisition of

practical skills in clinical placement sites. In cooperation with the Latvian Association of Audiologists and Speech Therapists, audits related to the skills and competences should be carried out during studies, so as to look for possibilities for improvement both during studies and after graduation of the institution of higher education (refer to Annex 4.1, Paragraph 1.7). Cooperation with employers should continue, involving them both in the study process and in the Study Programme Quality Council (refer to Annex 4.1, Paragraph 7.1, 7.2).

2.1.4. Figure 1. Employment of audiologists/speech therapists by city/county (health Inspectorate data) (SAR, p. 269) with data provided by the Health Inspectorate Registry Division for the period up to 27.01.2021. shows a total of 145 audiologist/speech therapist services are available in various municipalities and cities of Latvia. Figure 2. (SAR, p. 270) shows 92 audiologists/speech therapists contracted with the National Health Service (NHS). Data for certain regions in Latvia where audiologist/speech therapist services, which would have been registered in the NHS and Health Inspectorate Register are not available. Similarly, data on audiologists/speech therapists carrying out their professional activities in educational or social care centers were not analyzed. The distribution by county and city shows that in many regions the number of specialists is 1 to 2 audiologists/speech therapists. According to the State Employment Agency as of September 2023, there are four available vacancies for audiologists/speech therapists (website of the Association of audiologists and speech therapists (<https://audiologopedi.lv/>), only in Latvian)). Three specialists are needed in Riga, one specialist has a vacancy in Ogre. There is therefore a demand for audiologist/speech therapist services.

The interest in the study programme has grown considerably since 2018. The average number of applications submitted for state-funded study places was eight applicants per state-funded study place as indicated in Annex 16_Anx_Statistics_Audiology_and_Speech_Therapy.pdf. 40 applicants indicated the programme as a priority in 2018, and 66 applicants indicated the programme as a priority in 2022.

2.1.5. Not applicable.

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

The Professional bachelor study programme “Audiology and Speech Therapy” (42722) is compliant with the study field “Health Care”. The aim of the Professional bachelor study programme “Audiology and Speech Therapy” is to train speech and language therapists with the highest level of professional Bachelor's education in health care by ensuring high quality professional higher education and to provide health, educational and social care institutions with qualified and competitive speech and language therapists in accordance with the needs of the national healthcare and rehabilitation system and the requirements of the professional standard for the audiologist-speech therapist. The title, code, degree and professional qualification of the study programme, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation, as well as the implementation language, are reasonable and justified. Economic and social justification of the study programme, dynamics of the number of students and employment indicators of the graduates of the study programme are justified as there is demand on the market for this profession. This set of criteria are fulfilled by the following strengths:

Strengths:

There is compliance of the study programme “Audiology and Speech Therapy” with the study field. Study content is in line with the academic and professional requirements for audiology and speech therapists.

There is a demand for these professionals and therefore there is a market for these professions ensuring study programme viability in terms of employability.

Weaknesses:

None.

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1. The Professional bachelor study programme "Audiology and Speech Therapy" requires four years of full-time studies and a degree in Health Care. Each academic year has two semesters and ends with an exam to assess students' knowledge, skills, and abilities. Cabinet Regulation No. 305 "Regulations on the State Standard for Second level Professional higher Education" requires 160 credit points/240 ECTS during the programme. Study programme includes lectures, clinical practice, research papers, and state exams (semester papers, Bachelor's thesis defense). Distribution of study programme content is 20 KP/30 ECTS general education courses, covering theoretical humanities and social sciences (Philosophy and Medical Ethics, Economic and Business Fundamentals, etc.); 36 KP/50 ECTS field theoretical basic courses and information technology courses, which provide students with the knowledge, skills and abilities that are necessary and are the basis for the acquisition of professional specialisation courses (Normal Physiology and Neurophysiology, Latvian Language Culture, etc.); 60 KP/90 ECTS professional specialisation courses of the field, which provide students with in-depth knowledge for the acquisition of the profession of audiologist/speech therapist, specialist knowledge, skills and competences in the profession in accordance with the standard of the profession of audiologist/speech therapist (language disorders in children, speech rate and pace disorders, etc.); 26 KP/39 ECTS clinical practice during which students apply acquired knowledge and skills in the clinical environment, acquiring the necessary competencies in the profession of audiologist/speech therapist; 6 KP/9 ECTS free-choice courses, which also include a compulsory elective study course and a 12 KP/18 ECTS State examination, of which Bachelor's thesis is designed and defended. (SAR p. 273; Annex 17.1).

To align the study programme objectives, goals, and deliverables with study courses, integrate the results into course outcomes and define the necessary knowledge, skills, and competences, linking of the objective, tasks and deliverables of the study programme with study courses shall be implemented by integrating the results to be achieved by the study programme into the achievable results of each study course and defining the knowledge, skills and competences to be acquired in study courses. Study courses provide theoretical information and skills through lectures, face-to-face workshops, clinical practice, and independent work. Assessment of study course acquisition allows students to demonstrate their theoretical and practical understanding of individual courses and the study programme. The results for each student are assessed using the State examination. Study courses and clinical practices ensure LQF/EQF level 6 objectives are met (SAR p.274; Annexes 17.1; 18.2).

Study course descriptions at RSU are maintained in the electronic Register of Study Courses in RSU Academic Portal. The study course description specifies the structural unit responsible for the implementation of the study course and the study course leader who prepares and regularly updates the study course description in the system in accordance with RSU Process description No. 34 "Updating and Development of Study Courses, Study Programmes and Study Directions". The study course may be implemented in one or more study programmes and the study course leader may or may not be involved in the implementation of the study course in the particular study programme (Annexes 20; 19; and 18.1).

To administer a study programme, analyze course material and results, and assess conformance with objectives, tasks, and results, StP mapping is conducted. According to the guidelines

"Conformity of RSU study programmes with the quality assurance of Standard and guidelines in the European higher Education area (ESG) Part 1," the Rector or Board of Studies reviews study programme and study field annually to assess the quality, results, and recommended changes of study programme in light of current trends and market needs. The complimentary and sequential study courses allow students to learn the audiologist/speech therapist speciality's knowledge, abilities, and competences. Course material meets industry, labor market, and science trends. Course content is evaluated, revised, and added annually. The RSU quality mechanism, teaching staff, and student feedback support this strategy (SAR p. 274).

From the previous assessment recommendations provided by external experts were gradually introduced to the study programme, to improve the quality of the study process. Still there is space for continuous improvement. Study course descriptions were revised to ensure that learning outcomes are achieved at the appropriate level of education. The reading lists published in study course descriptions were revised to better reflect the current situation. Work on study course descriptions and literature should continue in the next accreditation period, and new ideas and goals should be implemented in the future study programme plans (Annex 11). However, there is a space for improvement. Study courses and their content do not fully comply with the needs of the relevant industry, labor market, and science trends. It is recommended to take into account the rapid development of technology in the field of profession. The field of Audiology and Speech Therapy has witnessed notable trends and innovations reflecting advancements in technology and service delivery. There are new topics that should be considered for the implementation in the study programmes to give students more knowledge and skills and prepare them for a modern labor market. Some of the trends and innovations in the fields of Audiology and speech therapy up to the point are: telehealth and telepractice; digital hearing aids, cochlear implant innovations; augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), mobile apps and software, artificial intelligence (AI) in speech recognition; wearable devices for monitoring and intervention, remote patient monitoring, personalized medicine approaches and other topics.

There has been a rise in the popularity of telehealth and telepractice, which has made medical care more accessible. Hearing aids that are digital, come equipped with a variety of advanced functions, such as noise reduction and wireless access to smartphones. As the technologies behind cochlear implants continue to advance, the quality of sound and speech perception will benefit from these advancements. An immersive therapeutic environment can be created via the use of augmented and virtual reality applications, while speech exercises can be made more engaging through the use of mobile apps and software. One of the contributions that artificial intelligence makes to speech recognition is that it helps with assessment and feedback during therapy. While eating and speaking patterns are being monitored by wearable sensors, real-time data is being collected for the purposes of assessment and intervention. A number of factors, including the incorporation of Internet of Things devices, remote patient monitoring, and personalized medicine methods, are contributing to the changing landscape of audiology and speech therapy. None of the mentioned topics is discussed or included in the study programme, while it should be, to follow the trends of modern science and technology development. The enhancement and use of the material and technical base in the study process to strengthen the practical skills of the audiologists - speech therapists is highly recommended.

These recommendations are in compliance with the development plan and involvement of digital gadgets aid in learning and work. The second objective in developing the study programme is using digital resources to enhance the learning process and work experience. Acquiring digital tools and software will prepare students and instructors for future professional work, enabling face-to-face and distant collaboration in studies and daily work, learning through simulation (Annex 4.1).

The content of the study programme is topical, the content of the study courses is interconnected and complementary, corresponds to the objectives of the programme and ensures the achievement of learning outcomes, and in majority meets the needs of the industry, labor market and scientific

trends. It complies with National regulations and professional standard. However, there is a need to modernize the study programme and include topics which are the result of a modern and rapid science and technology development. In the light of future changes in the credit system to ECTS, planning the study process for the transition from CP to ECTS should make an effort in avoiding the discrepancies regarding the associated credits to courses.

2.2.2. Not applicable.

2.2.3. The duration of the study programme is equivalent to 160 Latvian credit points or 240 ECTS. One credit point is equivalent to the amount of forty academic hours that a student is required to load. The quantity of contact hours that constitute one credit point ranges from thirty percent to forty percent, and the remaining load consists of the student's own work. Detailed information regarding the organization, tasks, and evaluation criteria of the independent work are included in the description of each study course. The students' communication and information, the submission of their autonomous work, and the provision of feedback are all accomplished through the use of an e-learning environment. The dean of the RSU Faculty of Rehabilitation, the Department of Rehabilitation, and other RSU departments are responsible for ensuring that the study programme is implemented properly. They will also invite the staff members who are responsible for ensuring that the Audiology Program's study courses are learned (from rehabilitation centers, outpatient medical treatment institutions, etc.) (SAR p. 276).

In order to ensure that students are able to acquire professional study courses, practicing audiology experts who mix their practical expertise with academic work in the RSU are responsible for its acquisition. Lecture halls and clinical bases at RSU are the locations where the studios are offered. Clinical practice is utilized in the provision of medical care as well as in educational institutions that are specialized. During the course of the research process, a variety of instructional approaches are utilized, and the research is conducted both in-person and remotely. Interactive lectures, practical classes or seminars, and individual work on the part of students are the primary modes of instruction that are utilized in the learning process. Lectures and classes at RSU use the cutting-edge technologies that are accessible to the university (SAR p. 277).

E-learning environments, virtual communication environments, Panopto recording systems, and simulation environments are some of the latest technologies accessible to students at RSU. These technologies are utilized in both lectures and classrooms. Students have the opportunity to learn or supplement their knowledge in the field that is to be learned, as well as their academic performance in achieving the content of the lesson, the results of the study course and STP results, and a more modern study process in general, through the use of a variety of applications that are either free to use or that require payment. Pro Metronome-Tempo, Beats (which are utilized in speech rhythm activities and patients who have dysarthria), Dysphagia Training (which are tasks that are utilized to engage the structures involved in swallowing), TD Snap, Snap Scene (which provides alternative communication), voice recorder, and other similar devices are some examples (SAR p. 277; Annex 23.2).

To administer the study programme, a student-centered, structured, social study method is used, promoting self-motivated student studies. Student group studies and learning cooperation are encouraged. Students in the course "Speech Sound Disorders of Different Origin" must work in small groups and submit their work. Clinician-based studies focus on practical skills and competencies. The study curriculum includes lectures, classrooms (seminars, practical classes, and lab work), discussions, individual work, and group work. The study approach is designed to give students more choice, convenience, and tailored learning based on their talents and requirements. Students in the study course "Neurologically Based Communicative Disorders, Course Paper" can study, analyze provided materials, and complete projects at their convenience, scope, and learning rate (SAR p. 277).

Flipped learning classrooms, such as “Language Disorders in Children” and “Speech Sound Disorders of Different Origin”, promote self-learning through independent preparation for specific classes. Before class, students learn about e-studies, visual aids, and tasks at a convenient time and place, and in class, they discuss and apply their self-learning. By discussing the material, you learn more and can actively discuss it. In lectures, presenters teach course theory. Students use theoretical information by working practically and analyzing clinical scenarios in class. Students improve problem-solving abilities by discussing theory, including past experiences and practice, at seminars. Individual work dominates course papers and Bachelor's theses, group work in practical classes, and study courses. One of the best ways to get students to apply knowledge and search relevant literature online is to have them do autonomous (cooperative) work and submit their findings. Students gain public speaking and presentation skills by discussing and expressing their views and opinions after presenting their independent work outcomes. Feedback—questions, responses, conversations, talks—is crucial to study programme implementation. The study programme requires placement. For audiologist/speech therapist certification, students gain practical skills during placement (SAR p. 278).

The academic staff involved in the programme provides study methodology and electronic materials for the University's electronic system. Student access to video lectures, audio recordings, practical skill demonstration videos, etc. has risen significantly. Faculty and support personnel of the study programme take RSU courses on e-learning and e-resources, as well as PIC courses on the study process in collaboration with the IT department (SAR p. 278).

Studies use formative and summative assessment. Students receive formative assessment through daily study, class assessments, and discussions of their individual work. Each course concludes with a test or exam. Summative assessments are written or oral talks. At the end of studies, the student chooses a Bachelor's thesis topic based on interests, writes, and defends it. Students' knowledge is assessed by written and oral exams (tests, seminars, individual and group work assessments) in study courses. State degree exams, including a qualification exam and Bachelor's thesis defense, conclude the curriculum. The RSU examination and test form, students' electronic record books, and personal files contain study subject assessments. Student performance is regularly assessed (SAR p. 278).

A State degree exam tests students' theoretical knowledge by selecting answers and demonstrating practical abilities by analyzing clinical situations, exam outcomes, and audio recordings. The head of the State Examination Board evaluates the examination, which is approved for each academic year and follows RSU rules. Employer and professional association representatives make up over 50% of the State Examination Board. The State Examination Board chair represents companies or a professional association (SAR p. 278).

Methods of study implementation help achieve course and programme goals and learning outcomes. Student-centered teaching is considered.

However, there is a space for improvement, as the methods of scientific work and involvement of students is not seized enough. Research in the study process encourages student participation in scientific initiatives. Sharing Bachelor's thesis results at RSU Student Scientific Conferences can help integrate study into the professional environment, allowing graduates to present their findings to professionals and contribute to the field's development. Involving teaching staff and students in research projects enhances research skills, quantitative indicators, creativity, cooperation, and expands the audiology-speech therapy field.

The programme emphasizes cooperation and communication through study modes (pair work, group work, student-to-student), but should promote more of the multidisciplinary collaboration with lecturers, employers, and association representatives, as well as other professionals in clinics to create interdisciplinary approach in solving complex problems of the profession.

2.2.4. The study programme “Audiology and Speech Therapy” involves a 26 CP/39 ECTS clinical

placement. Clinical placement tasks are related to study programme learning outcomes and study courses implemented in the appropriate year of studies, including theoretical knowledge and abilities obtained in lessons. Clinical placement begins in the second year and continues into the fourth. A summary of clinical placement progress in the study programme "Audiology and Speech Therapy" and the Faculty of Rehabilitation Clinical Placement Regulations govern clinical placement (SAR p.279 Annex 9).

The placement is a mandatory part of the study programmes implemented by the FR, which is implemented in compliance with the "Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No 512 of 26 August 2014 "Regulations on the National Standard for the Second Level Professional Higher Education" (RSU academic Regulations I2). The aim of the placement is to strengthen the knowledge acquired previously by the student in the study programme, to develop and improve practical skills in working with patients/clients of different age groups in reducing and/or preventing functional capacity limitations and to acquire the competence in the chosen profession corresponding to the professional standard. Students learn first aid and emergency help, restrictions, functional ability assessment and classification, and more during their studies. In the survey of graduates "Study programme survey results," almost 100% of students believe placement ensures learning outcomes from 2016/2017 to 2021/2022 only two of the students who gave information were unhappy with placement (SAR p. 275; Annex 9).

Major Latvian clinics host clinical placement. When selecting a placement site, students' preferences are prioritized. Students can complete clinical placement in the placement sites offered and in other regions and clinical institutions because a set amount of study time is devoted to placement, which usually does not conflict with lectures and courses. When a student requests a clinical placement location, the programme director hears them out (SAR p. 279).

In recent years, new clinical placement sites have been attracted in different regions of Latvia, giving students the opportunity to undergo clinical placement closer to their place of residence, opportunities and interests. (Jēkabpils Regional Hospital, the Centre for Better Hearing, Liepāja Regional Hospital, Vidzeme hospital, etc.) (Annex 11).

All lecturers involved in a clinical placement are invited to attend the supervisor meeting and receive organization, requirements, and assessment documents electronically before the placement. New placement supervisors should meet with the programme director to discuss placement organization, requirements, and assessment. A clinical placement supervisor helps students navigate daily work, arranges their involvement, and provides feedback on each day's work and tasks. Student clinical placement comprises clinical case analysis sessions to build analytical skills, create performance goals, and plan and implement therapy. Clinical placement supervisors prepare and guide student clinical case analysis. A student receives 60% of the assessment for his or her activity at the clinical placement site (practical skills, cooperation, attitude, and scientific orientation in practical work), 20% for analyzing and presenting a clinical case prepared during clinical placement, and 20% for representing their own performance during clinical placement. Giving a clinical case and answering queries serve to defend clinical placement. Clinical placement supervisors assist with clinical case defense and provide comments. After clinical placement, clinical placement supervisors meet with the programme director to discuss their experiences and make suggestions for improving the course (SAR p 279).

Students and employers show general satisfaction with the placement opportunities. However, there is always space for improvement. To enhance the quality of clinical placement, several strategic measures have been undertaken. In October 2020, the Quality Council of study programme "Audiology and Speech Therapy" engaged in comprehensive discussions addressing the organization of clinical placement, placement documentation, and the formulation of criteria for evaluating clinical placement. A focused dialogue with clinical placement supervisors and students was orchestrated to identify necessary enhancements and improvements in placement implementation. The study curriculum relies on clinical placements. Therefore, one of the priorities for the study

programme in the coming years should be the provision, development, and incorporation of new clinical placements, which contribute to the competence and professional development of young professionals and allow Latvian regions to involve young audiology and speech therapy specialists. It is imperative that the ongoing commitment to improving clinical placement continues in following accreditation years. This proactive approach ensures the continual optimization of the clinical placement experience, aligning with evolving educational standards and industry expectations in audiology and speech therapy field. The placement during the study programme, the opportunities and provision of internship offered to students, as well as the organization of work are effective. The tasks of the placement are related to the learning outcomes achievable. The placement complies with the requirements of regulatory enactments. There is space for improvement. There needs to be further improvement of the study process and promotion of acquisition of practical skills in clinical placement sites.

2.2.5. Not applicable.

2.2.6. Students choose their bachelor's thesis topics based on their professional interests, relevance, usefulness, and contribution to the development of the Audiology and Speech Therapy industry and field. For example, translations of different instruments include: "Verification of the Reliability of the Latvian Translation of the Holden Communication Scale", "Reliability of the Questionnaire for the Assessment of Technical Aids for Alternative and Augmentative Communication: Pilot Study", and "Cognitive-Communication Checklist for Acquired Brain Injury". Various literature reviews of communication, speech and language therapy methods and their effectiveness: "Effects of Neuromuscular Electrical Stimulation on Stroke Patients with Oropharyngeal Dysphagia", "Commonly Used Treatment Methods in Patients after Stroke with Non-Fluid Aphasia", etc. (SAR p. 275).

Some of the topics of the final thesis are: "Systematic literature review: Efficiency of a speech generating device in children with autism spectrum disorder"; "Quality of life assessment in patients undergoing laryngectomy with an implanted voice prosthesis: systematic review"; "Dog assisted therapy and its use in rehabilitation in Latvia" (Annex 22).

Students present research presentations at the RSU International Science Conference, including "Hard and Soft Palate Cleavages and Speech Disorder Correlation." Graduates with high Bachelor theses ratings present their work to the Association of Audiologists and Speech Therapists, promoting the latest findings, information, and research to members. The programme's teachers' professional, academic, and scientific experience is also crucial. An academic staff member in Latvia was the first to use an eye-guided device for communication (Tobi). Knowledge is shared through a course called "Introduction to Alternative and Augmentative Communication" to help students learn new technologies and participate in the learning process, both during RSU studies and other seminars (SAR p. 281).

The topics of students' final theses are relevant to the field and correspond to the study programme. The positive thing is that many thesis use the evidence-based approach in research, which is highly welcomed, but there is a lack of involvement of students in scientific work and this should be improved.

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

The Bachelor study programme "Audiology and Speech Therapy" requires four years of full-time studies and gives a degree in Health Care. The academic structure encompasses two semesters per year, culminating in examinations evaluating students' knowledge, skills, and capabilities. In

accordance with Cabinet Regulation No. 305, governing the State Standard for Second-level Professional Higher Education, a total of 160 credit points or 240 ECTS credits are requisite for programme completion. The curriculum for the "Audiology and Speech Therapy" study programme integrates lectures, clinical practice, research papers, and State exams such as semester papers, a Bachelor's thesis, and advocacy activities. The distribution of the study programme content (160 KP/240 ECTS) comprises 20 KP/30 ECTS for general education courses in theoretical humanities and social sciences, including Philosophy and Medical Ethics, Economic and Business Fundamentals. Additionally, 36 KP/50 ECTS are allocated for field theoretical basic courses and information technology, laying the foundation for necessary knowledge and skills. The programme includes 60 KP/90 ECTS for professional specialization courses, providing comprehensive insights into the audiologist/speech therapist profession. Clinical practice, amounting to 26 KP/39 ECTS, enables students to apply acquired knowledge in real-world settings. Furthermore, 6 KP/9 ECTS are dedicated to free-choice courses, incorporating a compulsory elective study course. The programme culminates in a 12 KP/18 ECTS State examination, involving the design and defense of the Bachelor's thesis. The content aligns with programme objectives, ensuring the attainment of learning outcomes while addressing industry needs, labor market requirements, and scientific advancements, in compliance with national regulations and professional standards. While the study programme is relevant, there is a discernible need for modernization to incorporate topics emerging from rapid advancements in science and technology. The methods employed for study implementation leverage various approaches, integrating modern technologies and adopting student-centered teaching methodologies. However, enhancements are warranted, particularly in fostering the involvement of teaching staff and students in research projects and embracing an interdisciplinary approach to solving complex problems. The tasks assigned during clinical placement align with learning outcomes and corresponding study courses. The internship structure and organization are deemed effective, complying with regulatory requirements, though there is room for improvement. Students' final theses demonstrate relevance to the field and align with the study programme's objectives. In summary, while the "Audiology and Speech Therapy" programme exhibits strengths, it is recommended to embrace continuous improvements, particularly in response to evolving scientific and technological landscapes, to ensure sustained excellence in education and preparation for the workforce.

Strengths:

1. The demand for the study programme has increased.
2. The implementation of the programme in Latvia is improved every year.
3. Many theses use the evidence-based approach in research and systematic reviews.

Weaknesses:

1. The study course descriptions, and reading lists published in study course descriptions are not fully revised since the last reaccreditation period. Updating the study course content and descriptions is necessary.
2. Study courses and their content do not fully comply with the needs of the relevant industry, labor market and science trends, it does not follow the rapid science and technology development in the field of profession.
3. Underused possibilities of involvement of students in scientific work.
4. Lack of interdisciplinarity and work with various professions to solve complex problems of professions was obtained during the study programme.
5. There needs to be further improvement of the study process and promotion of acquisition of practical skills in clinical placement sites.

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

programmes)

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1. According to the Self-Assessment Report (SAR, Part II, Study Programme Audiology and Speech Therapy, Paragraph 3.3.1) the Study Programme has undergone a modernisation process that led to the creation of an audio and video filing cabinet to promote students' self-directed learning process. Recordings collected are available in the implementation of several study courses, such as "Speech Sound Disorders of Different Origin", "Language Disorders in Children", etc. This approach fosters the in-depth learning and technology-enriched study process, creating in students understanding of analysis, synthesis processes, feedback and the creation of practical experience and competence. Several study courses put emphasis on the independent work of the student prior to the class and the use of information technologies plays an important role (video materials, self-assessment tests, etc. are used). Students also participate in supplementing the audio and video filing cabinet by creating video attachments for visual demonstration of different types of therapy, which are used in the study process. The improvement and modernisation of the study process is done continuously every year. A noteworthy example is the project "Improvement of the management process and study programme content modernisation at Rīga Stradiņš University" which resulted in creation of a repository of study materials and functions as a methodological support tool for the implementation of interdisciplinarity and various simulations. Additionally a skills catalog has been created, it contains skills descriptions in accordance with confirmed guidelines. Different visual aids include models (ear, nasal cavity, mouth, etc.), posters (hearing parameters, brain structure, etc.), computer programmes (SnapeCoreFirst, SnapSceneLife, etc.). Various test materials like "Latvian Language Phoneme Testing Material", "Boston Diagnostic Aphasia Examination", tools that "Audiology and Speech Therapy" study programme students learn and are able to use in their professional activities and research, such as a lip strength meter, tongue strength meter, bite muscle strength meter, speech feedback tool, audiometer, tympanometer etc. No specific information on the SAR is provided on the availability of library resources. This complicates further analysis due to the fact that assumptions need to be made.

The expert group concludes that the study provision is sufficient with the exception of informative resources.

2.3.2. Not applicable.

2.3.3. According to SAR p.285, the study programme is financed from the state budget as well as the funds of private persons. The tuition fee per study year is EUR 4890. The result of the full-time study programme with such tuition fee per year is negative due to the lack of funding from the state budget in accordance with the Cabinet Regulations No. 994 – the basic costs of studies no longer cover infrastructure maintenance costs. A positive thing is the additional funding allocated for the performance funding, approved in the budget of the Ministry of Education and Science for the study programme.

The number of students planned to reach in the four years of study of the full-time study programme is 94 students, with 33 students admitted in the first year of studies, and 11 student drop-outs

predicted for the second year of studies, the number of students remaining unchanged in the third study year, and reaching 16 students in the fourth year of studies.

Based on the information provided in Table 5 that is accessible in the SAR p.286. Cost of study programme, there is a predicted increase in the revenue and average cost per student with slightly higher revenue than cost, but very minor.

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

The study programme faces financial challenges and has dependency on external funding, which can cause issues with study programme sustainability in the future, if it cannot be self-sufficient and financially independent in the long-term. There is a narrow margin between revenue and costs. At this point of time, additional funding allocated for the performance funding is crucial and hopefully helps the programme to manage that it becomes financially sustainable. Continuous improvement efforts, including the development of a repository of study materials and a skills catalog, demonstrate a commitment to enhancing the study process.

Strengths:

1. Additional funding allocated for the performance funding.
2. Technology-enriched study process.

Weaknesses:

1. The basic costs of studies no longer cover infrastructure maintenance costs.

Assessment of the requirement [6]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The study programme ensures the necessary resource provision and fulfills the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and ensures the achievement of learning outcomes.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1. SAR (p. 206) shows that the qualification of the academic staff involved in the implementation of the study programme "Audiology and speech therapy" (42722) is in conformity with the conditions for implementation of the study programme and the requirements of regulatory enactments. The study programme, objectives of the relevant study courses and learning outcomes are successfully achieved. The staff complement 78 teaching staff ensures the implementation of the mandatory part of the professional Bachelor's study programme "Audiology and Speech Therapy". 38 out of the 78 have been elected to RSU's academic positions: 3 professors, 7 associate professors, 15 assistant professors, 8 lecturers and 5 assistants. 25 of the 38 hold a doctoral degree. 61 out of the 78 teaching staff are RSU employees (elected, acting or adjunct lecturers of the University), and 17 are visiting lecturers.

For academic year 2021/2022, 35 lecturers graduated from an RSU study programme (from one up to three), and eight lecturers study in one of the programmes (SAR, p. 288).

2.4.2. Over the period of assessment, several lecturers and visiting staff have been recruited to ensure that the implementation of the study programme takes place without problems. According to interviews in site visits with staff, the Director of the study programme regularly engages in both educational and professional qualification improvement activities and has shown agility in responding to changes needed also based on student feedback and gaps in human resources.

2.4.3. Not applicable.

2.4.4. The implementation of the compulsory and restricted elective part of the professional bachelor's study programme "Audiology and Speech Therapy" is carried out by 78 lecturers, 38 of whom have been elected to the academic positions at RSU. Out of 38 elected representatives of the academic staff, 3 are professors and 7 associate professors. Out of 78 lecturers involved in the implementation of the StP, 61 lecturers are employed in the main job (the position of an elected lecturer, acting lecturer or adjunct lecturer (staff employees)) and 17 are invited lecturers (specialists from other organisations and experts in the field). Out of 61 lecturers employed in the main job, 38 are elected lecturers, 21 are acting lecturers, while 2 are adjunct lecturers. Of the 38 academic staff members elected for the implementation of the study programme, the largest proportion of the position is that of assistant professor. That 11 lecturers, or ~29% of all elected lecturers involved in the implementation of the study programme have been employed at least once in RSU research projects since 2017. Whereas, since 2017, 4 or ~ 19% of all acting lecturers involved in the implementation of the study programme have been employed in RSU research projects at least once. With regard to the status of an expert of the Latvian Council of Science (LCS), 37% of the elected lecturers involved in the implementation of the study programme has the status of an expert of the LCS. All academic information is provided on the VIIS website - https://www.viis.gov.lv/registri/akademiskais_personals. Renewal of the status from the Human Resources Department in the VIIS shall be carried out in accordance with the Regulations of the State Education Information System.

Beside the roles of academic staff at the RSU, the work experiences of the involved academic staff highlight the diverse professional roles and responsibilities of the individuals involved in the teaching process. This includes roles at the institutions such as psychotherapist private practices, Christian Academy of Latvia, Riga technical school of arts and media; Children's health center; Preschool children's institution, School of aesthetics "Tince"; Social care center "Kurzeme", Structural unit "Dundaga", Tobii Dynavox AB, Upeslejas Primary School of the municipality of Ropaži District and other relevant institutions and companies.

Even 6/78 CV's are missing, all of the presented Faculty of Rehabilitation academic staff in the last six years have published in peer-reviewed editions, including international editions, or have five years of practical experience in accordance with the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

2.4.5. There is a mechanism for mutual cooperation of the teaching staff in the implementation of the study programme which therefore ensures the achievement of the aims of the study programme and the interconnection of study courses within the study programme. There is continuous cooperation between the Council of the Faculty of Rehabilitation, lecturers within the department, students, employers, graduates, and other departments. This is promoted in particular by the Director of the study programme, who captures internal evidence twice a year by analyzing the results of the study course assessment questionnaires, recommendations and comments of students. These results are discussed with the heads of study courses and the lecturers involved, so that consensus is built for changes to be made so as to improve the study process as necessary.

In addition, there is communication with heads of the study courses during the planning and implementation phases annually. The reviews assist the Director of the programme to plan for the next academic year. Subsequently, heads of study courses whose study courses require changes are

contacted and discussions ensue for implementation of improvements. Also, before each semester, the content, outcomes and interconnection of the study course with other study courses are discussed. These discussions with lecturers are important to fine-tune study programmes to not only promote improvement and continuity but also to avoid the overlapping of study content. Several examples are provided in SAR (p. 290-291) so as to achieve learning outcomes in terms of Annex 4.1, Paragraph 8.1. An illustration of this cooperation is found in Figure 3 (p. 292) of SAR.

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

The qualification of the teaching staff involved in the study programme matches the requirements for its implementation and the regulatory enactments, enabling the study programme's aims and learning outcomes and the relevant study courses to be met. The RSU takes steps to ensure that changes in the teaching staff do not impair the quality of the study programme or its compliance with regulatory requirements. In the last six years, all academic staff members have written in peer-reviewed journals, including international editions or have five years of practical experience per the Law on Higher Education Institutions. A framework for teaching staff cooperation in implementing the study programme promotes its success and the interconnectedness of study courses.

Strengths:

1. The qualification of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme "Audiology and Speech Therapy" complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme.
2. There is ample cooperation amongst key stakeholders that enable successful running, improvement and maintenance of study programme.

Weaknesses:

None

Assessment of the requirement [7]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The presented qualifications of the academic staff and visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting docents, visiting lecturers and visiting assistants are in compliance with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements set out in the respective regulatory enactments. It is justified by information SAR (p. 286-292)

24.7_Analysis_of_the_Composition_of_Academic_Staff_Audiology_and_Speech_Therapy.pd

6.2_Anx_Biographies_teaching_staff_PBSP_Speech_and_Langauge_Therapy_EN_350pages.pdf

6.4_Anx_Ac_staff_publications_IF factor_Facult_Rehabilitation.pdf

8.1_Anx_Data_on_international_lecturers_Faculty_of_Rehabilitation.pdf

2.5. Assessment of the Compliance

Requirements

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Annex - 17.1_Anx_Compl_with_Nat_Ed_Stand_Audiol_and_Speech_Ther.pdf confirms that the study programme complies with State Education Standard corresponding to Cabinet Regulations No 305 of 13 June 2023 "Regulations on National Standard for Professional Higher Education" <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/342818-noteikumi-par-valsts-profesionalas-augstakas-izglitiba-standartu>.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The study programme complies with the profession standard "Standard of the Profession of Audiologist-Speech Therapist" (agreed at the meeting of the tripartite Cooperation Council for Vocational Education and Employment of 25 November 2015, minutes No 8), which is available online: <https://registri.visc.gov.lv/profizglitiba/dokumenti/standarti/ps0308.pdf> based on the annex 18.2_Anx_Mapping_StP_to_Profession_Standard_Audiology_and_Speech_Therapy.pdf

- 3 - The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in all languages in which the study programme is implemented, and they comply with the requirements set forth in Section 561, Paragraph two and Section 562, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

The study course descriptions are prepared in Latvian that can be accessed under annex - 20_Anx_Study_course_description_Audiology_Speech_therapy.pdf. Descriptions comply with regulations set forth in Law on Higher Education Institutions.

For further improvements, the reading list should be revised and the latest tendencies should be included.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The provided Diploma sample -

24.1_Anx_Sample_Diploma_and_Supplement_PBSP_Audiology_and_Speech_Therapy.pdf complies with the procedure by which state-recognised documents of higher education are issued according to Cabinet Regulation No. 202 "Kārtība, kādā izsniedz valsts atzītus augstāko izglītību apiecinošus dokumentus".

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 6 6 - Academic study programmes provided for less than 250 full-time students may be implemented and less than five professors and associated professors of the higher education institution may be involved in the implementation of the mandatory and limited elective part of these study programmes provided that the relevant opinion of the Council for Higher Education has been received in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 7 7 - At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of an academic doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field of science. At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a professional doctoral study programme in arts (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 8 8 - The teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme are proficient in the official language in accordance with the regulations on the level of the official language knowledge and the procedures for testing official language proficiency for performing professional duties and office duties.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Based on the acquired information onsite as well as relevant annexes:

24.4_Anx_Certification_Regarding_Latvian_Language_of_the_Academic_Staff.pdf and

6.2_Anx_CV_ENG_visas_programmas.7z, it can be evaluated that the

language proficiency of teaching staff is compliant with Cabinet Regulation. Nr. 733 "

Regulations Regarding the Extent of the Knowledge of the Official Language, the Procedures for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language and the State Fee for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language".

- 9 9 - The teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language, if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Sample of attached study agreement 24.8_Anx_Study contract sample_Health Care study direction.pdf complies with Cabinet Regulation. Nr. 70 "Studiju līgumā obligāti ietveramie noteikumi".

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

RSU has provided confirmation that students will be provided with opportunities to continue their education in another higher education institution if the implementation of the study programme is terminated. The agreements are specified in the annexes under "24.2_pielik_Apliecinajumi_par_parnemsanu_eng.7z". It is specified that in case of

discontinuation of this study programme, students can continue their studies at Professional Bachelor's study programme "Occupational Therapy" at RSU.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

RSU has provided confirmation that students are guaranteed compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the study programme's license is revoked. It is ensured based on the Section 55(8) of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education and Cabinet of Ministers No 795 of 11 December 2018 "Regulations on Licensing of study programmes", Paragraph 13.4. The relevant document can be found under Annexes - 24.3_Anx_Certification_of_Compensation_of_Losses_to_Students.pdf.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The study programme complies with Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 268 Regulations on the Therapeutic Expertise of Medical Personnel and Students Acquiring the First- or Second-Level Professional Higher Medical Education and the Extent of Their Theoretical and Practical Knowledge and Medical Treatment Law based on information specified and analyzed in the Annex - 7.2_Anx_Compliance_with_Field-Specific_Regulations_Audiology_and_Speech_Therapy.pdf

Assessment of the requirement [8]

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Study programme mostly fully complies with regulatory enactments, descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have to be revised.

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

The Professional bachelor study programme "Audiology and Speech Therapy" is compliant with the study field "Health Care" and aims to educate and train speech therapists with the highest level of professional Bachelor's education in health care by ensuring high quality professional higher education and to provide health, educational and social care institutions with qualified and competitive speech therapists in accordance with the needs of the national healthcare and rehabilitation system, as well as in line with the requirements of the professional standard for the audiology-speech. The title, code, degree and professional qualification of the study programme, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated. The Professional Bachelor study programme "Audiology and Speech Therapy" requires four years of full-time studies.

Each academic year has two semesters and ends with an exam to assess students' knowledge, skills, and abilities. Cabinet Regulation No. 305 "Regulations on State Standard for Professional higher Education" requires 160 credit points/240 ECTS during the programme. Study programme "Audiology and Speech Therapy" includes lectures, clinical practice, research papers, and state exams (semester papers, Bachelor's thesis and its defence). The duration and scope of the study programme implementation, as well as the implementation language, are reasonable and justified. Economic and social justification of the study programme, dynamics of the number of students and employment indicators of the graduates of the study programme are justified as there is demand on the market for this profession. The content of the study programme is topical, the content of the study courses is interconnected and complementary, corresponds to the objectives of the programme and ensures the achievement of learning outcomes, and in majority meets the needs of the industry, labor market and scientific trends. It complies with national regulations and professional (occupational) standards.

However, there needs to be further improvement of the study process and promotion of acquisition of practical skills in clinical placement sites.

Furthermore, there is a need to modernize the study programme and include topics which are the result of a modern and rapid science and technology development. Teaching is student-centered, however some of the methods in teaching should be better implemented, for example involving students in research projects and taking a more interdisciplinary approach in solving complex problems. The study programme faces financial challenges and has dependency on external funding, which can cause issues with study programme sustainability in the future, if it cannot be self-sufficient and financially independent in the long-term. There is a narrow margin between revenue and costs. At this point of time, additional funding allocated for the performance funding is crucial and hopefully helps the programme to manage that it becomes financially sustainable.

The Professional bachelor study programme "Audiology and Speech Therapy" involves clinical placement in the appropriate year of studies, with tasks being related to study programme learning outcomes. Clinical placement begins in the second year and continues into the fourth. The placement during the study programme, the opportunities and provision of placement offered to students, as well as the organization of work are effective. The placement complies with the requirements of regulatory enactments and the tasks are related to the learning outcomes. The topics of students' final theses are relevant to the field and correspond to the study programme. The qualification of the teaching staff involved in the study programme matches the requirements for its implementation and the regulatory enactments, enabling the study programme's aims and learning outcomes and the relevant study courses to be met. RSU takes steps to ensure that changes in the teaching staff do not impair the quality of the study programme or its compliance with regulatory requirements. In the last six years, all academic staff members have successfully achieved publications in peer-reviewed journals, including international editions or possess five years of practical experience as per the Law on Higher Education Institutions. A framework for teaching staff cooperation in implementing the study programme exists and this promotes its success and the interconnectedness of study courses.

Strengths:

1. The demand for the study programme has increased.
2. The implementation of the programme in Latvia is improved every year.
3. Many thesis use the evidence-based approach in research and systematic reviews.
4. Study content is in line with the academic and professional requirements for audiology and speech therapists.
5. There is a demand for these professionals and therefore there is a market for these professions ensuring study programme viability in terms of employability.
6. Additional funding allocated for the performance funding.

Weaknesses:

1. There needs to be further improvement of the study process and promotion of acquisition of practical skills in clinical placement sites.
 2. The study course descriptions, and reading lists published in study course descriptions are not fully revised since the last reaccreditation period. Updating the study course content and descriptions is necessary.
 3. Study courses and their content do not fully comply with the needs of the relevant industry, labor market and science trends, it does not follow the rapid science and technology development in the field of profession.
 4. Underused possibilities of involvement of students in scientific work.
- Lack of interdisciplinarity and work with various professions to solve complex problems of profession, obtained during the study programme.
5. The basic costs of studies no longer cover infrastructure maintenance costs.

Evaluation of the study programme "Audiology and Speech Therapy"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Audiology and Speech Therapy"

Short-term recommendations

Improve the study process using modern technologies.

Actively promote the acquisition of practical skills in clinical placement sites, ensuring a more robust and practical learning experience.

Continue to revise and update study course descriptions and reading lists, addressing changes related to the new ECTS credit system, with the goal of ensuring accuracy and alignment with the evolving educational landscape, and implement these revisions within the next assessment period to facilitate a smooth transition to the new credit system.

Long-term recommendations

Align study courses and their content with the evolving needs of the relevant industry, labor market, and current science and technology trends within the profession, ensuring responsiveness to rapid developments in the field, and implement necessary adjustments within the next assessment period to enhance the overall relevance and effectiveness of the study programme.

Actively involve teaching staff and students in research projects, to enhance their research skills, quantitative indicators, creativity, cooperation, and contribute to the professional field, within the next assessment period.

Promote interdisciplinarity within the study programme, fostering collaboration with various professions to address complex professional challenges, and ensure the integration of interdisciplinary approaches in study programme, within the next assessment period.

Develop a strategic plan to address the misalignment between basic study costs and infrastructure maintenance expenses, ensuring that the financial framework adequately covers infrastructure needs. Implement necessary adjustments within a specified timeframe to sustainably support the maintenance of essential facilities and enhance the overall quality of the educational environment.

II - "Occupational Therapy " ASSESSMENT

II - "Occupational Therapy " ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1. The Professional bachelor study programme "Occupational Therapy" (42722) is compliant with the study field "Health Care" as clearly identified in 17.1_Anx_Compl_with_Nat_Ed_Stand_Occupational_Therapy.pdf -Table 1. Compliance assessment of the Cabinet Regulations No 512 according to the sample of Annex 6 to The Guidelines for the Development of Self-assessment Report of the Study Direction of AIKA.

The evaluation of the assessment of compliance with the standard is based on mapping the study programme against the standard as in Annex 18.1 18.1_Anx_Study_Course_Mapping_Occupational_Therapy.pdf

The code "42722" of the study programme describes the level of higher education and compliance with the study field "Health Care". The first part of the code "42" denotes second level professional higher education (fifth level professional qualification and professional bachelor's degree) or second level professional higher education (fifth level professional qualification), to be implemented after completing general or professional secondary education. Study duration in full-time studies is four years, and compliance with level 6 of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) / Latvian Qualifications Framework (LQF) has been established in Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 322 (only in Latvian). The second part of the study programme code "722" according to Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 322 is "Medical services": "72" refers to the thematic area of education "Health Care".

The aim of the study programme is formulated in accordance with the Cabinet Regulations No 512 and it provides professional studies based on theoretical foundations of the science of occupational therapy and comply with the professional standard of Latvian occupational therapist in force since 15 December 2021. The assessment of the compliance of the study programme with the standard has been carefully evaluated by mapping the study programme against the standard. The mapping process and a summary of the mapping are available in Annex 18.1_Anx_Study_Course_Mapping_Occupational_Therapy.pdf

SAR (p. 637) states that the study programme "Occupational Therapy" corresponds to the study field "Health Care", with degree – professional bachelor's degree in health care and professional qualification of an occupational therapist, in accordance with the Occupational Standard for the Occupational Therapist and the minimum standard of the World Federation of Occupational Therapists in the education of occupational therapists and the Republic of Latvia Regulations on professional studies in occupational therapy.

2.1.2. The aim of the professional bachelor study programme "Occupational Therapy" is to provide the opportunity to obtain a professional Bachelor's degree in health care and to learn professional education in occupational therapy based on the theoretical foundations of the field, in accordance with the Occupational Standard for the Occupational Therapist and the minimum standard of the World Federation of Occupational Therapists in the education of occupational therapists and the Republic of Latvia Regulations on professional studies in occupational therapy (SAR, p. 637 and

17.1_Anx_Compl_with_Nat_Ed_Stand_Occupational_Therapy.pdf).

SAR (p. 637) shows that the duration of the 4 year full time study programme is implemented in Latvian in accordance with the Occupational Standard for the Occupational therapist, applicable in practice, through the acquisition of in-depth knowledge in occupational therapy.

2.1.3. According to SAR (p. 643), the development of the study programme “Occupational Therapy” takes into account the recommendations of local and international professional associations (Latvian Association of occupational therapists, World Federation of Occupational Therapy (WFOT), European Network of Occupational Therapy in Higher Education (ENOTHE) for the education of occupational therapists).

The results of student surveys are taken into account in the improvement of the study programme. This has resulted in reviewing of how lectures are planned, resulting in lectures being provided online and prepared in the video format for video lectures being available in the e-learning environment, enabling students to plan their time for studies more flexibly. Examples of some other changes (SAR, p. 644) included the introduction of self-assessment tests in the study courses “Somatic Diseases”, “Occupational Therapy in Paediatrics”, and “Biopsychosocial Approach to Palliative Care for Adults”, where students can test knowledge after learning theoretical material. In addition, following advice from the professional association and employers, study courses include content on modern technology applications in evaluation and occupational therapy. These changes are all justified and reflect the response of the Director of the programme to the needs and suggestions of key stakeholders.

2.1.4. According to Council of Occupational Therapists for European Countries (COTEC), Summary of Profession, 2022, in English available at:

<https://www.coteceurope.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Summary-of-the-Profession-2022.pdf>, Latvia has a relatively lower number of occupational therapists per capita compared to other EU countries (11.25 occupational therapists per 100,000 inhabitants). The availability of occupational therapists in regions of Latvia is very limited as shown in Figure 1. (SAR, p. 645) Availability of occupational therapists in regions of Latvia (data as at 2023, 210 occupational therapists in total). This data was compiled according to the Health Inspectorate Register of medical practitioners and medical treatment support persons (Latvian only) on 1.06.2023.

According to the State Employment Agency, the labour market has constantly high demand for occupational therapy graduates on the Internet site of the Association of Latvian occupational therapists www.ergoterapija.lv (Latvian only), indicating that on 01.10.2023 there are 15 occupational therapist vacancies available in various regions of Latvia and in Riga. The shortage of occupational therapists is in Riga but particularly critical in the regions. This was highlighted in national procurement procedures for the provision of health care services with contracting authorities of the National Health Service, namely palliative care mobile crews, home health services, etc.

The study programme “Occupational Therapy ” has 36 state-funded study places in full-time studies and additional 9 study places for tuition fee (SAR, p.647, Table 2). Since the academic year 2020/2021, there has been an increase in state-funded study places from 24 to 36 in view of the high demand for occupational therapists in health and social care sectors. On average, there were 304 applications for 36 state-funded study places over the last three years.

2.1.5. Not applicable.

The Professional bachelor study programme “Occupational Therapy” is compliant with the study field “Health Care”. The aim is to train occupational therapists with the highest level of professional Bachelor's education in health care by ensuring high quality professional higher education and to provide health, educational and social care institutions with qualified and competitive occupational therapists in accordance with the needs of the national healthcare and rehabilitation system and the requirements of the professional standard for occupational therapy. The title, code, professional qualification of the study programme, aims, objectives and learning outcomes are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation, as well as the implementation language, are reasonable and justified. Economic and social justification of the study programme, dynamics of the number of students and employment indicators of the graduates of the study programme are justified as there is demand on the market for this profession.

Strengths:

1. There is compliance of the study programme “Occupational Therapy” with the study field.
2. There is a demand for these professionals and therefore there is a market for these professions ensuring study programme viability in terms of employability.

Weaknesses:

None.

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1. A Bachelor of Health Care and an occupational therapist's qualification are required for the four-year full-time Bachelor of the study programme “Occupational Therapy”. Each year comprises two semesters, each ending with an exam to assess students' knowledge, skills, and competences. Cabinet Regulation No. 305 "Regulations regarding the State Standard for Professional Higher Education" requires 160 credit points / 240 ECTS during the programme. Clinical placement, 26 CP/ 39 ECTS, is done in years 3rd and 4th. The clinical placement is enough to start occupational therapy practice according to the profession norm (Cabinet Regulations No 512 of 26 August 2014 “Regulations on National Standard for Second Level Professional Higher Education” <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/268761> (MK 512) Annex 9 and 17.1, SAR p. 650). Study courses of the professional Bachelor's study programme have been created and are constantly being improved in accordance with the occupational therapist's profession standard in Latvia, as well as the WFOT (World Federation of Occupational Therapy) Minimum Standards for the Education of Occupational Therapists, ENOTHE (European Network of Occupational Therapy Higher Education) recommendations for the study programme harmonization project in Europe. Mapping of the study programme has been performed in accordance with the new occupational therapist's profession standard approved in 2021 (Annex 17.1; 18.2; 18.1; 19; 20; 9).

Each study course has clearly defined learning outcomes. Study course descriptions describe the course's goal, prerequisites, content, test methods, and outcomes—what knowledge, skills, and competences students gain from taking the course. The e-learning study course description provides students with information about the content and expected outcomes of the course, the topics of lectures, practical classes, and seminars, a list of mandatory and recommended readings, and requirements for mastering the course. The study programme is continuously updated, and course descriptions, lectures, and classes are evaluated annually to include the newest scientific findings and supplement student readings (SAR p. 651; <http://www.rsu.lv/>).

In academic year 2016/2017, the theoretical part of the State Examination was changed from an oral to a written test with 100 multiple-choice questions covering various study subjects to improve the process and objectivity. Students and the State Examination Board like the modifications. The

Respondus Monitor initiative accelerated e-environment adoption during the COVID-19 outbreak. The practical part of the State examination had to be transferred from the medical institution environment and e-environment for two years due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, but since academic year 2021/2022, it has been held on site in a medical treatment institution with patient participation, while the theoretical part remained in the e-environment. Every year, fresh field developments replace 20% of theoretical questions (SAR p. 651).

The study programme's purpose and learning outcomes are tightly associated, and achieving results requires adequate and subordinate study course results. The study programme and study courses must meet occupational therapist standards, which shows that the curriculum meets labor market needs and is represented in mapping outcomes. According to RSU quality management requirements and student and faculty feedback, study courses are arranged in logical order and modified frequently before each academic year (SAR p. 651; Annex 17.1; 18.1).

Even there are changes made to align the study programme to state educational standard mapping of the content of StP against the updated Occupational Standard for the Occupational Therapist should be continued and adjustments and updating of the content of study courses should be made, especially in the light of the new transition to the ECTS credit points. Updating the study course descriptions; e learning outcomes for study courses; and content of examinations in study courses should be continued.

Regarding the study courses, in the Part C, there is a small number of options for students, therefore it should be improved. New optional courses in Part C should provide students more options based on their professional interests. Special focus should be given to the development of elective courses, including multidisciplinary courses, academic integrity, ethical aspects of research and practice in rehabilitation in specific study courses as well as courses that provide development of entrepreneurial skills and cherish interdisciplinary approach. Special focus should be placed on the implementation of the topics that are raised as a result of rapid development of technology and science. Occupational therapy is witnessing transformative changes due to rapid advancements in science and technology. The profession is increasingly incorporating virtual platforms, such as telehealth and teletherapy, to enhance accessibility and continuity of care. Digital health tools and mobile applications are utilized for condition management and engagement in therapeutic activities. Immersive technologies, including virtual reality and augmented reality, contribute to realistic therapeutic environments and skill development. Wearable technology monitors physical activity, while robotics aids rehabilitation for individuals with physical disabilities. Advances in sensory technology cater to those with sensory processing disorders, and 3D printing allows development of customized assistive devices. Data analytics informs evidence-based practices, and cognitive rehabilitation software addresses cognitive impairments. Future collaboration in the professional field will be facilitated through technology, fostering communication among interdisciplinary healthcare teams. The dynamic nature of occupational therapy, driven by ongoing technological advancements for improved patient outcomes and comprehensive care requires adaptation in the study programme to tackle the challenges of the modern era.

The continuous improvement of the e-learning environment, at the beginning of each semester: update of existing materials, content of teaching materials and clinical cases is needed.

The study programme is topical, the content of the study courses / modules is interconnected and complementary, corresponding to the objectives of the programme. It also complies with national regulations and state professional (occupational) education standards. However there is still space for improvement. In expert opinion, study courses and their content do not fully comply with the needs of the relevant industry, labor market and science trends, it does not follow the rapid science and technology development in the field of profession.

2.2.3. Students receive information about the course's objectives, content, plan, final assessment, tasks, interim and final report schedules, and evaluation criteria at the start of the course. E-learning has all the information. During course implementation, students and lecturers communicate information, clarifying questions from independent work if needed, and provide further help and discussions. Study course assessments, informal student feedback, and academic staff pedagogical competence improvements have been used to critically evaluate study course teaching and assessment methods since 2016 (SAR p. 652).

In the programme, lecturers generate and maintain methodological resources, which are available in electronic form on the RSU e-environment. Student video lectures have expanded dramatically in recent years. Remote research required a quick development in new technology, which was implemented successfully. RSU's Occupational Therapy programme continued throughout COVID-19. Academic staff communicate with students using all RSU ICT. These technologies give administrative and academic staff feedback and simple access. Students can access teaching methodological materials prepared by teaching staff in an e-environment, video clinical cases in study courses like "General rehabilitation," "Biopsychosocial approach to palliative care for adults," and "Evaluation and Classification of functional restrictions," and video lectures with self-assessment tests that encourage self-directed learning. The study programme is mostly practical lessons that provide vocational skills. By working in small groups, students can receive individual attention. During the last accreditation period, clinical cases (situational tasks) in occupational therapy vocational study courses, such as "Occupational therapy in pediatrics," "somatic diseases," and a problem-based learning (PBL) approach mastered by teaching staff under the guidance of a US professor, developed clinical thinking for students and helped achieve study course goals and outcomes (SAR p. 653).

The study programme consists of 160 credit points / 240 ECTS, with one credit point / 1.5 ECTS representing the student's 40 academic hours workload. Within one credit point, the amount of contact hours ranges from 30% to 40% for most study courses. The remaining workload is the student's independent work. In expert opinion this is not compliant with the 20th paragraph of the Cabinet Regulation No.305 which states that in full-time studies contact hours should be not less than 40%. Course descriptions contain autonomous work, tasks, and assessment requirements. Student communication, autonomous work submission, and feedback are done in the RSU e-environment. The study plan follows RSU's strategy, goals, and tasks. The RSU Dean's office of the Faculty of Rehabilitation, Department of Rehabilitation, and other RSU departments implement the study programme. Students study in RSU classrooms and clinical learning centers (SAR p. 653).

Implementing study methods helps achieve course and programme goals and learning. The implementation of student-centered teaching is compiled within the study programme. Even though the various methods have been implemented in study programmes, there is room for improvement. It is highly recommended to update the content of examinations and clarify the assessment criteria. Exam content, format, and assessment criteria should be updated, and self-assessment tests should be created to assess students' knowledge and skills.

Besides the above mentioned it is important to mention that the scientific procedures and student involvement should be improved. Research in the study process should encourage students to do science projects. Research projects with faculty and students improve research skills, quantitative indicators, creativity, cooperation, and the occupational therapy area. The programme emphasizes cooperation and communication through pair work, group work, and work student-to-student, but it should also encourage multidisciplinary collaboration with lecturers, employers, association representatives, and clinic professionals to solve complex professional problems.

2.2.4. Clinical placement is a required component of the study programme, organized in accordance with Latvian laws and regulations. It enhances skills needed for professional qualification in a sector-specific company or organization outside RSU. The study programme "Occupational Therapy"

includes clinical placement in the 3rd and 4th years: "Clinical Placement in Somatic Medicine I" (6 CP / 9 ECTS), "Clinical Placement in Psychiatry" (8 CP / 12 ECTS), "Clinical Placement in Somatic Medicine II" (8 CP / 12 ECTS), and "Clinical Placement for Persons with Mental Retardation" (4 CP / 6 ECTS). Institutions guarantee clinical placement through gratis and paid placement agreements (SAR p. 654; Annexes 17.1; 18.2; 18.1; 9) .

Clinical placements are available at various medical, educational, and social care institutions in Latvia, including P.Stradins Clinical University Hospital, Riga East Clinical University Hospital, Children's Clinical University Hospital, 2nd Riga Hospital, NRC "Vaivari", SIA "Sanare-KRC Jaunkemeri", Riga Health Centre, NGO "Special Aids Park", NGO "Movement for Independent Life", NGO "Cared Child", 1st Riga Basic School Development Centre, 5th Agreements with regional medical treatment institutes have been reached, and student clinical placement sites are being increased, with a focus on regional availability. The goal of clinical placement is to strengthen students' knowledge from the study programme, develop and improve practical skills in working with patients of different ages to prevent or reduce functional capacity disorders, and acquire competence according to the occupational therapist's profession standard. Clinical placements follow approved documents from the Faculty of Rehabilitation Council, including Regulations, Programme, Portfolio, Assessment, and Case Assessment. Every academic year, the clinical placement program is reviewed and improved. The placement assessment documentation evaluates students' knowledge and skills during clinical placement, and they must attend a clinical placement seminar and report a clinical case analysis according to the clinical case analysis guidelines for a conceptual placement model "Occupational therapist's placement process structure," where they provide detailed information about patient assessment, occupation, and care. At each placement site, the clinical placement supervisor documents and provides input on the placement stage. After clinical placement, students submit a portfolio and defend it (SAR p. 654).

The study programme has good cooperation with employers in health and social care, providing placements for students and involving employers' representatives in the defense of Bachelor's theses and the State Examination Boards and in the work of the Study Quality Council. Even if the criteria is well met, there are some suggestions that should be taken into account for the future implementation. The number of clinical placements in medical, educational, social care, and non-governmental organizations has increased significantly during accreditation, including regional placement sites which is a very positive improvement. Cooperation with employers in expanding the clinical placement base locations, developing regional placement locations throughout the territory of Latvia is strongly encouraged. This addresses the problem of decentralization of human resources in health care and social care in Latvia. It should also be considered to improve and implement more the student exchange within the clinical placement within Erasmus+ mobility programme, and placement in the EU territory.

2.2.5 Not applicable.

2.2.6. Students select their Bachelor's thesis topics based on their chosen professional field, focusing on current and relevant subjects that contribute practically to the fields of occupational therapy and rehabilitation. The Latvian Association of Occupational Therapists regularly hosts conferences where students present their chosen topics and field practitioners learn about the most recent developments in research. Notably, the collaboration between the study programme and the professional association extends to the translation and validation of standardized evaluation instruments in occupational therapy. Students also engage in cooperative efforts with practitioners, medical institutions, non-governmental organizations, and social services to gather research data. Collaboration extends to partnerships with Latvian start-ups; for instance, a prototype for the evaluation section of a digital therapy tool was developed in collaboration with "Vigo Health." Users of "Vigo Health," including stroke patients, occupational therapists, and other professionals, are

actively using this prototype that incorporates the "Canadian Occupational Performance Measure" into the digital tool (SAR p. 655-656).

Some of the final thesis topics were: "Satisfaction with the work in the ergotherapist profession: the experience of practitioners' ergotherapist"; "Effectiveness of the use of telerehabilitation method in occupational therapy practice providing neurorehabilitation services to persons after a stroke: a systematic literature review"; "Systematic literature review of psychosocial rehabilitation content in patients with breast cancer." and others.

Upon graduation from the study programme "Occupational Therapy", individuals participate in sector conferences, presenting reports (oral and poster) derived from their Bachelor's thesis research. Events such as the annual summer conference of the Latvian Association of Occupational Therapists, the First and Second Latvian National Congresses of Rehabilitation Medicine (2019, 2021), and the 9th Latvian Congress of Doctors (2022) showcase the high quality of research evident in the Bachelor's theses. In 2019, graduates of the study programme continued their active participation in conferences, participated in the scientific paper competition and won award-winning places (1st, 2nd place) at the Baltic Congress of Scientific Researchers in Occupational Therapy; further emphasizing the programme's commitment to excellence in research. The topics of students' final theses are relevant to the field and correspond to the study programme. The criteria is well met.

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

A Bachelor of Health Care and an occupational therapist's qualification are required for the four-year full-time Bachelor of study programme "Occupational Therapy". Each year comprises two semesters, each ending with an exam to assess students' knowledge, skills, and competences. Cabinet Regulation No. 305 "Regulations regarding the national Standard for Professional Higher Education" requires 160 credit points / 240 ECTS during the programme. Clinical placement, 26 CP/ 39 ECTS, is done in years 3 and 4. The clinical placement is enough to start occupational therapy practice according to the professional standard. The study programme is mostly topical, and the content of the study courses corresponds to the objectives of the programme and ensures the achievement of learning outcomes. It complies with national regulations and state education, and professional (occupational) standards. However there is still space for improvement. Topic for improvement include broadening the courses options in the Part C. Special focus should be given to the development of elective courses, including multidisciplinary courses, academic integrity, ethical aspects of research and practice in rehabilitation in specific study courses as well as courses that provide development of entrepreneurial skills and cherish interdisciplinary approach. Additionally, focus should be placed on the implementation of the topics that are raised as a result of rapid development of technology and science. The continuous improvement of the e-learning environment, at the beginning of each semester: update of existing materials, content of teaching materials and clinical cases is needed. It is important to mention that the scientific procedures and student involvement should be improved. The programme emphasizes cooperation and communication through pair work, group work, and work student-to-student, but it should also encourage multidisciplinary collaboration with lecturers, employers, association representatives, and clinic professionals to solve complex professional problems. Implementing study methods helps achieve course and programme goals and learning. The implementation of student-centered teaching is compiled within the study programme. Clinical placements are available at various medical, educational, and social care institutions in Latvia. The topics of students' final theses are relevant to the field and correspond to the study programme. The qualification of the teaching staff involved in the study programme matches the requirements for its implementation and the regulatory enactments, enabling the study programme's aims and learning outcomes and the

relevant study courses to be met. The RSU takes steps to ensure that changes in the teaching staff do not impair the quality of the study programme or its compliance with regulatory requirements. In the last six years, all academic staff members have written in peer-reviewed journals, including international editions or five years of practical experience according to the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Strengths:

1. Programme's commitment to excellence in research.
2. Bachelor's theses show prominent excellent topics. Some were presented at active participation in conferences, participated in the scientific paper competition, and won award-winning places

Weaknesses:

1. The study course descriptions and reading lists published in study course descriptions should be fully revised and update of the study course content and descriptions is necessary, taking care of changes to a new, ECTS, credit system.
2. Study courses and their content do not fully comply with the needs of the relevant industry, labor market and science trends, it does not follow the rapid science and technology development in the field of profession.
3. Underused possibilities of involvement of students in scientific work.
4. Lack of interdisciplinarity and work with various professions to solve complex problems of profession, obtained during the study programme.

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1. According to the Self-Assessment Report (SAR, Part II, Study Programme Occupational Therapy, Paragraph 3.3.1) the provision of the study programme includes resources available at the RSU Medical Education Technology Centre (MITC), that has the premises necessary for the study process. This includes equipment necessary for learning basic occupational therapy skills at pre-clinical stage: equipment for evaluating functioning - dynamometer, goniometers, RehaCom digital software for evaluation of cognitive functions, technical assistive technologies for self-care, mobility activity training, hygiene room, a sensory integration room and equipment of making hand splints. A digital catalog of resources is also available, it contains materials and technical resources of the department and optimizes the cooperation process between different study courses and study programmes.

The study programme provides students with extensive RSU Library resources, including the library branch located in the Medical Education Technology Centre. The available electronic resources include four databases of e-books (Ebook Academic Collection (EBSCO), Ebook Central (Proquest), AccessMedicine and ClinicalKey), ten full-text databases of journals, full text databases of scientific articles (Sage Premier 2022 Collection, Health Research Premium Collection (ProQuest), MEDLINE Complete (EBSCO), Communication Source (EBSCO), Sociology Source Ultimate (EBSCO), Academic Search Complete (EBSCO), Wiley Online Journals, PsycARTICLES (APA), BMJ Journals, ClinicalKey

journals (Elsevier), Science Direct (Elsevier)).

Additionally four evidence-based medical databases are available, these include ClinicalKey Clinical Overviews (Elsevier), The Cochrane Library (Wiley), DynaMed (EBSCO), PEN: Practice-based Evidence in Nutrition. Advisory support to the lecturers and students is also provided by the RSU Library.

The study programme has developed successful cooperation with RSU clinical learning centers.

In the expert's view the analysis above indicates that the provision of the study programme ensures a high-quality study process.

2.3.2. Not applicable.

2.3.3. In accordance with SAR p. 657, the study programme is financed with either from state budget or private funds. The tuition fee for studies is EUR 4890 per study year. Based on the information provided in the SAR p. 658, the number of students planned to reach in the four years of study of the full-time study programme is 145 students, with 41 students admitted in the first year of studies, and 6 student drop-outs predicted for the second year of studies, and the number of students remaining unchanged in the third and fourth years. Such a number of students is optimal to ensure a high quality study process and so that the study programme can cover implementation and development costs.

Based on the Table 2 provided in the SAR p.658, - cost of study programme, the average revenue per student is 37 EUR higher than average cost per student.

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

The study programme seems to have a sound financial structure with a diverse funding model. The planned student number, coupled with a tuition fee that results in a positive revenue-cost margin, indicates financial viability, however, the margin at this point is comparably small and could be extended in the future to ensure less risk and higher financial sustainability of the programme. The focus on maintaining a high-quality study process and covering implementation and development costs further underscores a strategic approach to programme management. Additionally, the study programme offers comprehensive resources to support learning and development. The provision includes well-equipped facilities at the RSU Medical Education Technology Centre, a digital catalog enhancing resource accessibility, extensive electronic and print resources from the RSU Library, and successful partnerships with clinical learning centers. These elements collectively contribute to a high-quality study process.

Strengths:

1. Focus on maintaining a high-quality study process with the necessary resource base and strategic programme planning.
2. The provision of the study programme includes resources available at the RSU Medical Education Technology Centre (MITC), which has the premises necessary for the study process.
3. Extensive informative provision and cooperation with clinical centers provides a strong base for the unity of theoretical knowledge and practical skills.

Weaknesses:

None.

Assessment of the requirement [6]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The study programme ensures the necessary resource provision and fulfills the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and ensures the achievement of learning outcomes.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1. SAR (p. 659) shows that the qualification of the academic staff involved in the implementation of the study programme "Occupational Therapy" is in conformity with the conditions for implementation of the study programme and the requirements of regulatory enactments. The lecturers involved in the implementation of professional occupational therapy study courses are highly qualified professionals in their area, and actively participate in the work of the Latvian Association of Occupational Therapists. The study programme, objectives of the relevant study courses and learning outcomes are successfully achieved through both practical experience in the work of an occupational therapist and continuous participation in various seminars, projects, studies and training that provide new theoretical and practical knowledge, exchange of experience and opportunity for students to transfer newly acquired knowledge on occupational therapy-related issues. The teaching staff complement involved in the study programme "Occupational Therapy" includes 2 professors, 2 associate professors, 3 assistant professors, 4 lecturers and 7 assistants from different RSU structural units. There are 24 guest lecturers as well.

2.4.2. Over the period of assessment, the staff complement stabilized with several new lecturers and visiting staff being recruited to ensure that the implementation of the study programme takes place without problems. According to interviews in site visits with staff, the Director of the study programme regularly engages in both educational and professional qualification improvement activities and has shown agility in responding to changes needed also based on student feedback and gaps in human resources (SAR, p.661-662).

2.4.3. Not applicable.

2.4.4. Even though 3/42 of Faculty of Rehabilitation, of the professional Bachelor's study programme "Occupational Therapy" academic staff on the list has not shown CV and references, all other members of the academic staff in the last six years have published in peer-reviewed editions, including international editions, or have five years of practical experience in accordance with the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

The implementation of the compulsory and restricted elective part of the professional Bachelor's study programme "Occupational Therapy" is carried out by 42 lecturers, 17 of whom have been elected to the academic positions at RSU. Out of 17 elected representatives of the academic staff, 1 is professor and 2 associate professors, the largest proportion of the position is that of assistant. Out of 42 lecturers involved in the implementation of the study programme, 21 lecturers are employed in the main job (the position of an elected or acting lecturer (staff employees)) and 21 of them are invited lecturers (specialists from other organisations and experts in the field). Out of 21 lecturers employed in the main job, 17 are elected lecturers, 4 are acting lecturers. that 5 lecturers, or ~29%

of all elected lecturers involved in the implementation of the StP have been employed at least once in RSU research projects since 2017. Whereas, since 2017, 2 or 50% of all acting lecturers involved in the implementation of the StP have been employed in RSU research projects at least once. With regard to the status of an expert of the Latvian Council of Science (LCS), 18% of the elected lecturers involved in the implementation of the StP has the status of an expert of the LCS (Annex 24_7). .

The professionals involved in the Professional Bachelor's study programme "Occupational Therapy", have professional experiences in work of "Riga Psychiatry and Narcology Centre (RPNC)"; Riga centre of psychiatry and addiction disorders; European region - World confederation of physical therapists; Latvian association of physiotherapists; SIA „Sanare-Krc Jaunķemeri; Rigas East university hospital, Clinic of rehabilitation; National Health Service, Department of Medical Services, Department of Outpatient Services. These work experiences highlight the diverse roles and responsibilities of the involved academic staff.

2.4.5. There is a mechanism for mutual cooperation of the teaching staff in the implementation of the study programme which therefore ensures the achievement of the aims of the study programme and the interconnection of study courses within the study programme. There is continuous cooperation between the Director of the study programme, the lecturers of the Department of Rehabilitation, management, students, employers, graduates, and other departments, as well as with the Latvian National Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine. The Director of the study programme also holds regular meetings with placement supervisors.

In addition, there is communication with heads of the study courses during the planning and implementation phases annually. The reviews assist the Director of the programme to plan for the next academic year. Subsequently, heads of study courses whose study courses require changes are contacted and discussions ensue for implementation of improvements. Also, before each semester, the content, outcomes and interconnection of the study course with other study courses are discussed. These discussions with lecturers are important to fine-tune study programmes.

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

The qualification of the teaching staff involved in the study programme "Occupational Therapy" matches the requirements for its implementation and the regulatory enactments, enabling the study programme's aims and learning outcomes and the relevant study courses to be met. The RSU takes steps to ensure that changes in the teaching staff do not impair the quality of the study programme or its compliance with regulatory requirements. In the last six years, all academic staff members have written in peer-reviewed journals, including international editions or have five years of practical experience per the Law on Higher Education Institutions. A framework for teaching staff cooperation in implementing the study programme promotes its success and the interconnectedness of study courses.

Strengths:

1. There is ample cooperation amongst key stakeholders that enable successful running, improvement and maintenance of study programmes.

Weaknesses:

None.

Assessment of the requirement [7]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The presented qualification of the academic staff and visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting docents, visiting lecturers and visiting assistants is compliant with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements set out in the respective regulatory enactments as per SAR p. 637-664, site visit interviews and Annexes 24.7, 6.2, 6.4 and 8.1.

2.5. Assessment of the Compliance

Requirements

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Annex - 17.1_Anx_Compl_with_Nat_Ed_Stand_Occupational_Therapy.pdf confirms that the study programme complies with Cabinet Regulations No 512 of 26 August 2014 "Regulations on National Standard for Second Level Professional Higher Education" <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/268761>

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Annex 18.2_Anx_Mapping_StP_to_Profession_Standard_Occupational_Therapy.pdf provides justification of compliance of the study programme with the profession standard "Occupational therapist's Profession Standard" (agreed at the meeting of the tripartite Cooperation Council for Vocational Education and Employment of 15 December 2021, minutes No 7). (available online: <https://registri.visc.gov.lv/profizglitiba/dokumenti/standarti/2017/PS-201.pdf>)

- 3 3 - The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in all languages in which the study programme is implemented, and they comply with the requirements set forth in Section 561 , Paragraph two and Section 562 , Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

The study course descriptions are prepared in English and Latvian that can be accessed under annexes -20_Anx_Study_course_description_Occ_Therapy.pdf and 20_pielik_Kursu_apr_Ergoterapija.pdf.

Descriptions comply with regulations set forth in Law on Higher Education Institutions. However, the implementation language of the programme is Latvian.

For further improvements, the reading list should be revised and the latest tendencies should be included.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The provided Diploma sample -

24.1_Anx_Sample_Diploma_and_Supplement_PBSP_Occupational_Therapy.pdf complies with the procedure by which state-recognised documents of higher education are issued according to Cabinet Regulation No. 202 "Kārtība, kādā izsniedz valsts atzītus augstāko izglītību apliecinošus dokumentus".

- 5 5 - The academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements set forth in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 6 6 - Academic study programmes provided for less than 250 full-time students may be implemented and less than five professors and associated professors of the higher education institution may be involved in the implementation of the mandatory and limited elective part of these study programmes provided that the relevant opinion of the Council for Higher Education has been received in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 7 7 - At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of an academic doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field of science. At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a professional doctoral study programme in arts (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 8 8 - The teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme are proficient in the official language in accordance with the regulations on the level of the official language knowledge and the procedures for testing official language proficiency for performing professional duties and office duties.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Based on the acquired information onsite as well as relevant annexes:

24.4_AnxCertification_Regarding_Latvian_Language_of_the_Academic_Staff.pdf and

6.2_AnxCV_ENG_visas_programmas.7z, it can be evaluated that the

language proficiency of teaching staff is compliant with Cabinet Regulation. Nr. 733 "

Regulations Regarding the Extent of the Knowledge of the Official Language, the Procedures for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language and the State Fee for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language".

- 9 9 - The teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language, if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Sample of attached study agreement 24.8_Anx_Study contract sample_Health Care study direction.pdf complies with Cabinet Regulation. Nr. 70 "Studiju līgumā obligāti ietveramie noteikumi".

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

RSU has provided confirmation that students will be provided with opportunities to continue their education in another higher education institution if the implementation of the study programme is terminated. The agreements are specified in the annexes under "24.2_pielik_Apliecinajumi_par_parnemsanu_eng.7z". It is specified that in case of discontinuation of this study programme, students can continue their studies at RSU Professional Bachelor's study programme "Physiotherapy".

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

RSU has provided confirmation that students are guaranteed compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the study programme's license is revoked. It is ensured based on the Section 55(8) of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education and Cabinet of Ministers No 795 of 11 December 2018 "Regulations on Licensing of study programmes", Paragraph 13.4. The relevant document can be found under Annexes - 24.3_Anx_Certification_of_Compensation_of_Losses_to_Students.pdf.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The study programme complies with the State Education Standard corresponding to Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No. 268 "Regulations on the competence in medical treatment of practitioners of medicine and the students, who follow the first or second level professional programmes of higher medical education, and the scope of theoretical and practical knowledge of such persons." and Medical Treatment Law.

Assessment of the requirement [8]

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Study programme mostly fully complies with regulatory enactments. The reading list should be

revised and the latest tendencies should be included.

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

The Professional bachelor study programme "Occupational Therapy" is compliant with the study field "Health Care". The aim is to educate and train occupational therapists with the highest level of professional Bachelor's education in health care by ensuring high quality professional higher education and to provide health, educational and social care institutions with qualified and competitive occupational therapists in accordance with the needs of the national healthcare and rehabilitation system and the requirements of the professional standard for the occupational therapy. The title, code, degree and professional qualification of the study programme, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated. The four year duration and scope of the study programme implementation, as well as the implementation language, are reasonable and justified. There needs to be further improvement of the study process and promotion of acquisition of practical skills in clinical placement sites. Economic and social justification of the study programme, dynamics of the number of students and employment indicators of the graduates of the study programme are justified as there is demand on the market for this profession. Each year comprises two semesters, each ending with an exam to assess students' knowledge, skills, and competences. Cabinet Regulation No. 305 "Regulations regarding the national Standard for Professional Higher Education" requires 160 credit points / 240 ECTS during the programme. Clinical placement, 26 CP/ 39 ECTS, is done in years 3 and 4. The clinical placement is enough to start occupational therapy practice according to the profession norm. The study programme is topical, the content of the study courses is interconnected and complementary, corresponds to the objectives of the programme and ensures the achievement of learning outcomes, as well as meets the needs of the industry, labor market and scientific trends. It also complies with national regulations and state education professional (occupational) standards. However there is still space for improvement. Topic for improvement include broadening the courses options in the Part C. Special focus should be given to the development of elective course, including multidisciplinary courses, academic integrity, ethical aspects of research and practice in rehabilitation in specific study courses as well as courses that provide development of entrepreneurial skills and cherish interdisciplinary approach. Additionally; focus should be placed on the implementation of the topics that are raised as a result of rapid development of technology and science. The continuous improvement of the e-learning environment, at the beginning of each semester: update of existing materials, content of teaching materials and clinical cases is needed. It is important to mention that the scientific procedures and student involvement should be improved. The programme emphasizes cooperation and communication through pair work, group work, and work student-to-student, but it should also encourage multidisciplinary collaboration with lecturers, employers, association representatives, and clinic professionals to solve complex professional problems. The study programme seems to have a sound financial structure with a diverse funding model. The planned student number, coupled with a tuition fee that results in a positive revenue-cost margin, indicates financial viability, however, the margin at this point is comparably small and could be extended in the future to ensure less risk and higher financial sustainability of the programme. The focus on maintaining a high-quality study process and covering implementation and development costs further underscores a strategic approach to programme management. The qualification of the teaching staff involved in the study programme matches the requirements for its implementation and the regulatory enactments, enabling the study programme's aims and learning outcomes and the relevant study courses to be met. The RSU takes steps to ensure that changes in the teaching staff do not impair the quality of the study programme or its compliance with regulatory requirements. In the last six years, all academic staff members have written in peer-reviewed journals, including international editions or

five years of practical experience per the Higher Education Institutions Law. A framework for teaching staff cooperation in implementing the study programme promotes its success and the interconnectedness of study courses. The implementation of student-centered teaching is compiled within the study programme. Clinical placements are available at various medical, educational, and social care institutions in Latvia. The topics of students' final theses are relevant to the field and correspond to the study programme. Moreover, the study programme provides a wide range of resources to facilitate learning and growth. This provision encompasses well-equipped facilities at the RSU Medical Education Technology Centre, an accessible digital catalog, extensive electronic and print materials accessible through the RSU Library, and fruitful collaborations with clinical learning centers. These components synergistically enhance the quality of the study experience.

Strengths:

1. Programme's commitment to excellence in research.
2. Bachelor's theses show prominent excellent topics. Some were presented at active participation in conferences, participated in the scientific paper competition, and won award-winning places.
3. The qualification of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme "Occupational therapy" complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme.
4. There is ample cooperation amongst key stakeholders that enable successful running, improvement and maintenance of study programme.
5. Focus on maintaining a high-quality study process with the necessary resource base and strategic programme planning.
6. Provision of the study programme includes resources available at the RSU Medical Education Technology Centre (MITC), that has the premises necessary for the study process.
7. The extensive provision of information and collaboration with clinical centers establish a solid foundation for integrating theoretical knowledge with practical skills.

Weaknesses

1. The study course descriptions and reading lists published in study course descriptions should be fully revised and update of the study course content and descriptions is necessary, taking care of changes to a new, ECTS, credit system.
2. Some study courses and their content do not fully comply with the needs of the relevant industry, labor market and science trends, it does not follow the rapid science and technology development in the field of profession.
3. Underused possibilities of involvement of students in scientific work.
5. Lack of interdisciplinarity and work with various professions to solve complex problems of profession, obtained during the study programme.

Evaluation of the study programme "Occupational Therapy "

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Occupational Therapy "

Short-term recommendations

Continue to revise and update study course descriptions and reading lists, addressing changes related to the new ECTS credit system, with the goal of ensuring accuracy and alignment with the evolving educational landscape, and implement these revisions within the next assessment period to facilitate a smooth transition to the new credit system.

Long-term recommendations

Align study courses and their content with the evolving needs of the relevant industry, labor market, and current science and technology trends within the profession, ensuring responsiveness to rapid developments in the field, and implementing necessary adjustments within the next assessment period to enhance the overall relevance and effectiveness of the study programme.

Actively involve teaching staff and students in research projects, to enhance their research skills, quantitative indicators, creativity, cooperation, and contribute to the professional field, within the next assessment period.

Promote interdisciplinarity within the study programme, fostering collaboration with various professions to address complex professional challenges, with the goal of providing students with a holistic and diverse educational experience, and ensure the integration of interdisciplinary approaches within the next assessment period.

II - "Physiotherapy" ASSESSMENT

II - "Physiotherapy" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1. SAR (p. 183-206) provides information about the Professional bachelor study programme "Physiotherapy" (42722) which was corroborated during expert group on-site visit and interviews, and Annexes 17.1_pielik_PBSP_Fiziot_atbilstiba_izglitibas_standartam_ENG.pdf and 18.2_Anx_Mapping_StP_to_Occupation_Standard_Physiotherapy.pdf. This information confirms that there is compliance of the study programme "Physiotherapy" with the study field "Health Care".

The aim of the study programme "Physiotherapy" is to promote the development of the rehabilitation system corresponding to the needs of national economy and to social needs in Latvia, providing it with qualified and competitive professionals, physiotherapists, by establishing professional studies in physiotherapy in compliance with the Professional Standard for Physiotherapist and the normative Regulation of the Republic of Latvia.

The study programme "Physiotherapy" has been implemented at RSU since 1993. In academic years 1995/1996 and 1997/1998, with support of the Danish Government and in cooperation with the Copenhagen School of Physiotherapy in Denmark the study programme was improved in accordance with the recommendations of the European Region of WCPT (World Confederation for Physical Therapy) for physiotherapy education in Europe. The study programme has been accredited since 2000. In 2010, the implementation of part-time study programme "Physiotherapy" started. Since 2005, RSU with its study programme "Physiotherapy" has been represented at ENPHE (European Network of Physiotherapy in Higher Education), whose mission is to improve physiotherapy education and make it more transparent, and to promote its uniform development in Europe. RSU is its active member.

2.1.2. The professional Bachelor's study programme in health care with qualification in "Physiotherapy" has been created in accordance with Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 305 of the Republic of Latvia "Regulations on the State Standard of professional higher education" and its title clearly refers to the content of the programme and Professional Bachelor's Degree in health care and qualification of physiotherapist (24.1_Anx_Sample_Diploma_and_Supplement_PBSP_Physiotherapy.pdf) to be obtained, in which professionals in one of the functional specialist professions relevant for rehabilitation are prepared.

Code of the study programme (42722) conforms to Cabinet Regulation No. 322 “Regulations regarding Classification of Education of Latvia” and indicates the level of Education of the study programme, as well as compliance with the field “Health care”. The structure and content of the study programme allows implementation of the aims and tasks of the study programme, as well as achievement of the learning outcomes provided for in the study programme and preparation of graduates for the performance of such professional tasks, which are determined by the Physiotherapist’s profession standard (agreed on 13.10.2021.). Recommendation documents and recommendations of professional associations (WCPT, WCPT ER, Latvian Association of Physiotherapists) and also ENPHE (European Network of Physiotherapy in Higher Education) for physiotherapy education are also taken into account.

Physiotherapy is offered as a 4-year full time and a 5-year part time as a professional bachelor’s degree in health care, in the Latvian Language, thereby allowing flexibility to candidates for the course.

2.1.4. The Department provides professional studies in “Physiotherapy” that are in accordance with the Professional Standard for Physiotherapist and the Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia, as well as with standards of international bodies as highlighted in 2.1.2, and applicable in practice, through the acquisition of in-depth knowledge in physiotherapy.

The Department has shown willingness during site visit to promote the competitiveness of the programme graduates in the changing socio-economic conditions in the local and international labor market. They are also actively marketing the course.

The study programme “Physiotherapy” is state-funded but also has places for self-funded individuals. Although the number of state-funded places in the study programme reduced in the previous accreditation period, the number of potential students and the number of enrolled students in the study programme have not reduced. The Public Health Guidelines 2021-2027 identified medical rehabilitation as one of priority health areas in view of the changing demography and aging population. The guidelines highlight shortage of medical practitioners including physiotherapists in the health care system, as well as insufficient availability of health care services. The aim and tasks of the study programme are in line with the development of the rehabilitation sector, thereby helping in the development of the study programme in accordance with sector development needs.

Surveys of students, graduates and employers, which are organised on a regular basis, are a significant aspect in improving the study programme.

According to the SAR (p. 186), a survey involving graduates for academic year 2021/2022, who have graduated since 2011, and organized in cooperation with the Latvian Association of Physiotherapists (LAP) shows that most of the graduates (98%) work in a field related to the study programme. Overall, 84% respondents evaluate the study programme as good and very good. When asked for their assessment of their skills to apply knowledge and practical skills in the labor market, 70% responded with “good” and “very good,” while 27% evaluated them as “average”. Of those working in the sector, 92% consider the knowledge and skills acquired in the study programme useful, 96% respondents noted that the education acquired had helped them find a job.

The need for physiotherapists in the labor market is also evidenced by the high number of job offers for graduates of the study programme, and most often these offers appear on the website of the Latvian Association of Physiotherapists.

2.1.5. Not applicable.

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

Conclusions:

The Professional bachelor study programme "Physiotherapy" is compliant with the study field "Health Care". The aim is to educate and train physiotherapists by ensuring high quality professional higher education and to provide health, educational and social care institutions with qualified and competitive physiotherapists in accordance with the needs of the national healthcare and rehabilitation system and the requirements of the professional standard. The title, code, degree and professional qualification of the study programme, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation, as well as the implementation language, are reasonable and justified. Economic and social justification of the study programme, dynamics of the number of students and employment indicators of the graduates of the study programme are justified as there is demand on the market for this profession.

Strengths:

1. There is compliance of the study programme "Physiotherapy" with the study field.
2. There is a demand for these professionals and therefore there is a market for these professions ensuring study programme viability in terms of employability.

Weaknesses:

None.

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1. The learning outcomes and the purpose of the study programme are closely associated, and the attainment of the learning outcomes is secured in a manner that is consistent with the aim of the study programme and the results of study courses that are subordinate to the learning outcomes. Both the results of the study programme and the results of study courses are in accordance with the standard of the physiotherapist profession. Study courses are organized in a logical manner and are regularly updated (SAR p. 189; Annex 17.1; 18.2; 17.2; 18.1; 19; 20f; 9f).

The professional Bachelor's degree programme called "Physiotherapy" gives a degree in Health care and a physiotherapist's qualification. The curriculum consists of four years of full-time studies and five years of part-time studies. There are two semesters in each academic year, and at the end of each semester, there is a session that is held to evaluate the students' knowledge, abilities, and competencies that students have learned over the year (SAR p. 190).

The bachelor's degree programme is developed and continuously revised in compliance with the physiotherapist's profession standard in Latvia, as well as the recommendations of the European Region of the World Council of Physical Therapy and the European Network of Physical Education. Following the new physiotherapist's profession standard, which has been in effect since October 13, 2021, the mapping of the study programme has been carried out in compliance with the new standard. The learning outcomes for the study programme as well as for each individual study course have been developed in a clear and concise manner. Those who are interested in studying have access to study course descriptions of the study programme. These descriptions define the purpose of the course, the prerequisites that are required, the content, as well as the methods of testing and the outcomes of the study process. These outcomes include the knowledge, skills, and competencies that students acquire as a result of learning the study courses. This information can be accessed free of charge on the website of the RSU administration. Additional information for students regarding the content and expected outcomes of the study course, information regarding the topics of lectures, practical classes, and seminars, a list of mandatory and recommended readings, and requirements for the mastery of the study course are all provided in the study course description, which is available in e-learning. This information is offered to students (SAR p. 190).

The structure of compulsory content of the Bachelor's study programme consists of: study courses or study courses and study modules; placement; state examination. The selection, amount and content of study courses, as well as the content of placement in accordance with the degree and professional qualification to be awarded are defined in the study content and implementation description of the Bachelor's study programme in accordance with the professional qualification requirements or regulatory enactments on competence, scope of theoretical and practical knowledge necessary for a student of a professional higher education programme for the relevant profession (SAR p. 191).

The content of the study courses is derived from the aims and learning outcomes of the study course, whereas they are derived from the aim and learning outcomes of the programme. The linkages can be seen from the mapping of the study programme. Each learning outcome of the programme (1- 9) corresponds to several study courses. Indication of the level of acquisition in the mapping was based on the knowledge, competencies and skills specified in the 6th level of qualification. The mapping concluded that the achievement of each defined outcome of the study programme is achieved through a number of study courses. At the same time, the content of each study course is designed to contribute to the achievement of several aims set for the study programme. Thus, through the mapping results report, the compliance of the courses of the study programme with the learning outcomes to be achieved and the mutual coherence is demonstrated (Annex 18.2; 17.2; 18.1; 19.).

The recommendations that were made by external experts were gradually included into the study programme in order to enhance the overall quality of the study process. These recommendations were derived from the prior evaluation. Nevertheless, there is room for continuous improvement of the situation. To guarantee that learning outcomes are attained at the appropriate level of education, the descriptions of the study courses have been changed. In order to more accurately reflect the current state of affairs, the reading lists that were provided in the descriptions of the study courses were changed. During the subsequent accreditation period, work should be continued on the descriptions of study courses and the literature regarding those courses. Additionally, new ideas and objectives should be incorporated into the plans for the future improvement of the study programme. Study courses and their content do not fully comply with the needs of the relevant industry, labor market, and science trends. It is recommended to take into account the rapid development of technology in the field of profession. In the evolving field of physiotherapy, cutting-edge technologies are revolutionizing both treatment methodologies and the education of future practitioners. These technologies include telehealth and remote monitoring for virtual consultations, VR and AR for immersive rehabilitation exercises, robotics and exoskeletons for precise movement assistance, and biofeedback systems offering real-time muscle activity insights. In the future improvement of the study programme, these new topics should be considered for implementation in the study programmes to give students more knowledge and skills and prepare them for a modern labor market.

The content of the current study programme, the content of the study courses, and modules are interconnected and complementary, which is relevant for the study programme "Physiotherapy". The content of the programme corresponds to the objectives of the programme and ensures the achievement of learning outcomes; and the majority of the content satisfies the requirements of the industry, the labor market, and scientific trends. The study programme is in accordance with national regulations. On the other hand, the study programme needs to be updated in order to incorporate subjects that are the product of modern and quick developments in science and technology. Planning the study process for the transition from CP to ECTS should make an effort to avoid discrepancies regarding the associated credits to a course. This is important in light of the fact that the credit system will be changing in the near future to ECTS.

2.2.2. Not applicable.

2.2.3. The study curriculum is 160 credit points/240 ECTS. One credit point represents a student's 40-hour academic workload. Individual study courses in part-time studies have 30% contact hours per credit point, but most study courses, including full-time and professional study courses, have 40%. Course descriptions contain autonomous work, tasks, and assessment requirements. Students submit individual work, receive comments, and communicate in the e-environment. The study plan follows RSU's strategy, goals, and tasks. The RSU Dean's office of the Faculty of Rehabilitation, the Department of Rehabilitation, and other RSU departments implement the study programme, inviting staff from state and private hospitals, rehabilitation centers, and outpatient medical facilities. Students study in RSU classrooms and clinical learning centers. Clinical placement at medical treatment facilities has expanded significantly during accreditation, notably through gratuitous agreements (SAR p. 192).

Research is conducted in RSU classrooms and clinical learning centers. Administrative and technical staff support, considering the many bases where the study programme is performed, is crucial and valued. Starting work at the new Medical Education Technology Centre (MITC), which is developing rapidly and where many study courses, including pre-clinical professional study courses, are implemented, improved performance in 2012/2013. Students can also use physiotherapy lecture rooms for self-study and skills training. Training methods include lectures, practical classes, seminars, discussions, and independent work (group, individual, research, and presentation) for intramural studies. RSU's e-learning environment is regularly improved within the study programme. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated growth. New remote study resources include video demonstrations of manual therapy techniques, specific evaluation exams, and proprioceptive neuromuscular facilitations to assure practical skill acquisition. The study programme is mostly practical classes that teach professional skills. Working in small groups ensures individual attention for pupils. Individual lessons are offered, and student suggestions are considered as needed. Students frequently use physiotherapy classrooms to learn practical skills independently. Systems approach, situation analysis, and problem-oriented approach are major study methodologies for programme acquisition (SAR p. 193).

To gain experience in problem-based learning (PBL), Faculty of Rehabilitation lecturers visited Tampere University of Applied Sciences (TAMK) and learned about their PBL-based physiotherapy programme. The head of the TAMK programme also visited RSU and shared their experiences with RSU lecturers. TAMK lecturer visited RSU in 2015/2016 as part of Erasmus+ and shared her problem-based training experiences. Participating in PIC training and gaining expertise allowed this strategy to be introduced in individual study courses. During the last accreditation period, the use of situational tasks in professional study courses, including pre-clinical study courses, which are particularly important for the development of the professional judgment of students, has been widely implemented and developed, as well as it allowed for a full study process in remote studies where the possibility of contact with patients in the clinical environment was limited. Recent years have brought significant efforts to enhance planning and inspection of students' autonomous work. (SAR p. 193).

Content and structure are constantly improved in e-learning. The RSU PIC trainings effectively enhances the e-learning environment and is widely utilized by study programme lecturers.

Lecturers assist with the study process by developing and updating methodological materials, which are available via the university's electronic system. Video lectures, actual skill demonstrations, and other lecturers have increased significantly. Lecturers and supporting staff of the study programme improve their skills in RSU's e-learning environment and e-resources training courses and PIC's regular study process courses in cooperation with the IT Department. Remote research required a quick development in new technology, which was implemented successfully. RSU studies, including "Physiotherapy," continued uninterrupted during COVID-19. Academic staff communicate with students using all RSU ICT. These technologies give administrative and academic staff feedback and simple access (SAR p. 193).

During the study process, students get regular tutorials, which also take place before examinations, as well as when writing course papers and Bachelor's theses. When learning study subjects, students have access to the methodological materials prepared by lecturers in the e-environment, which stimulate the independent work of students (SAR p. 193).

Tests and exams are basic programme acquisition assessments. Tests, colloquia, practical demonstrations, and independent work presentations are also used. More study courses are using cumulative assessments to evaluate and provide feedback throughout the semester. Assessments include theoretical knowledge, practical skills, attitude, and capacity to communicate with patients, family, and coworkers. Assessment system is regularly analyzed and improved. Lecturers and students' opinions matter. Students receive regular tutorials during the study process, before exams, and during writing course papers and Bachelor's theses. When studying, students can use instructors' methodological resources in the e-environment to encourage independent work (SAR p. 194).

The study implementation methods contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study courses and the study programme. Student-centered learning and teaching principles are considered. When assessing the learning outcomes of education, the basic principles and procedure for the assessment of the completion of the study programme used in study programme "Physiotherapy"; comply with the requirements of the Cabinet Regulations No 305: 55. However, there is room for improvement when it comes to the methods of involving students in scientific research. Not enough attention is paid to them. The incorporation of research into the learning process gives students the opportunity to participate in scientific endeavors and develop their scientific skills. The presentation of the results of a bachelor's thesis at a scientific conference can facilitate the integration of academic studies into the working environment. This provides graduates with the opportunity to show their findings to professionals and contribute to the development of the area. The involvement of teaching staff and students in research projects facilitates the growth of the field of physiotherapy by enhancing research abilities, quantitative indicators, creativity, and cooperation. The programme emphasizes cooperation and communication through study modes (pair work, group work, student-to-student), but should promote more of the multidisciplinary collaboration with lecturers, employers, and association representatives, as well as other professionals in clinics to create an interdisciplinary approach in solving complex problems of the profession. It is highly recommended to involve students in multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary activities and scientific projects.

2.2.4. Clinical placement is a mandatory part of the study programme that is organized according to Latvian law and improves skills needed for professional qualification in a sector-related company or organization outside RSU. The fourth year of the study programme "Physiotherapy" (semester 7 and 8) includes 26 CP / 39 ECTS of clinical placement in state-leading clinics, rehabilitation centers, and outpatient medical treatment facilities. It is designed to facilitate the development of skills that are essential for the acquisition of professional qualification in a company or organization that is not affiliated with RSU and is relevant to the sector. The purpose of clinical placement is to enhance the knowledge that students have already acquired throughout the course of their studies, to cultivate and improve their practical skills in working with patients of varying ages and with a variety of pathologies in the prevention or reduction of functional capacity disorders, and to acquire competence that is in accordance with the physiotherapist's profession standard in the chosen profession. This placement takes place at the most prestigious clinics, rehabilitation centers, and outpatient medical treatment institutions in the state such as Pauls Stradins Clinical University Hospital, Riga East Clinical University Hospital, Children's Clinical University Hospital, Hospital of Traumatology and Orthopaedics, Riga 2nd Hospital, NRC "Vaivari", "Sanare", KRC "Jaunkemeri", and Riga Health Centre (agreements in place). Cooperation with area medical treatment institutions was also extended. Students can choose a medical treatment institution for one part of their 5 CP / 7.5

ECTS placement if it fits placement standards. Thus, more regional placement chances and future work prospects are available. Students work with children, adults, and elderly people with orthopedic, neurological, cardiological, pulmonological, surgical, and injury-related disorders in five placement sites (SAR p. 195); (9_Anex_Organisation_of_student_placement_Physiotherapy.pdf).

The clinical placement process follows the following documents: Clinical Placement Regulations, Programme, Portfolio, Physiotherapy Protocol, and Stage Assessment. Before placement, students are familiar with these materials, which are publicly available online. The whole placement process is controlled. The Clinical Placement Regulations of the study programme were revised before the placement site procurement procedure in 2015/2016 and are now common to all functional specialist study programmes at the Faculty of Rehabilitation. Clinical Placement Programme for each study programme, including "Physiotherapy", have been established and implemented separately. Every academic year, the Clinical Placement Programme is evaluated and modified. Students' knowledge and skills are examined during placement, including written assessments and feedback from supervisors at each site. Documentation is done during placement. The placement supervisor keeps track of the Clinical Placement Logbook and reviews the Physiotherapy Protocols for improvement. After the fall semester, students report on placement, but in the spring semester, they submit placement documents and appraise placement and self-growth to the commission during pre-defence. After the third year, the Director of the study programme meets with students to discuss the fourth-year placement's organization, progress, and content. Meetings are also held before and during placement to discuss placement-related difficulties in the fourth year of studies. An academic year includes two clinical placement supervisor meetings. E-learning provides students and supervisors with all placement information (SAR p. 196).

There is a general sense of contentment among both students and companies on the placement opportunities. Nevertheless, there is always room for advancement in this area. Clinical rotations are an essential component of the educational programme. For this reason, one of the priorities for the study programme in the years to come should be the provision, development, and incorporation of new clinical placements. These placements should contribute to the competence and professional development of young professionals and should also allow Latvian regions to involve young physiotherapy specialists.

The internship that is offered to students during the course of their study programme, the opportunities and provision of internships that are made available to students, and the ways in which work is organized are all beneficial. There is a connection between the tasks of the internship and the learning goals that can be achieved. All of the regulations that have been enacted by regulatory agencies have been met by the internship.

2.2.5. Not applicable.

2.2.6. 2.2.6. Bachelor's thesis topics should align with the chosen field of professional activity, be current, and contribute to the field of rehabilitation. These include translations of rehabilitation tools, including physiotherapy, literature assessments of physiotherapy treatments and their efficacy, etc. Selection and development of subjects are based on current scientific research and sector trends. One Bachelor's thesis has competed in ENPHE's annual student research paper competition since 2017. The Latvian Association of Physiotherapists lectures allow students to exhibit their top Bachelor's theses. Every student is required to produce three course papers and a Bachelor's thesis while they are enrolled in classes. Course papers are written inside specialized study courses, such as "Ergonomics," "Physiotherapy in Orthopaedics," and "Physiotherapy in Neurology." These courses fall under the category of "course papers." In accordance with the most recent developments and news in the industry, the themes that are covered in developed Bachelor's theses are current and relevant. In order to select themes for their Bachelor's theses, students should take into consideration the professional field that they are interested in. The lecturer who is overseeing the

Bachelor's thesis is involved in the process of selecting subjects, developing topics, and developing an application for a topic. This process takes place in collaboration with the lecturer. The development of the Bachelor's thesis is accompanied by the organization of two meetings with students, in which supervisors of the Bachelor's thesis are also present participants. These include the presentation and defense of the subject matter of their Bachelor's thesis, as well as the pre-defense of the Bachelor's thesis, during which students receive suggestions for how to improve their papers (SAR p. 196).

The outcomes of a Bachelor's thesis contribute to rehabilitation research. These include translations of rehabilitation tools, including physiotherapy, literature assessments of physiotherapy treatments and their efficacy, etc. Selection and development of subjects are based on current scientific research and sector trends. Thus, the Bachelor's theses "The methods used by physiotherapists and their experience using them when working with subacute COVID-19 patients" and "Use of telerehabilitation in physiotherapist practice with patients" in 2021/22 and 2020/21 are closely related to the current COVID-19 situation. The Bachelor's theses "Stroke patient experience using digital rehabilitation therapy "Vigo" third version" and "Changes in the functional condition of the shoulder girdle and trunk for gym visitors after the use of VERVE classes" are professional research. Both the Bachelor's thesis "Effectiveness of using robotic technologies to improve gait in children with cerebral palsy under 16 years of age, with GMFCS level II and III: a systematic review" and "The effectiveness of virtual reality in improving balance and gait in patients with Parkinson's disease: a systematic review" address novel, relevant topics in the field. The main research areas for the professional Bachelor's study programme in health care's "physiotherapist" qualification are: musculoskeletal system injury evaluation and physiotherapy, including gait analysis; peripheral and central nervous system damage, motor control, and development; pediatric physiotherapy; and disease prevention.

The topics of the thesis are oriented towards some of the modern technologies which demonstrates that the topics of students' final theses are relevant to the field and correspond to the study programme. Following modern trends, focus on evidence-based approaches and systematic reviews, as well as excellence in research show positive trends in the study programme and relevance of the Bachelor thesis.

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

The content of the study programme, content of the study courses and modules are interconnected and complementary; is relevant for the study programme "Physiotherapy". The content of the programme corresponds to the objectives of the programme and ensures the achievement of learning outcomes; and the majority of the content satisfies the requirements of the industry, the labor market, and scientific trends. The study programme is in accordance with national regulations. During the subsequent accreditation period, work should be continued on the descriptions of study courses and the literature regarding those courses. Additionally, new ideas and objectives should be incorporated into the plans for the future improvement of the study programmes. Study courses and their content do not fully comply with the needs of the relevant industry, labor market, and science trends. The study programme needs to be updated in order to incorporate subjects that are the product of modern and quick developments in science and technology. Planning the study process for the transition from CP to ECTS should make an effort to avoid discrepancies regarding the associated credits to a course. The internship that is offered to students during the course of their study programme, the opportunities and provision of internships that are made available to students, and the ways in which work is organized are all beneficial. There is a connection between the tasks of the internship and the learning goals that can be achieved. All of the regulations that

have been enacted by regulatory agencies have been met by the internship. The topics of the thesis are oriented towards the modern technologies which demonstrates that the topics of students' final theses are relevant to the field and correspond to the study programme. Following modern trends, focus on evidence-based approaches and systematic reviews, as well as excellence in research show positive trends in the study programme and relevance of the Bachelor thesis.

Strengths:

1. New Medical Education Technology Centre, which is developing rapidly and where many study courses, including pre-clinical professional study courses, are implemented. Students can also use physiotherapy lecture rooms for self-study and skills training.
2. The high demand in the labor market for physiotherapy specialists.
Modern topics as bachelor thesis, following modern technologies implemented in the field of physiotherapy.
3. The demand for the study programme has increased.
4. The implementation of the programme in Latvia is improved every year.
5. Many thesis use the evidence-based approach in research and systematic reviews.
6. Positive sense regarding the placements.

Weaknesses:

1. The study course descriptions and reading lists published in study course descriptions are not fully revised since the last reaccreditation period. Updating the study course content and descriptions is necessary.
2. Study courses and their content do not fully comply with the needs of the relevant industry, labor market, and science trends; they do not follow the rapid science and technology development in the field of profession.
3. Underused possibilities of involvement of students in scientific work.
4. Lack of interdisciplinarity and work with various professions to solve complex problems of profession, obtained during the study programme.

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1. According to the Self-Assessment Report (SAR, Part II, Study Programme Physiotherapy, Paragraph 3.3.1) the provision includes material and technical resources available at the RSU Medical Education Technology Centre (MITC). The equipment necessary for learning basic physiotherapy skills both for the acquisition of basic physiotherapy skills (for example, physiotherapy beds, mats, balls, rubber, balance pads, etc.) and equipment which may be used for research purposes (e.g. balance platform, gait analysis equipment, equipment for isometric testing of muscle strength, etc.) is readily available. Additionally two gyms and a gymnastics hall are also used for the study programme. A register of available resources (equipment) has been created at the Department of Rehabilitation, allowing more efficient use of existing equipment.

The budget of the Faculty of Rehabilitation allocates funds to attract visiting lecturers, support study

visits and research, this possibility should be used more widely in the future. The students have access to extensive resources at the RSU Library, these include four databases of e-books (Ebook Academic Collection (EBSCO), Ebook Central (Proquest), AccessMedicine and ClinicalKey), ten full-text databases of journals are available in the field of rehabilitation sciences, subscribed databases: Sage Premier 2022 Collection, Health Research Premium Collection (ProQuest), MEDLINE Complete (EBSCO), Communication Source (EBSCO), Sociology Source Ultimate (EBSCO), Academic Search Complete (EBSCO), Wiley Online Journals, PsycARTICLES (APA), BMJ Journals, ClinicalKey journals (Elsevier), Science Direct (Elsevier) and evidence-based medical databases (ClinicalKey Clinical Overviews (Elsevier), The Cochrane Library (Wiley), DynaMed (EBSCO), PEN: Practice-based Evidence in Nutrition). A list of recommended e-books is also provided. The expert group concludes that the study provision ensures a high-quality study process.

2.3.2. Not applicable.

2.3.3. Based on the information provided in the SAR p.199, the study programme for full-time studies is financed from the state budget and the funds of private and legal persons by setting the tuition fee in accordance with the state budget funding without social security in the amount of EUR 4890 of study year. The number of students planned to reach in the four years of study of the full-time study programme is 223 students, with 62 students admitted in the first year of studies, and 3-7 student drop-outs in the following years. The result of the full-time study programme with such tuition fee per year is negative due to the lack of funding from the state budget in accordance with the Cabinet Regulations No. 994 – the basic costs of studies no longer cover infrastructure maintenance costs. However, there is additional funding allocated for the performance funding, approved in the budget of the Ministry of Education and Science.

According to SAR p.199, for part-time studies, it is planned to be financed by private individuals and legal entities only. It is planned to reach a total of 86 students in the study programme of five years, with 29 students enrolled in the first year of studies, 12 student drop-outs scheduled for the second year of studies, the third student drop-out rate falling to 14, and another student remaining unchanged in the fourth. The tuition fee for the study programme amounts to EUR 3000 per year, increasing it to EUR 3100 in the coming years, analyzing the restrictions on the demand. Based on the numbers, expenses of the study programme exceeded revenues, but in the long run it is believed that the situation is stabilized with the revision of tuition fees.

Based on Table 2 provided in the SAR p.200, the cost of study programme for full-time studies is predicted to increase in average revenue per student by EUR 149 and an increase in average costs of a student by EUR 63. For part-time studies, the average revenue is predicted to increase by EUR 98, while the predicted increase in average costs is to increase by EUR 30.

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

The full-time study programme is facing financial challenges, as the result is negative due to the lack of sufficient funding from the state budget. The basic costs of studies are no longer covering infrastructure maintenance costs. The positive aspect is the additional funding allocated for performance funding, which has been approved in the budget of the Ministry of Education and Science. This external funding source is crucial for sustaining the programme. This emphasizes the need for increased state budget funding or alternative financial strategies to cover the infrastructure maintenance costs. The part-time study programme is facing financial challenges as well, with expenses exceeding revenues. However, there is an optimistic view that the situation will stabilize in the long run with the revision of tuition fees.

Strengths:

1. The programme has found a solution on how to address financial challenges in the short-term.

Weaknesses:

1. There has to be a strategy and a solution found to address financial challenges in the long-term.

Assessment of the requirement [6]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The study programme ensures the necessary resource provision and fulfills the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and ensures the achievement of learning outcomes.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1. The qualification of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme "Physiotherapy" complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements set forth in the regulatory enactments, and it enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses. This corresponds to regulatory documents of the Republic of Latvia.

The teaching staff involved in the study programme are highly qualified professionals in their area, obtained in-depth knowledge and skills in a physiotherapy field, and actively participate in the work of the Latvian Association of Physiotherapists.

The Director of the study programme "Physiotherapy" has education of a physician and a physiotherapist, and is very active in improving her professional and pedagogical qualification. The teaching staff involved in the study programme are professors, associate professors, assistant professors, lecturers of RSU departments and assistants from 25 RSU structural units. There is also documentation of continuing professional and academic development as reported in SAR p. 201, that from 1 January 2017 to 1 October 2022, 101 lecturers of "Physiotherapy" participated in continuing education activities of the Centre for Educational Growth attending a total of more than 190 training activities of different content. The lecturers of the study programme "Physiotherapy" spent 8481 academic hours on mastering continuing education activities.

2.4.2. SAR (p. 203) and site visit interviews confirmed that the Faculty of Rehabilitation took measures so that changes in the composition of the teaching staff do not negatively affect the quality of the implementation of the study programme. Indeed, there were some staff complement changes during the accreditation period, namely that two lecturers left but the measure taken was that three lecturers, who completed doctoral studies at RSU were involved in the implementation of professional study courses and are now contributing to the development of the study programme. In addition, several new lecturers were recruited, who are reading for doctoral studies after obtaining a Master's degree and who are highly qualified professionals in their field. 60 lecturers graduated from an RSU study programme (from one up to four), while 14 lecturers currently study in one of the RSU programmes (in academic year 2022/2023).

2.4.3. Not applicable.

2.4.4. Even though some teaching staff of the Faculty of Rehabilitation on the list has not shown CV and references, all other members of the academic staff in the last six years have published in peer-reviewed editions, including international editions, or have five years of practical experience in accordance with the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

The implementation of the compulsory and restricted elective part of the professional Bachelor's study programme "Physiotherapy" is carried out by 126 lecturers, 68 of whom have been elected to the academic positions at RSU. Out of 68 elected representatives of the academic staff, 6 are professors and 10 associate professors. Of the 68 academic staff members elected for the implementation of the study programme, the largest proportion of the position is that of assistant professor, out of 68 elected academic staff members, 40 hold a doctoral degree. Out of 126 lecturers involved in the implementation of the study programme, 116 lecturers are employed in the main job (the position of an elected lecturer, acting lecturer or adjunct lecturer (staff employees)) and 10 are invited lecturers (specialists from other organisations and experts in the field). Out of 116 lecturers employed in the main job, 68 are elected lecturers, 45 are acting lecturer, while 3 are adjunct lecturers. 17 lecturers, or ~25% of all elected lecturers involved in the implementation of the study programme have been employed at least once in RSU research projects since 2017. Whereas, since 2017, 5 or 11% of all acting lecturers involved in the implementation of the study programme have been employed in RSU research projects at least once. With regard to the status of an expert of the Latvian Council of Science (LCS), 37% of the elected lecturers involved in the implementation of the study programme has the status of an expert of the LCS (Annex 24_7).

The teaching staff members involved in the Professional Bachelor's study programme "Physiotherapy", besides work in academia, has numerous work experiences in different institutions and companies in Latvia, such as Paula Stradiņa Clinical University Hospital, Riga East University Hospital, Latvian Red Cross, Jurmala hospital, Baltic Diagnostic Services, SIA "Laba prakse" in Rīga, Mārupes Sporta Centrs, Fizioterapijas studija "Tore" in Rīga. These examples provide insights into the diverse professional work experiences of the academic staff.

2.4.5. There is a mechanism for mutual cooperation of the teaching staff in the implementation of the study programme "Physiotherapy" which therefore ensures the achievement of the aims of the study programme and the interconnection of study courses within the study programme. There is continuous cooperation between study programme directors, the lecturers of the Department of Rehabilitation, management, students, employers, graduates, and other departments, as well as with the Latvian National Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine. The Director of the study programme also holds regular meetings with placement supervisors.

In addition, there is communication with heads of the study courses during the planning and implementation phases annually. The reviews assist the Director of the programme to plan for the next academic year. Subsequently, heads of study courses whose study courses require changes are contacted and discussions ensue for implementation of improvements. Also, before each semester, the content, outcomes and interconnection of the study course with other study courses are discussed. These discussions with lecturers are important to fine-tune study programmes.

RSU is represented in ENPHE (European Network of Physiotherapy in Higher Education) seminars and conferences and in the Baltic Nordplus project "Age is No Barrier", within which healthy aging programmes were created. There is also cooperation with Arcada University of Applied Sciences (Finland) on the use of simulations in education of functional specialists. Clinical placement supervisors entitled to train are physiotherapists certified by the Latvian Association of Physiotherapists with a master's degree in health care or five years of professional experience. There is frequent organization of guest speakers for continuous professional and academic development from across Europe and outside.

The head of the study course provides feedback to students regarding the assessment of the study course, having discussed it in advance with the lecturers involved in the implementation of the study

course.

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

The qualification of the teaching staff involved in the study programme "Physiotherapy" matches the requirements for its implementation and the regulatory enactments, enabling the study programme's aims and learning outcomes and the relevant study courses to be met. The RSU takes steps to ensure that changes in the teaching staff do not impair the quality of the study programme or its compliance with regulatory requirements. In the last six years, all academic staff members have written in peer-reviewed journals, including international editions or have five years of practical experience per the Law on Higher Education Institutions. A framework for teaching staff cooperation in implementing the study programme promotes its success and the interconnectedness of study courses.

Strengths:

1. The qualification of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme "Physiotherapy" complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme.
2. There is ample cooperation amongst key stakeholders that enable successful running, improvement and maintenance of study programme.

Weaknesses:

None.

Assessment of the requirement [7]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The academic staff, visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting docents, visiting lecturers and visiting assistants are qualified and their academic qualifications fully comply with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements set out in the respective regulatory enactments, it is confirmed by provided annexes:

24.7_Analysis_of_the_Composition_of_the_Academic_Staff_Physiotherapy.pdf

6.4_Anx_Ac_staff_publications_IF factor_Facult_Rehabilitation.pdf

6.2_Anx_Biographies_teaching_staff_PBSP_Physiotherapy_EN_509pages.pdf

2.5. Assessment of the Compliance

Requirements

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Annex - 17.1_pielik_PBSP_Fiziot_atbilstiba_izglitibas_standartam_ENG.pdf confirms that the

study programme complies with State Education Standard corresponding to Cabinet Regulations No 305 of 13 June 2023 "Regulations on National Standard for Professional Higher Education" <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/342818-noteikumi-par-valsts-profesionalas-augstakas-izglitiba-standartu>.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

It also is in accordance and in compliance with the profession standard "Physiotherapist" (agreed at the meeting of the tripartite Cooperation Council for Vocational Education and Employment of 13 October 2021, minutes No 6). (available online: <https://registri.visc.gov.lv/profizglitiba/dokumenti/standarti/2017/PS-187.pdf>) according to annex - 18.2_Anx_Mapping_StP_to_Occupation_Standard_Physiotherapy.pdf

- 3 3 - The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in all languages in which the study programme is implemented, and they comply with the requirements set forth in Section 561 , Paragraph two and Section 562 , Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

The study course descriptions are prepared in English and Latvian that can be accessed under annexes -20_Anx_Study_course_description_Physiotherapy.pdf and 20_pielik_Kursu_apr_Fizioterapija.pdf. However, the study course descriptions and reading lists published in study course descriptions are not fully revised since the last reaccreditation period. Updating the study course content and descriptions is necessary.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The provided Diploma sample - complies with the procedure by which state-recognised documents of higher education are issued according to Cabinet Regulation No. 202 "Kārtība, kādā izsniedz valsts atzītus augstāko izglītību apliecinošus dokumentus".

- 5 5 - The academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements set forth in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 6 6 - Academic study programmes provided for less than 250 full-time students may be implemented and less than five professors and associated professors of the higher education institution may be involved in the implementation of the mandatory and limited elective part of these study programmes provided that the relevant opinion of the Council for Higher Education has been received in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 7 7 - At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of an academic doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field of science. At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a professional doctoral study programme in arts (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 8 8 - The teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme are proficient in the official language in accordance with the regulations on the level of the official language knowledge and the procedures for testing official language proficiency for performing professional duties and office duties.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Based on the acquired information onsite as well as relevant annexes:

24.4_AnxCertification_Regarding_Latvian_Language_of_the_Academic_Staff.pdf and 6.2_AnxCV_ENG_visas_programmas.7z, it can be evaluated that the

language proficiency of teaching staff is compliant with Cabinet Regulation. Nr. 733 "

Regulations Regarding the Extent of the Knowledge of the Official Language, the Procedures for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language and the State Fee for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language".

- 9 9 - The teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language, if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Sample of attached study agreement 24.8_AnxCStudy contract sample_Health Care study direction.pdf complies with Cabinet Regulation. Nr. 70 "Studiju līgumā obligāti ietveramie noteikumi".

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

RSU has provided confirmation that students will be provided with opportunities to continue their education in another higher education institution if the implementation of the study programme is terminated. The agreements are specified in the annexes under

"24.2_pielik_Apliecinajumi_par_parnemsanu_eng.7z". It is specified that in case of discontinuation of this study programme, students can continue their studies at RSU Professional Bachelor's study programme "Occupational Therapy".

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

RSU has provided confirmation that students are guaranteed compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the study programme's license is revoked. It is ensured based on the Section 55(8) of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education and Cabinet of Ministers No 795 of 11 December 2018 "Regulations on Licensing of study programmes",

Paragraph 13.4. The relevant document can be found under Annexes -
24.3_Anx_Certification_of_Compensation_of_Losses_to_Students.pdf.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The study programme complies with Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 268 Regulations on the Therapeutic Expertise of Medical Personnel and Students Acquiring the First- or Second-Level Professional Higher Medical Education and the Extent of Their Theoretical and Practical Knowledge and Medical Treatment Law according to Annex
17.2_Anx_Compliance_with_the_Field-Specific_Regulation_Physiotherapy.pdf.

Assessment of the requirement [8]

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Study programme partially complies with the regulatory enactments as the study course descriptions and reading lists published in study course descriptions are not fully revised since the last reaccreditation period. Updating the study course content and descriptions is necessary.

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

The Professional bachelor study programme "Physiotherapy" is compliant with the study field "Health Care". The aim of the Professional bachelor study programme "Physiotherapy" is to train therapists with the highest level of professional Bachelor's education in health care by ensuring high quality professional higher education and to provide health, educational and social care institutions with qualified and competitive therapists in accordance with the needs of the national healthcare and rehabilitation system and the requirements of the professional standard. The title, code, degree to be obtained, professional qualification or degree and professional qualification of the study programme, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation, as well as the implementation language, are reasonable and justified. Economic and social justification of the study programme, dynamics of the number of students and employment indicators of the graduates of the study programme are justified as there is demand on the market for this profession. The content of the study program, content of the study courses and modules are interconnected and complementary; is relevant for the study programme "Physiotherapy". The content of the programme corresponds to the objectives of the programme and ensures the achievement of learning outcomes; and the majority of the content satisfies the requirements of the industry, the labor market, and scientific trends. The study programme is in accordance with national regulations. During the subsequent accreditation period, work should be continued on the descriptions of study courses and the literature regarding those courses. Additionally, new ideas and objectives should be incorporated into the plans for the future improvement of the study programmes. Study courses and their content do not fully comply with the needs of the relevant industry, labor market, and science trends. The study programme needs to be updated in order to incorporate subjects that are the product of

modern and quick developments in science and technology. Planning the study process for the transition from CP to ECTS should make an effort to avoid discrepancies regarding the associated credits to a course. The internship that is offered to students during the course of their study programme, the opportunities and provision of internships that are made available to students, and the ways in which work is organized are all beneficial. There is a connection between the tasks of the internship and the learning goals that can be achieved. All of the regulations that have been enacted by regulatory agencies have been met by the internship. The topics of the thesis are oriented towards the modern technologies which demonstrates that the topics of students' final theses are relevant to the field and correspond to the study programme. Following modern trends, focus on evidence-based approaches and systematic reviews, as well as excellence in research show positive trends in the study program and relevance of the Bachelor thesis.

Strengths:

1. New Medical Education Technology Centre, which is developing rapidly and where many study courses, including pre-clinical professional study courses, are implemented. Students can also use physiotherapy lecture rooms for self-study and skills training.
2. The high demand in the labor market for physiotherapy specialists.
Modern topics as bachelor thesis, following modern technologies implemented in the field of physiotherapy.
3. The demand for the study programme has increased.
4. The implementation of the programme in Latvia is improved every year.
5. Many thesis use the evidence-based approach in research and systematic reviews.
6. Positive sense regarding the placements.

Weaknesses:

1. The study course descriptions and reading lists published in study course descriptions are not fully revised since the last reaccreditation period. Updating the study course content and descriptions is necessary.
2. Study courses and their content do not fully comply with the needs of the relevant industry, labor market, and science trends; they do not follow the rapid science and technology development in the field of profession.
3. Underused possibilities of involvement of students in scientific work.
4. Lack of interdisciplinarity and work with various professions to solve complex problems of profession, obtained during the study programme.

Evaluation of the study programme "Physiotherapy"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Physiotherapy"

Short-term recommendations

Fully revise study course descriptions and reading lists, recognizing that they have not been comprehensively updated since the last reaccreditation period, and implement necessary updates to the study course content and descriptions within the next assessment period to ensure accuracy, relevance, and alignment with current educational standards.

Long-term recommendations

Align study courses and their content with the evolving needs of the relevant industry, labor market, and current science and technology trends within the profession. Recognize the necessity of incorporating new subjects that reflect modern science and technology advancements, and implement necessary adjustments within the next assessment period.

Actively involve teaching staff and students in research projects, aiming to enhance their research skills, quantitative indicators, creativity, cooperation, and contribute to the expansion of the physiotherapy field, and implement this plan within the next assessment period.

Promote interdisciplinarity within the study programme, fostering collaboration with various professions to address complex professional challenges, with the goal of providing students with a holistic and diverse educational experience, and ensure the integration of interdisciplinary approaches within the next assessment period.

II - "Orthotics and Prosthetics" ASSESSMENT

II - "Orthotics and Prosthetics" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1. SAR (p. 384-404) provides information about the study programme "Orthotics and Prosthetics" (42722), which information was corroborated during expert group on-site visit interviews and Annexes 17.1_pielik_PBSP_OrtoProt_atbilstiba_izglitibas_standartam_ENG.pdf and 18.2_ENG_profesijas_standarta_kartejums_Ortozesana_protezesana.pdf. This information confirms that there is compliance of the study programme "Orthotics and Prosthetics" with the study field "Health Care".

The aim of the study programme "Orthotics and Prosthetics" is to train qualified functional specialists – orthopedic technicians, who, through evidence-based practice, carry out examinations of a person, manufacture custom-made technical aids, using technical orthopedic medical technology. The four-years full time professional bachelor's degree in health care for the study programme "Orthotics and Prosthetics" is of 160 CP / 240 ECTS and professionally leads to the acquisition of an orthopedic technician's qualification. The language of studies is Latvian. The orthopedic technicians are functional specialists, who implement evidence-based practice and can perform evaluation of patients and make decisions regarding the manufacture or adaptation of the necessary technical aids. Therefore, graduates of the study programme are familiar with technical orthopedic medical technologies and general medical treatment methods.

2.1.2. The professional bachelor's study programme in health care with qualification in "Orthotics and Prosthetics", with transcript as shown in Annex 24.1_Anx_Sample_Diploma_and_Supplement_PBSP_Orthotics_and_Prosthetics.pdf has been created in accordance with Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 305 of the Republic of Latvia "Regulations on the State Standard of professional higher education" and its title clearly refers to the content of the programme and the qualifications to be obtained, in which professionals in one of the functional specialist professions relevant for rehabilitation are prepared.

Code of the study programme (42722) conforms to Cabinet Regulation No. 322 "Regulations regarding Classification of Education of Latvia" and indicates the level of Education of the study programme.

The structure and content of the study programme as shown in Annex 17.2_Anx_Compliance_with_Field-Specific_Regulations_Orthotics-Prosthetics.pdf allows for the

implementation of the aims and tasks of the study programme “Orthotics and Prosthetics”, as well as achievement of the the professional qualification of “Orthopaedic Technician.”.

“Orthotics and Prosthetics” is offered as a 4-year full time study programme as a professional bachelor’s degree in health care, in the Latvian language.

2.1.3. On analyzing SAR (p. 388) Table 1 that shows that the formulation of the aim of the study programme has been updated since the previous accreditation provides in addition to expert interviews a justification that the required corrections have been made. Admission requirements to the study programmes have been changed, supplementing them with a centralized examination (CE) certificate in mathematics and an annual grade in biology or life sciences.

2.1.4. Study programme “Orthotics and Prosthetics” is the only Bachelor level study programme in Latvia that prepares medical practitioners in the speciality of orthopedic technician. In Latvia, there is a stable demand for orthopedic technicians and therefore the number of specialists prepared by RSU is sufficient. There are various opportunities for employment after graduation. This is in technical orthopaedics companies that specialize in the manufacture or sale of orthoses, prostheses, orthopedic shoes and other technical aids. Other opportunities for work include being part of rehabilitation teams in public and private institutions. Examples of places of work include “National Rehabilitation Centre” Vaivari” national Ltd., “REHAD” Ltd., “DDA Orthopaedics” Ltd., “Technical orthopaedics” Ltd., “Prosthetic and Orthopedic Centre” Corp., “Unihaus” Ltd. and others.

The demand for “Orthotics and Prosthetics” is increasing worldwide in view of the aging demographics. In addition, as SAR (p. 390) rightly explains that the availability of prosthetic and orthotic services brings economic benefits for users of technical aids who can return to the labor market, family, community after they become ill. In addition, as technical aids accelerate recovery, there is less burden on health services and the period of time a person spends in medical facilities after becoming ill is shortened.

As per SAR (p. 391) an average of 18 students are admitted to the study programme every year, with lowest number in 2017 – 16 students, and the highest number in 2019 and 2020, when 21 students were enrolled. However, there is attrition with most students dropping out in the 1st year of studies, 12.5 students on average, of whom 4.5 students leave because they withdraw from their studies and an average of 7.3 students leave because of poor academic performance. An average of five students graduate – the smallest numbers in 2019 and 2021 with four graduates. In 2020, there were no graduates whereas the highest number of graduates was registered in 2018 with six students.

2.1.5. Not applicable.

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

The Professional bachelor study programme “Orthotics and Prosthetics” (42722) is compliant with the study field “Health Care”. The aim of the Professional bachelor study programme “Orthotics and Prosthetics” is to train therapists with the professional Bachelor's education in health care by ensuring high quality professional higher education and to provide health, educational and social care institutions with qualified and competitive technicians in accordance with the needs of the national healthcare and rehabilitation system and the requirements of the professional standard.

The title, code, degree and professional qualification of the study programme, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation, as well as the implementation language, are reasonable and justified. Economic and social justification of the study programme, dynamics of the number of students and employment indicators of the graduates of the study programme are justified as there is demand on the market for this profession.

Strengths:

1. There is compliance of the study programme "Orthotics and Prosthetics" with the study field. Study content is in line with the academic and professional requirements for occupational therapists.
2. There is a demand for these professionals and therefore there is a market for these professions ensuring study programme viability in terms of employability.

Weaknesses:

None.

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1. The study programme is designed in accordance with the professional standard of "Orthopedic Technician". The assessment of the compliance of the study programme with the standard has been carefully evaluated by mapping the study programme against the standard. The mapping process and a summary of the mapping are available in Annex 18.2. The standard of education developed by the International Society for Prosthetics Orthotics (ISPO) has also been taken into account (Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 268 Regulations on the Therapeutic Expertise of Medical Personnel and Students Acquiring the First- or Second-Level Professional Higher Medical Education and the Extent of Their Theoretical and Practical Knowledge • Medical Treatment Law; SAR p.392, Annex 17.1; 18.2; 17.2).

The study programme is aimed to provide students with the necessary information and abilities for the orthopedic technician profession. The curriculum begins with classes on human body function, functional ability evaluation, research concepts, and technical orthopedic materials and technologies. The knowledge is used to take medical courses, particularly technical orthopedics. The study schedule includes 13 CP / 19.5 ECTS general educational social and humanities courses, 71 CP / 106 ECTS basic courses, 70 CP/105 ECTS professional specialization courses, and 6 CP / 9 ECTS electives. According to the October 11, 2022 modifications of Article 1, Clause 8 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions, RSU will transition to the European credit transfer and accumulation system by December 31, 2024. While developing the self-assessment report, the RSU continues to highlight Latvia's credit points and the European Credit Transfer System's credit points (SAR p. 393). The study programme aligns with orthopedic technician professional standard, employer surveys, and international norms from the International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics. The study content and course descriptions are evaluated and updated annually. The study curriculum is updated based on employer surveys and industry science developments, and contacts with other European universities offering similar programmes are maintained. The programme teaches students about rehabilitation and the function of an orthopedic technician in the rehabilitation team. Curriculum courses and their mastery enable study programme outcomes. However, there is room for improvement. Following the recommendation from the previous assessment, after formulating the study programme's objectives and outcomes, the course content has been modified. This should continue in the future period and new topics and goals should be introduced. Update study course content and strategy to ensure relevance, should be done continuously. The reading lists published in study course descriptions should be revised to better reflect the current situation. Course

descriptions should continue to be updated annually by lecturers, taking into consideration questionnaire results. Work on study course descriptions and literature should continue in the next accreditation period, and new ideas and goals should be implemented in the future study programme plans.

Study courses and their content do not fully comply with the needs of the relevant industry, labor market, and science trends. It is recommended to take into account the rapid development of technology in the field of profession. The field of technical orthopedics is influenced by various scientific and technological advancements. The changing landscape of orthopedic care is reflected in emerging themes. Biomechanics and computational modeling improve orthopedic structural comprehension, while smart implants and sensors enable real-time monitoring. 3D printing allows customized orthopedic solutions, while robotics improves surgical precision. Innovative tissue repair methods come from regenerative medicine and tissue engineering. Augmented reality in surgical planning improves preoperative procedures, while nanotechnology in orthopedics develops superior materials. Telemedicine, remote patient monitoring, and personalized medicine change postoperative treatment. Artificial intelligence is used in orthopedic diagnosis to evaluate medical imaging data. Orthopedic equipment with wireless communication allows remote adjustments, and AI improves diagnostic accuracy. Virtual reality and motion-capture devices make orthopedic rehabilitation more dynamic and interesting. These advances represent the current state of technical orthopedics, demonstrating the potential for innovation, improved patient outcomes, and more individualized orthopedic care. In future planning of changes in the study programme, some of these topics should be implemented.

The content of the study courses is derived from the aims and learning outcomes of the study course, whereas they are derived from the aim and learning outcomes of the programme. The linkages can be seen from the mapping of the study programme. Each learning outcome of the programme corresponds to several study courses. Indication of the level of acquisition in the mapping was based on the knowledge, competencies and skills specified in the 6th level of qualification. The content of the study programme is topical, the content of the study courses / modules is interconnected and complementary, corresponds to the objectives of the programme and ensures the achievement of learning outcomes, and in majority meets the needs of the industry, labor market and scientific trends. It complies with national regulations. However there is a need to modernize the study programme and include topics which are the result of a modern and rapid science and technology development. In the light of future changes in the credit system to ECTS, planning the study process for the transition from CP to ECTS should make an effort in avoiding the discrepancies regarding the associated credits to a course.

2.2.2. Not applicable.

2.2.3. The Dean's office of the Faculty of Rehabilitation organizes the study programme, while the Department of Rehabilitation, in cooperation with other departments, recruits academic staff and provides resources. Various study approaches are employed for study implementation. Different forms are utilized for regular and distance studies: lectures, seminars, practical classes, debates, independent work, situation analysis, etc. Lectures provide the theoretical foundation for courses, while classrooms emphasize practical application. Online lectures and class recordings can be posted in a well-developed RSU e-environment for study process implementation. The e-environment lets studio content include relevant resources to assist students learn. Students can test their knowledge in the RSU e-environment. Student-centered professional study courses involve clinical case analysis to identify, analyze, and find systematic solutions to problems. Student learning involves reflecting on course content and task performance. Group work is used to teach pupils how to work together and solve problems (SAR p 394).

Tests and exams are used to evaluate student knowledge. Exam types include test work, practical

and autonomous work, colloquiums, and cumulative assessments. Lecturers and students provide feedback on course assessment, which is adjusted as needed. IT tools have been used to bring simulation-based learning and new study approaches in study courses. To complete the study programme, a student must receive a good appraisal of the study content. (SAR p. 394).

Various study courses include a variety of study methods - reading of literature, seminars, individual and group work, and laboratory work close to the working environment. One of the main settings of the study programme is the responsibility of students for the achievement of learning outcomes. In order to facilitate it, 1) individual responsibility and knowledge tests, including critical thinking, independent learning and problem solving, are included in the implementation of studies; 2) a placement where learners have to learn independent decision-making and professional interaction with clients. Methods of study implementation help achieve course and programme goals and learning results. Student-centered teaching is considered.

Nevertheless, there is room for improvement, as the methods of scientific research and engagement of students are not adequately utilized. Research in the study process promotes student engagement in scientific research. Presenting the findings of a Bachelor's thesis at RSU Student Scientific Conferences can facilitate the integration of academic studies into the professional world. This opportunity enables graduates to present their research to experts and make valuable contributions to the advancement of their field. Engaging teaching staff and students in research initiatives improves research skills, quantitative measures, creativity, collaboration, and broadens the scope of the orthotics and prosthetics field.

The programme emphasizes cooperation and communication through study modes (pair work, group work, student-to-student), but should promote more of the multidisciplinary collaboration with lecturers, employers, and association representatives, as well as other professionals in clinics to create an interdisciplinary approach in solving complex problems of the profession.

2.2.4. Clinical placement tasks are related to study programme learning outcomes and study courses implemented in the appropriate year of studies, including theoretical knowledge and abilities obtained in lessons. Clinical placement is in the fourth year. The study programme includes placement, which is implemented in the fourth year of studies. The number of placement sites is variable, those are five to seven technical orthopedics companies and rehabilitation centers. Placement takes place in "Nacionālais rehabilitācijas centrs "Vaivari"", Vaivari Orthotics and Prosthetics Centre, SIA "REHAD", SIA "DDA Orthopaedics", SIA "Tehniskā ortopēdija", AS "Protezēšanas un ortopēdijas centrs", SIA "Unihaus". Each technical orthopedics company specializes in the manufacture of various technical aids - prostheses, orthoses, orthopedic shoes, as well as industrial technical aids, etc. It is possible for students to learn different technologies for the manufacture of individually manufactured technical aids - both conventional and 3D based manufacturing methods (SAR p. 395).

The placement sites needed depend on the number of students and the capacity of technical orthopedics companies to accommodate them. Students learn Latvia's technical aid circulation system throughout placement. Most technical orthopedic placement companies are private. However, the state-owned Vaivari Orthotics and Prosthetics Centre can admit the most students at once. Students gain a wide spectrum of technical aid experience in a rehabilitation facility through extensive placements. To cycle students to all relevant placement sites, competence-based placement is scheduled (SAR p 395).

As with prosthetics, students learn to build various types of hard orthoses, evaluate patients clinically, and pick appropriate technological aids. Students in soft orthosis manufacturing classes should be able to assess the patient's technical aid needs and grasp its operation. The materials and technologies used to make soft orthoses are specified. In their fourth year, students take an English-language Erasmus+ mobility cooperation university placement. RSU Erasmus+ international students receive English placement. The content of placement is based on previous years' study and

enhanced with practical skills. They compose a placement logbook and report on the most important scientific and practical knowledge they learnt. At the end of study, the placement logbook is evaluated (SAR p. 396).

Students and employers show general satisfaction with the placement opportunities. However, there is always space for improvement. Study programme in the coming years should incorporate new clinical placements which will contribute to the competence and professional development of young professionals and allow Latvian regions to involve young audiology and speech therapy specialists. It is recommended to diversify clinical placement sites in different regions of Latvia, giving students the opportunity to undergo clinical placement closer to their place of residence, opportunities, and interests.

The internship during the study programme, the opportunities and provision of internships offered to students, as well as the organization of work, are effective. The tasks of the internship are related to the learning outcomes achievable. The internship complies with the requirements of regulatory enactments. There is space for improvement.

2.2.5. Not applicable.

2.2.6. The reporting period had 26 students defend their final papers. Students often write final papers on comprehensive literature reviews, investigations, and adaptations of evaluation instruments into Latvian for rehabilitation purposes. Lower limb prosthetics is a popular area where students investigate prosthetic functionality, gait parameters, and user surveys. Scoliosis corrective orthoses and compression clothing effectiveness are also examined. Students rarely choose academics from other universities for their final paper supervisors. RSU instructors generally represent employers. The industry-relevant study "Adaptation of the support programme "Exchange of experience of patients related to amputation" in Latvia " used the student's work to create Latvia's first post-amputation support programme. This study improved the rehabilitation programme for amputation survivors by involving a support person, an internationally recognized technique. Some of the Bachelor thesis have topics such as: "Adaptation and validation of the survey "Factors Influencing Evidence-Based Practices in Orthotics and Prosthetics" in Latvian medical culture environment" "Changes in gait parameters in patients using reciprocal gait orthoses after T3 – T12 spinal cord damage: systematic review", "Self report outcome measure "Prosthesis Evaluation Questionnaire" translation into latvian language and validation". The final paper's evaluation tools and questionnaires allow local professionals to use the latest knowledge. The papers are evaluated by the commission, which includes representatives of RSU and specialists outside RSU. Assessments of final papers range from almost satisfactory to excellent evaluation, most often students have received a good assessment. During the reporting period, there was one case where the student could not successfully defend a final paper (SAR p. 396).

The topics of students' final theses are relevant to the field and correspond to the study programme. The positive thing is that some theses use the evidence-based approach in research, use modern technologies in the professional field, which is highly welcomed, involvement of students in scientific work should be improved.

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

The study programme is designed in accordance with the professional standard of technical

orthopedics. The assessment of the compliance of the study programme with the standard has been carefully evaluated by mapping the study programme against the standard. The mapping process and a summary of the mapping are available in Annex 18.2. The standard of education developed by the International Society for Prosthetics Orthotics (ISPO) has also been taken into account. The content of the study programme is topical, the content of the study courses / modules is interconnected and complementary, corresponds to the objectives of the programme and ensures the achievement of learning outcomes, and in majority meets the needs of the industry, labor market and scientific trends. It complies with national regulations and professional (occupational) standards. However, there is a need to modernize the study programme and include topics which are the result of a modern and rapid science and technology development. In the light of future changes in the credit system to ECTS, planning the study process for the transition from CP to ECTS should make an effort in avoiding the discrepancies regarding the associated credits to a course. Methods of study implementation help achieve course and programme goals and learning results. Student-centered teaching is considered. However, there is a space for improvement, as the methods of scientific work and involvement of students is not seized enough. The programme emphasizes cooperation and communication through study modes (pair work, group work, student-to-student) but should promote more of the multidisciplinary collaboration with lecturers, employers, and association representatives, as well as other professionals in clinics to create an interdisciplinary approach in solving complex problems of the profession. The internship during the study programme, the opportunities and provision of internship offered to students, as well as the organization of work are effective. The tasks of the internship are related to the learning outcomes achievable. The internship complies with the requirements of regulatory enactments. There is space for improvement. The topics of students' final theses are relevant to the field and correspond to the study programme. The positive thing is that some thesis use the evidence-based approach in research, use modern technologies in the professional field, which is highly welcomed, involvement of students in scientific work should be improved.

Strengths:

1. The list of partners for placements has both private and state funded companies, five to seven technical orthopedics companies, and rehabilitation centers.
2. The implementation of the programme in Latvia improves every year.
3. Collaboration with International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics.
4. Many theses use an evidence-based approach in research and systematic reviews, as well as use of modern technologies in the professional field.

Weaknesses:

1. The study course descriptions and reading lists published in study course descriptions should be revised continuously, updating the study course content and descriptions is necessary.
2. Study courses and their content do not fully comply with the needs of the relevant industry, they do not follow the rapid science and technology development in the field of profession.
3. Underused possibilities of involvement of students in scientific work.
4. Lack of interdisciplinarity and work with various professions to solve complex problems of profession, obtained during the study programme.

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1. According to the Self-Assessment Report Section 3.3. Subsection 3.3.1 The acquisition of practical knowledge in the study programme is organized with the involvement of other institutions, this forms a stable and adaptable practical study base.

Regular procurement is carried out to provide materials and raw materials necessary for the study process. Some examples of technical provision include limb moldings, plaster casts, high temperature thermoplastics, fabrics, sewing accessories, various resins (for laminating technique), adhesives, etc. The University transfers the materials to placement sites as required. Additionally protective equipment for the study process like respirators, noise-canceling headphones, etc. is also provided by the University. Noteworthy example is the 3D scanner and software for processing 3D models, and uses open access software (available courses include “CAD-CAM Technologies in Rehabilitation”, “Clinical Orthotics”, “Clinical Placement I”, “Clinical Placement II”).

The informative provision includes variety of databases like Academic Collection (EBSCO), Ebook Central (Proquest), AccessMedicine, ClinicalKey and SAGE Research Methods, Sage Premier 2023, Health Research Premium Collection (ProQuest), MEDLINE Complete (EBSCO), Communication Source (EBSCO), Sociology Source Ultimate (EBSCO), Academic Search Complete (EBSCO), Wiley Online Journals, PsycARTICLES (APA), BMJ Journals, ClinicalKey journals (Elsevier), Science Direct (Elsevier). Additionally access to four evidence-based medicine databases is also provided, these include ClinicalKey Clinical Overviews (Elsevier), The Cochrane Library (Wiley), DynaMed (EBSCO) and UpToDate. Noteworthy is access to theses in various branches of science, including orthotics and prosthetics in ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global: The Sciences and Engineering Collection database. Lastly, news and reference databases include Encyclopedia Britannica Academic Edition, Letonika, LETA news archive, Nozare.lv and News.lv (Lursoft).

The expert group concludes that the informative provision is sufficient to facilitate quality research for both students and members of the academic staff.

2.3.2. Not applicable.

2.3.3. In accordance with SAR p.399, it is planned to finance the study programme from the state budget and the funds of private and legal persons by setting the tuition fee in accordance with the state budget funding without social security in the amount of EUR 4890 of study year. The number of students planned to reach in the four years of the study programme is 51 students, with 19 students admitted in the first year of studies, with 8 students predicted to drop out in the second years of studies, the number of students remaining consistent in the third year, and decreasing to 10 students in the fourth year of studies. Due to various reasons, the result of the full-time study programme with such tuition fee per year is negative due to the lack of funding from the state budget in accordance with the Cabinet Regulations No. 994 – the basic costs of studies no longer cover infrastructure maintenance costs. As it is also the case for other Faculty of Rehabilitation study programmes, there has been an additional funding allocated for the performance funding, approved in the budget of the Ministry of Education and Science.

Based on the table provided in the SAR pp.399-400, average cost per student exceeds average revenue per student at this point of time by EUR 634.

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

The study programme is facing immediate financial challenges, and the current revenue model is not sufficient to cover the costs. The reliance on performance funding and collaboration with the

Ministry of Education and Science indicates an effort to address these challenges. However, a more comprehensive financial strategy may be needed to ensure the long-term sustainability of the programme. Additionally, strong informative support available to students, including access to a wide range of databases covering various academic fields, evidence-based medicine, and research resources facilitates high-quality research and learning outcomes.

Strengths:

1. Students have the opportunity to use modern technologies during their studying.
2. Extensive informative provision for both learning and research purposes.

Weaknesses:

1. Average cost per student exceeds average revenue per student.

Assessment of the requirement [6]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The study programme ensures the necessary resource provision and fulfills the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and ensures the achievement of learning outcomes.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1. According to SAR (p. 400), the qualification of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme “Orthotics and Prosthetics” complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements set forth in the regulatory enactments, and it enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses. The staff complement includes 63 lecturers (of whom 18 have a doctorate and 22 a master degree) that are involved in the implementation of an interdisciplinary approach for the provision of the study programme “Orthotics and Prosthetics” as they represent different scientific expertise, namely health sciences, social sciences, and natural sciences. Furthermore, the lecturers involved in the implementation of professional courses in technical orthopedics are practitioners – certified orthopedic technicians.

According to SAR (p. 400), as regards continuous professional and academic development, lecturers participate in Latvian and global scientific conferences and seminars, as well as improve their technical skills by having traineeship in European technical orthopedics companies, thereby updating themselves with the current technologies and methods for the manufacture of technical aids. Examples of international participation include attendance at the technical orthopedics conference and international exhibition in OTWorld in Leipzig, as well as in the Global Educators Meeting organized by ISPO, and other events organized by associations for Prosthetics and Orthotics in other European countries. The orthopedic technicians involved in the implementation of the study programme are members of the Latvian Association of Prosthetics and Orthotics, some of whom work on the board of the association. The lecturers of the study programme “Orthotics and Prosthetics” spent 4125 academic hours on continuous education activities.

2.4.2. According to SAR (p. 401), the Faculty of Rehabilitation took measures so that changes in the

composition of the teaching staff do not negatively affect the quality of the implementation of the study programme and the compliance of the study programme with the requirements specified in regulatory enactments. Indeed, additional lecturers were recruited during the reporting period under assessment. These included lecturers for courses in “Orthotics with Firm Orthosis”, “Orthotics with Soft Orthosis”, “Lower Limb Prosthetics”, “Learning Materials”, “Processing Materials”, and “Biomechanics”.

The involvement for visiting foreign lecturers for remote lectures is being considered.

2.4.3. Not applicable.

2.4.4. According to 6.2_Anx_Biographies_teaching_staff_PBSP_Orthotics_-_Prosthetics_EN_236pages.pdf and 6.4_Anx_Ac_staff_publications_IF factor_Facult_Rehabilitation.pdf, even though 20% of Faculty of Rehabilitation elected members of the academic staff on the list, has not shown CV and references. All other members of the academic staff in the last six years have published in peer-reviewed editions, including international editions, or have five years of practical experience in accordance with the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

From the provided information on CV's, academic staff members involved in the Professional Bachelor's study programme “Orthotics and Prosthetics”, besides work in academia have numerous work experiences in different institutions and companies in Latvia, such as National Rehabilitation Centre "Vaivari". RSU Clinic of Psychosomatic Medicine and Psychotherapy, Riga Institute of Medicine, SIA "Rīga 2. slimnīca"; "Veselības centru apvienība". These examples provide insights into the diverse professional and relevant work experiences of the academic staff.

2.4.5. There is a mechanism for mutual cooperation of the teaching staff in the implementation of the study programme “Orthotics and Prosthetics” which therefore ensures the achievement of the aims of the study programme and the interconnection of study courses within the study programme. There is continuous cooperation between study programme directors, the lecturers of the Department of Rehabilitation, management, students, employers, graduates, and other departments, as well as with the Latvian National Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine. The Director of the study programme also holds regular meetings with placement supervisors.

In addition, there is communication with heads of the study courses during the planning and implementation phases annually. The reviews assist the programme director to plan for the next academic year. Subsequently, heads of study courses whose study courses require changes are contacted and discussions ensue for implementation of improvements. Also, before each semester, the content, outcomes and interconnection of the study course with other study courses are discussed. These discussions with lecturers are important to fine-tune study programmes.

According to SAR (p. 386), to ensure improvement of the quality of studies, the content of the courses is reviewed, based on both developments in the sector and information in questionnaires answered by students regarding courses. There is also regular communication with employers to find out the current skills required in graduates of the study programme.

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

The qualification of the teaching staff involved in the study programme “Orthotics and Prosthetics” matches the requirements for its implementation and the regulatory enactments, enabling the study programme's aims and learning outcomes and the relevant study courses to be met. RSU takes steps to ensure that changes in the teaching staff do not impair the quality of the study programme or its compliance with regulatory requirements. In the last six years, all academic staff members have written in peer-reviewed journals, including international editions or have five years of practical

experience per the Law on Higher Education Institutions. A framework for teaching staff cooperation in implementing the study programme promotes its success and the interconnectedness of study courses.

Strengths:

1. The qualification of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme "Orthotics and Prosthetics" complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme.
2. There is ample cooperation amongst key stakeholders that enable successful running, improvement and maintenance of study programme.

Weaknesses:

None.

Assessment of the requirement [7]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The academic staff, visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting docents, visiting lecturers and visiting assistants are duly qualified and their academic qualifications and experience are compliant in line with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements set out in the respective regulatory enactments.

SAR (p. 400-404)

24.7_Analysis_of_the_Composition_of_the_Academic_Staff_Orthotics-Prosthetics.pdf

6.2_Anx_Biographies_teaching_staff_PBSP_Orthotics_-_Prosthetics_EN_236pages.pdf

6.4_Anx_Ac_staff_publications_IF factor_Facult_Rehabilitation.pdf

8.1_Anx_Data_on_international_lecturers_Faculty_of_Rehabilitation.pdf

2.5. Assessment of the Compliance

Requirements

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Annex - 17.1_pielik_PBSP_OrtoProt_atbilstiba_izglitibas_standartam_ENG.pdf confirms that the study programme complies with State Education Standard corresponding to Cabinet Regulations No 305 of 13 June 2023 "Regulations on State Standard for Professional Higher Education"
<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/342818-noteikumi-par-valsts-profesionalas-augstakas-izglitibas-standartu>.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Annex 18.2_ENG_profesijas_standarta_kartejums_Ortozesana_protezesana.pdf provides

justification of conformity to the Professional Standard “standards of the profession of Technical orthopedics” (agreed at the meeting of the Tripartite Cooperation Sub-Council on Vocational Education and Employment of 25 October 2006, protocol No 6). Available online: <https://registri.visc.gov.lv/profizglitiba/dokumenti/standarti/ps0380.pdf>. During an onsite meeting it was specified by the representatives of the RSU that there is a newer standard developed and that they comply with it. The study programme corresponds to the latest professional standard that is accessible here: <https://registri.visc.gov.lv/profizglitiba/dokumenti/standarti/2017/PS-264.pdf>

- 3 3 - The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in all languages in which the study programme is implemented, and they comply with the requirements set forth in Section 561 , Paragraph two and Section 562 , Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The study course descriptions are prepared in English and Latvian that can be accessed under annexes - 20_Anx_Study_course_description_Orthotics_Prosthetics.pdf and 20_pielik_Kursu_apr_Ortozesana, protezesana.pdf Descriptions comply with regulations set forth in Law on Higher Education Institutions. The implementation language of the programme is Latvian. However, The study course descriptions and reading lists published in study course descriptions are not fully revised since the last reaccreditation period. Updating the study course content and descriptions is necessary.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The provided Diploma sample - 24.1_Anx_Sample_Diploma_and_Supplement_PBSP_Orthotics_and_Prosthetics.pdf complies with the procedure by which state-recognised documents of higher education are issued according to Cabinet Regulation No. 202 “Kārtība, kādā izsniedz valsts atzītus augstāko izglītību apliecinošus dokumentus”.

- 5 5 - The academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements set forth in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 6 6 - Academic study programmes provided for less than 250 full-time students may be implemented and less than five professors and associated professors of the higher education institution may be involved in the implementation of the mandatory and limited elective part of these study programmes provided that the relevant opinion of the Council for Higher Education has been received in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 7 7 - At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of an academic doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field of science. At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a professional doctoral study programme in arts (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 8 8 - The teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme are proficient in the official language in accordance with the regulations on the level of the official language knowledge and the procedures for testing official language proficiency for performing professional duties and office duties.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Based on the acquired information onsite as well as relevant annexes:

24.4_AnxCertification_Regarding_Latvian_Language_of_the_Academic_Staff.pdf and

6.2_AnxCV_ENG_visas_programmas.7z, it can be evaluated that the

language proficiency of teaching staff is compliant with Cabinet Regulation. Nr. 733 "

Regulations Regarding the Extent of the Knowledge of the Official Language, the Procedures for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language and the State Fee for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language".

- 9 9 - The teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language, if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Sample of attached study agreement 24.8_AnxCStudy contract sample_Health Care study direction.pdf complies with Cabinet Regulation. Nr. 70 "Studiju līgumā obligāti ietveramie noteikumi".

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

RSU has provided confirmation that students will be provided with opportunities to continue their education in the same higher education institution if the implementation of the study programme is terminated. The agreements are specified in the annexes under "24.2_pielik_Apliecinajumi_par_parnemsanu_eng.7z". It is specified that in case of discontinuation of this study programme, students can continue their studies at RSU Professional Bachelor's study programme "Occupational Therapy".

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

RSU has provided confirmation that students are guaranteed compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the study programme's license is revoked. It is ensured based on the Section 55(8) of the Law on Higher Education Institutions and Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No 795 of 11 December 2018 "Regulations on Licensing of study programmes", Paragraph 13.4. The relevant document can be found under Annexes - 24.3_AnxCertification_of_Compensation_of_Losses_to_Students.pdf.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Additionally, the programme complies with Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 268 Regulations on the Therapeutic Expertise of Medical Personnel and Students Acquiring the First- or Second-Level Professional Higher Medical Education and the Extent of Their Theoretical and Practical Knowledge and Medical Treatment Law.

Assessment of the requirement [8]

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Study programme partially complies with regulatory enactments. The study course descriptions and reading lists published in study course descriptions are not fully revised since the last reaccreditation period. Updating the study course content and descriptions is necessary.

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

The Professional bachelor study programme “Orthotics and Prosthetics” is compliant with the study field “Health Care” and aims to educate and train orthotics and prosthetics technicians, as well as to provide health, educational and social care institutions with qualified and competitive therapists in accordance with the needs of the national healthcare and rehabilitation system and the requirements of the professional standard. The study programme is designed in accordance with the professional standard of technical orthopedics and carefully evaluated by mapping the study programme against the standard as identified in Annex 18.2.

The content of the study programme is topical, the content of the study courses is interconnected and complementary, corresponds to the objectives of the programme and ensures the achievement of learning outcomes, and in majority meets the needs of the industry, labor market and scientific trends. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation are reasonable and justified. Economic and social justification of the study programme, dynamics of the number of students and employment indicators of the graduates of the study programme are justified as there is demand on the market for this profession.

In the transition process from CP to ECTS credit system, discrepancies during the planning of the study process should be avoided. Teaching is student-centered. However, there is a space for improvement, in terms of involvement of students in scientific work. The programme emphasizes cooperation and communication through study modes (pair work, group work, student-to-student) but should promote more multidisciplinary collaboration involving lecturers, employers, and association representatives, as well as other professionals in clinics in solving complex problems of the profession. The internship during the study programme, the opportunities and provision of internship offered to students, as well as the organization of work are effective. The topics of students' final theses are relevant to the field and correspond to the study programme. The positive thing is that some theses use the evidence-based approach in research, use modern technologies in the professional field, which is highly welcomed, involvement of students in scientific work should be

improved. There is necessary resource provision that ensures implementation of the study programme and the achievement of learning outcomes. The academic qualifications of the teaching staff and their experience are adequate for the successful implementation of the study programme.

Strengths:

1. The list of partners for placements has both private and state funded companies, five to seven technical orthopedics companies, and rehabilitation centers.
2. The implementation of the programme in Latvia improves every year.
3. Collaboration with International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics.
4. Many theses use an evidence-based approach in research and systematic reviews, as well as use of modern technologies in the professional field.
5. Students have the opportunity to use modern technologies during their studying.

Weaknesses:

1. The study course descriptions and reading lists published in study course descriptions have not been fully revised since the last reaccreditation period. Continuously updating the study course content and descriptions is necessary.
2. Study courses and their content do not fully comply with the needs of the relevant industry, labor market, and science trends; they do not follow the rapid science and technology development in the field of profession.
3. Underused possibilities of involvement of students in scientific work.
4. Lack of interdisciplinarity and work with various professions to solve complex problems of profession, obtained during the study program.
5. Average cost per student exceeds average revenue per student.

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Evaluation of the study programme "Orthotics and Prosthetics"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Orthotics and Prosthetics"

Short-term recommendations

Continue to revise and update study course descriptions and reading lists, addressing changes related to the new ECTS credit system, with the goal of ensuring accuracy and alignment with the evolving educational landscape, and implement these revisions within the next assessment period to facilitate a smooth transition to the new credit system.

Long-term recommendations

Align study courses and their content with the evolving needs of the relevant industry, labor market, and current science and technology trends within the profession, ensuring responsiveness to rapid developments in the field, and implementing necessary adjustments within the next assessment period to enhance the overall relevance and effectiveness of the study programmes.

Actively involve teaching staff and students in research projects, to enhance their research skills, quantitative indicators, creativity, cooperation, and contribute to the professional field, within the next assessment period.

Promote interdisciplinarity within the study programme, foster collaboration with various professions to address complex professional challenges, and ensure the integration of interdisciplinary approaches in study programme, within the next assessment period.

Address the imbalance where the average cost per student surpasses the average revenue per student, ensuring financial sustainability. Implement necessary adjustments within the next assessment period.

II - "Nutrition" ASSESSMENT

II - "Nutrition" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1. SAR (p. 561-586) provides information about the Professional bachelor study programme "Nutrition" (42722), which information was corroborated during expert group on-site visit interviews as well as Annexes 17.1_pielik_PBSP_Fiziot_atbilstiba_izglitiba_standartam_ENG.pdf and 18.2_Anx_Mapping_StP_to_Professional_Standard_Nutrition.pdf.

This information confirms that there is compliance of the study programme "Nutrition" with the study field "Health Care". The aim of the Professional bachelor study programme "Nutrition" is to provide the opportunity to obtain a Bachelor's degree in health care and to receive professional education in nutrition, in accordance with the standard for professional higher education and the standard for the profession of nutritionist, forming the basis for future professional activity in the field of health and social care and subsequent certification.

2.1.2. The Professional bachelor's study programme in Health care with qualification in "Nutrition" has been created in accordance with Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 305 of the Republic of Latvia "Regulations on the State Standard of professional higher education" and its title clearly refers to the content of the programme and the qualifications to be obtained, in which professionals in one of the functional specialist professions relevant for rehabilitation are prepared. Code of the study programme (42722) conforms to Cabinet Regulation No. 322 "Regulations regarding Classification of Education of Latvia" and indicates the level of Education of the study programme, as well as compliance with the field of Health care. As per <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/291524-noteikumi-par-latvijas-izglitiba-klasifikaciju>, (only in Latvian), 42722 describes the study programme at the second-level professional higher education (fifth-level professional qualification and professional bachelor's degree). The second part of the code "722" - refers to the educational programme group: Medical services / Healthcare services and educational programme group: nutrition science. Compliance is demonstrable and understandable.

The mission of the professional bachelor's degree in "Nutrition" is to promote the development and sustainability of the nutrition industry in Latvia, nutrition policy and nutrition science are inextricably linked with health care and the study field of Health care. The name of study programme "Nutrition" derives from the understanding of nutrition as both a health-promoting, health-maintaining and academic discipline, which is established in the professional standard.

The Professional Bachelor's study programme "Nutrition" has been implemented by RSU since the academic year 2003/2004, and the part-time form of the study programme - since the academic

year 2005/2006. The volume is 160 credit points (240 ECTS). It is a full-time and part time regular study programme, which is implemented over four and four-and-a-half years, or eight and nine semesters respectively. In the form of part-time regular studies, the duration of studies shall be 4 years and 6 months as specified in the study programme parameters, self-assessment report, Annex 17.1 and Annex 19.

The Professional Bachelor's study programme "Nutrition" was accredited several times during its lifetime for the full accreditation period – six years –, with the last accreditation for the programme as part of the health care study field in 2017. This is the only study programme in Latvia that offers in-depth and professional knowledge in nutrition science. The study programme is based on and updated in accordance with the European Federation of the Associations of Dietitians (EFAD) Academic Standards – 2018 revision.

2.1.3. The corrections made to the study programme's parameters within the assessment of the study field are achieved and justified as supported by the expert group site visit interviews as well as detailed in the SAR report (p. 565-566). Table 1 clearly shows that there were no significant changes that were made to the parameters of the study programme "Nutrition" since the previous accreditation. The changes followed feedback from working group meetings with the Study Programme Quality Council and the heads of study courses were:

1. The learning outcomes in the study programme and study course descriptions have been updated,
2. The amount of CP/ECTS was harmonised with cross-compliance analysis as per Annex 18.1_Anx_Study_Course_Mapping_Nutrition.pdf of the learning outcomes of the study programme and study courses included therein, and
3. The content of the courses has been supplemented with the latest developments of the field.
4. SAR (p. 569): following recommendations of alumni and students, the volume of "Nutrition Education" course was increased from 8 CP / 12 ECTS to 10 CP / 15 ECTS by dividing the course into two parts: "Basics of Nutrition Education" – 5 CP / 7.5 ECTS; and "Nutrition Therapy" – 5 CP / 7.5 ECTS.
5. SAR (p. 569) following the recommendations of employers and professional association, the Latvian Association of Diet and Nutrition Specialists (LDUSA), new topics have been added to the study courses and increased attention has been paid to certain issues. For example, the topic of taking a dietary history has been expanded, and the protocols for nutritionist consultations approved by LDUSA on 5 August 2020 have been introduced and used for training and national examinations: for children, children with eating disorders, pregnant women, adults, first and repeated, outpatient and inpatient.

2.1.4. This is the only study programme in Latvia that offers in-depth and professional knowledge in nutrition science. The economic and social justification of the study programme is emphasized on the basis of the data by the World Health Organization, namely that 7 of the 10 main causes of death in the world in 2019 were chronic non-infectious diseases, while a healthy diet is very important in the prevention of these diseases, for example, cardiovascular and oncological diseases, type 2 diabetes, etc.

The Department carries out surveys regularly and feedback is acted upon.

Although the profession of a nutritionist is young in Latvia (2003), its importance is being pushed by society in general and by potential employers of medical and rehabilitation institutions, as well as in nutrition policy institutions, municipalities and the education sector.

SAR (p. 570) rightly cites a review report by PubMed (February 16, 2022) on the Global architecture for the nutrition training of health professionals: a scoping review and blueprint for next steps". This reports that the number of trained nutrition professionals, which is adequate and can cover at least

the minimum requirements for providing nutrition policy, is generally a capacity indicator related to the number of trained nutritionists per 100,000 population, which varies greatly from country to country, which may reflect the country's capacity to develop and implement nutrition policies and interventions. Among the 126 countries that reported the number of nutritionists, only 23 (18.3%) had the recommended density of 10 nutritionists per 100,000 population or more. Converting to the population of Latvia, the country would need at least 184 certified nutritionists working in their field. It should be also noted that the availability of nutritionists in Latvia still varies widely by region. During the placement, employers have the opportunity to recruit potential employees, which they actively do. The offer of rehabilitation services is steadily growing, creating new jobs. The Study Programme Quality Council, the Council of the Faculty of Rehabilitation (FR) are aiming to increase the number of nutritionists in their medical institutions in the near future – both in the public and private sector.

On 21 December 2022, the State Agency of Medicines approved medical technology for nutritionists – Nutritionist Consultation – by Decision No 1-50/433, which will allow a much broader involvement of nutritionists in the treatment process. The need for nutritionists in the labor market is also reflected in the number of job offers for graduates of the study programme, which most often appear on the Latvian Nutritionists website or in correspondence with members of the association.

Annex 16 “Statistical Data About the Students of the Master's Study Programme “Nutrition Science”” shows an increase in the number of students from 10 students in academic years 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 to over 30 from 2018/2019 providing evidence of the increase in popularity of the study programme.

2.1.5. Not applicable.

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

The Professional bachelor study programme “Nutrition” (42722) is compliant with the study field “Health Care”. The aim of the Professional bachelor study programme “Nutrition” is to educate and train Nutritionists by ensuring high quality professional higher education and to provide health, educational and social care institutions with qualified and competitive nutritionists in accordance with the needs of the national healthcare and rehabilitation system and the requirements of the professional standard. The title, code, degree and professional qualification of the study programme, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation, as well as the implementation language, are reasonable and justified. Economic and social justification of the study programme, dynamics of the number of students and employment indicators of the graduates of the study programme are justified as there is demand on the market for this profession.

Strengths:

1. There is compliance of the study programme “Nutrition” with the study field.
2. There is a demand for these professionals and therefore there is a market for these professions ensuring study programme viability in terms of employability.

Weaknesses:

None

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1. The Professional Bachelor's study programme "Nutrition" leads to a degree in Health care and qualifies students as nutritionists. The programme can be completed in either four years of full-time studies or four years and six months of part-time studies. Every academic year is divided into two semesters, and each semester concludes with an assessment period to assess the knowledge, skills, and competences acquired by students. As to Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No. 305 of the Republic of Latvia, students are required to get 160 CP / 240 ECTS credits during their study programme in order to meet the quality of state professional higher education (SAR p. 571; Annex 17.1; 18.2; 17.2; 18.1; 19).

Clinical placement is a mandatory component of the study programme, following the laws of the Republic of Latvia. It aims to enhance the necessary skills for obtaining professional qualifications in a company or organization related to the field, but outside of RSU. The clinical placement is conducted in three distinct periods. The placement is conducted during the first, second, and fourth year of full-time studies and during the first, second, fourth, and fifth year of part-time studies. The State examination, which involves the development and defense of the Bachelor's thesis, requires a total of 12 credit points (CP) or 18 European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) credits. This takes place either in the fourth year of full-time studies or the fifth year of part-time studies. The remaining 122 CP / 183 ECTS are allocated to various study courses, including general, theoretical, information technology, professional specialization, and free elective courses (SAR p. 572; Annex 9).

The general education study courses have a combined credit value of 20 CP / 30 ECTS. This encompasses theoretical courses in humanities and social sciences, which also include study courses aimed at enhancing fundamental social, communication, and organizational abilities. The combined credit points (CP) or European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) for the theoretical core courses and information technology courses is 36 CP / 54 ECTS. These encompass fundamental courses in natural sciences such as Biology, Anatomy, Physiology, etc., which enhance students' understanding and provide them with the extensive information, abilities, and competences required for specialized professional courses. Field-specific professional specialization courses provide for 60 credit points (CP) or 90 European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) credits. They offer students comprehensive education to become proficient in the field of nutrition, equipping them with the specialized information, abilities, and competencies required by the professional standard. The pre-clinical courses are completed in the first two years of study, whereas the clinical study courses are primarily undertaken in the third and fourth years of study (and also in the fifth year for part-time students). The free elective courses in the Bachelor's study programme are worth 6 CP / 9 ECTS (SAR p. 572; Annex 18.1; 19; 20).

The study courses of the professional Bachelor's study programme are designed and continuously developed in accordance with the professional standard of nutritionist in Latvia. In 2022, a working group of the Latvian Association of Diet and Nutrition Specialists developed a new professional standard, agreed with the Union of Professional Organisations of Medical Practitioners of Latvia (LĀPPOS) and the Ministry of Health (SAR p.572).

Both for the overall study programme and for individual study courses, the learning objectives are well-defined. Study course descriptions are provided to prospective students. These descriptions include the goal of the course, the prerequisites, the content, the examination procedures, and the outcomes of the study process, which are the knowledge, skills, and competences that students gain from finishing the study course. The RSU website provides this material without any cost. The study course description, available in e-studies, provides supplementary details for students. This includes information about the course content, expected outcomes, lecture topics, practical classes, seminars, required and recommended readings, as well as the requirements for completing the

course. The study programme undergoes frequent enhancements, with annual revisions to the study course descriptions and content of lectures and courses. These updates aim to integrate the most recent scientific discoveries and expand the selection of suggested literature for students (SAR p. 572).

To ensure academic integrity, the theoretical portion of the state examination was moved to an electronic format during the recent accreditation period. Respondus (or other comparable programmes) was used for this purpose. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the practical component of the national examination was performed online for two years. The examination utilized clinical cases that were created by certified nutritionists who are members of the teaching team of the professional study courses. In the academic year 2021/2022, the practical component of the national examination was reintroduced in an authentic clinical environment. To ensure a consistent evaluation among all members of the assessment board, specific assessment criteria have been devised for the practical portion of the state examination. The questions and clinical cases included in the theoretical segment of the state examination underwent constant scrutiny, with a focus on identifying and analyzing the questions that were most prone to errors. Additionally, a minimum of 20% of the questions and situational assignments were substituted annually (SAR p. 572).

From the previous assessment recommendations provided by external experts were introduced to the study programme, to improve the quality of the study process. However, there are challenges that have to be tackled in the next assessment period. Study course descriptions were revised to ensure that learning outcomes are achieved at the appropriate level of education. The reading lists published in study course descriptions should be revised to better reflect the current situation. Work on study course descriptions and literature should continue in the next accreditation period, and new ideas and goals should be implemented in the future study programme plans.

Employers' perspectives on the alignment of skills and competencies possessed by study programme graduates with the demands of the labor market and current industry trends should be assessed regularly. The content of study courses should be continuously revised and adjusted to new trends in the field of profession. Nutrition professionals face various challenges in their efforts to promote health through dietary guidance and intervention. The intricate nature of these challenges mirrors the dynamic landscape of nutrition, looking for effective approaches and solutions.

Addressing individual dietary needs is a complex task, demanding personalized nutrition plans that consider diverse preferences, cultural backgrounds, and health conditions. Nutrition professionals also deal with the issue of nutrition misinformation, and often misleading dietary information. Behavioral changes are a central challenge, as professionals work to motivate and sustain dietary modifications among clients, overcoming previous habits and population-level issues like malnutrition, obesity, and food insecurity. Nutrition education and literacy present ongoing challenges, requiring effective communication to reach diverse populations with varying health literacy levels. Socioeconomic disparities impact nutritional well-being, necessitating strategies to address barriers to healthy eating in underserved communities. Integrating nutrition into chronic disease management presents dynamic challenges for nutrition professionals. Environmental sustainability, ethical considerations, including conflicts of interest, demand persistence in maintaining the ethical standards. Successfully navigating these challenges requires a combination of scientific knowledge, effective communication skills, cultural competence, and an unwavering commitment to ongoing professional development. Nutrition professionals play a pivotal role in promoting healthy dietary habits and preventing diet-related health issues amidst the evolving landscape of nutritional science and public health. The rapid development of science and technology is bringing transformative changes in the field of nutrition. Precision nutrition, influenced by nutrigenomics and nutrigenetics, enables personalized dietary recommendations based on individual genetic factors. The advent of digital health technologies, including nutrition apps and wearables, facilitates remote monitoring and engagement. Big data analytics allows nutrition professionals to

analyze population-level dietary patterns, informing evidence-based interventions. Telehealth platforms expand access to nutrition services through virtual consultations. Smart kitchen appliances and robotics support meal planning and dietary management, while blockchain technology enhances food traceability for informed choices. Augmented reality contributes to interactive nutrition education, making learning engaging and accessible. This rapid integration of technology highlights the need for high quality education and adaptability among nutrition professionals to optimize the potential of emerging tools and approaches. Keep this in mind when the future changes will be implemented in the study program. It is highly recommended to include some of the above mentioned topics in the study program in some form.

The content of the study programme is topical, the content of the study courses is interconnected and complementary, corresponds to the objectives of the programme and ensures the achievement of learning outcomes, and in majority meets the needs of the industry, labor market and scientific trends. In the light of future changes in the credit system to ECTS, planning the study process for the transition from CP to ECTS should make an effort in avoiding the discrepancies regarding the associated credits to courses.

2.2.2. Not applicable.

2.2.3. The study programme has a volume of 160 CP or 240 ECTS. One credit point is equivalent to a student workload of 40 academic hours. The contact hours per credit point range from 30% to 40%. It is not clear if this refers to the full time or part time studies. If this refers to full time studies then in expert opinion this is not fully compliant with the 20th paragraph of Cabinet Regulation No.305 which states that in full-time studies contact hours should be not less than 40%.

The remaining burden consists of tasks that the student must complete on their own without assistance. The course description provides information about the structure, responsibilities, and evaluation standards for individual coursework. The E-environment serves as a platform for communication and dissemination of information to students, as well as for submitting independent work and receiving feedback (SAR p. 574).

The studies are conducted both in-person and remotely, employing a diverse range of teaching methods including lectures, practical classes, seminars, discussions, independent student work (such as group projects, individual projects, and individual research projects), and presentations of prepared projects. RSU has established and is consistently enhancing the e-learning platform inside the study program. Expeditionary expansion transpired amidst the Covid-19 pandemic. Additional educational resources, such as recorded video lectures, have been created to facilitate distance learning. The bulk of the study course mostly comprises hands-on classes, wherein students learn professional competencies. The practical component is conducted in small groups, guaranteeing a customized approach to pupils. Individual counseling is available if needed, and students' desires and recommendations are actively acknowledged and considered. The predominant instructional methodologies utilized in study curricula include the systems approach, situation analysis, and problem-oriented approach. Efforts have been made in recent years to enhance the organization of students' self-directed study and review. The e-learning environment undergoes continuous enhancements, encompassing both content and organization. The training provided by the RSU Centre of Educational Growth on the construction of an e-learning environment greatly aids this process and is actively utilized by the study programme teachers (SAR p. 575).

Throughout the placement, the student completes a placement logbook. The placement supervisor evaluates both the practical capabilities and the student's attitude towards the given duties throughout the placement. The ultimate evaluation of the placement (either pass or fail) is bestowed by the accountable lecturer at the academic institution subsequent to the defense of the placement. Students have the option to submit an appeal if they have a disagreement with the assessment or raise a complaint against the techniques used for assessment (SAR p. 575).

The primary methods used to evaluate the completion of a programme are tests and examinations. Various modes of assessment, such as written tests, oral exams, practical demonstrations, and independent work presentations, are also utilized. Study classes include cumulative evaluations more frequently, enabling students to get ongoing evaluation and feedback throughout the semester. Evaluation is conducted on theoretical knowledge, practical skills, attitude, and the capacity to engage with patients, their family members, and coworkers. The assessment system is regularly analyzed and enhanced. The viewpoints of instructors and students are considered (SAR p. 575).

The state examination comprises a multiple-choice test to examine theoretical knowledge and a clinical skills demonstration with a patient. The assessment is weighted more heavily towards the practical component, accounting for 70% of the overall score. Amidst the Covid-19 outbreak, when there were restrictions on accessing patients in the clinical setting, the practical component of the state test was conducted in the online environment. The process of the state examination is outlined in the Procedure of the State Examination, which was ratified during the Quality Council meeting of the study programme, the Council of the Faculty of Rehabilitation meeting, and subsequently approved by the RSU Council of Deans. The state examination is assessed by the national examination board, whose leadership and composition are approved for the respective academic year. The board acts in accordance with the normative documents of the RSU. Employers and professional associations are invited to the State Examination Board as representatives, constituting a majority of over 50% of the Board. The State Examination Board is overseen by a chairperson who is a representative of either employers or a professional group (SAR p. 575).

Studies use formative and summative assessment. Students receive formative assessment through daily study, class assessments, and discussions of their individual work. Each course concludes with a test or exam. Summative assessments are written or oral talks. At the end of studies, the student chooses a Bachelor's thesis topic based on interests, writes, and defends it. Students' knowledge is assessed by written and oral exams (tests, seminars, individual and group work assessments) in study courses.

To administer the study programme, a student-centered, structured, social study method is used, promoting self-motivated student studies. Student group studies and learning cooperation are encouraged. Research in the study process encourages student participation in scientific initiatives. Involving teaching staff and students in research projects enhances research skills, quantitative indicators, creativity, cooperation, and expands the professional field. The program emphasizes cooperation and communication through pair work, group work, and work student-to-student, but it should also encourage multidisciplinary collaboration with lecturers, employers, association representatives, and clinic professionals to solve complex professional problems. The involvement of students in scientific work in the future period should follow the already set positive trend. It is highly recommended to offer students more topics that include strengthening their transferable skills and work in multidisciplinary teams.

Implementing study methods helps achieve course and programme goals and learning. The implementation of student-centered teaching is complied within the study programme. Even though the various methods have been implemented in study programmes, there is room for improvement, particularly in enhancing the methods of scientific work and increasing student engagement. Integrating research into the study process promotes active student involvement in scientific initiatives. The dissemination of student's thesis results during RSU Student Scientific Conferences can facilitate the integration of academic studies into the professional environment, enabling graduates to present their discoveries to experts and contribute to the advancement of their field.

2.2.4. The study course "Nutrition" has a total placement volume of 23 (CP) or 34.5 (ECTS). The primary aim of the clinical placement is to enhance the student's understanding, refine and enhance practical abilities, and acquire proficiencies in line with the profession of nutritionist. During the

placement, the student is required to carefully observe, evaluate, and analyze the particular aspects of the nutritionist profession in relation to their personal desires, interests, and ambitions while selecting their future career. The extent and substance of the placement phases are individually determined for each step. The placement is conducted during the first, second, and fourth year of full-time studies, and during the first, second, fourth, and fifth year of part-time studies. The placement involves the following stages: introductory placement in a medical treatment institution; placement in public institutions; placement in a hospital for medical rehabilitation in a hospital, day hospital, or outpatient setting; placement in a hospital for medical rehabilitation of children in a hospital, day hospital, or outpatient setting; placement in an outpatient setting for outpatient medical rehabilitation; placement in a rehabilitation center for medical rehabilitation in a hospital, day hospital, or outpatient setting. The placement supervisor is a licensed medical professional who is qualified to train others. They can be a certified nutritionist, a physician-dietician, or a doctor. The supervision of the placement in the second year of studies, which takes place in public institutions that have implemented nutrition policies, is carried out by specialists in the field. Most of these specialists are alumni of the nutrition programme and are nutritionists themselves. However, in this particular case, the placement supervisor is not required to have a certificate. The clinical placement volume is adequate for commencing professional practice in alignment with the nutritionist's professional standard (SAR p. 575).

Placement includes list of institutions such as: Rehabilitation Centre Līgatne; Ministry of Health, scientific research institute Bior, Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (SPKC); Riga Health Centre, Rehabilitation Centre Līgatne, Rehabilitation Centre; Jaunķemeri, Riga Psychoneurology and Narcology Centre, Children's Clinical University; Hospital, Pauls Stradiņš Clinical University Hospital, Jūrmala Hospital.

Even if the criteria is well met, there are some suggestions that should be taken into account for the future implementation. The number of clinical placements in medical, educational, social care, and non-governmental organizations shows positive trend, that should be followed with cooperation with employers in expanding the placement locations, developing regional placement locations throughout the territory of Latvia to address the problem of decentralization of human resources in health care in Latvia. It should also be considered to improve and implement more the student exchange within the clinical placement within Erasmus + mobility programme, and placement in the EU territory.

2.2.5. Not applicable.

2.2.6. The topics of Bachelor's theses are chosen by students according to their chosen field of professional activity, the topics are relevant, the results are practically applicable and contribute to the field of rehabilitation. These include translation of tools used in rehabilitation, including nutrition, literature reviews on therapeutic methods used in nutrition therapy and their effectiveness, etc. The selection and development of the topics are based on the most recent scientific literature and take into account the latest trends in the field (SAR p. 576).

Students have the right to suggest their own research topic and choose a thesis supervisor who agrees to supervise the respective Bachelor's thesis. The supervisor of a Bachelor's thesis must have a Master's or doctoral degree. The topics are approved at the meeting of the Council of the Faculty of Rehabilitation no later than six months before the defense of the Bachelor's thesis. The high level of motivation that students have to learn should be taken into consideration. This motivation is visible throughout the process of studying, particularly when students are working on autonomous projects, as well as in student surveys and conversations with other students. Regular counseling is provided to students throughout the course of their academic pursuits. This includes counseling before tests as well as counseling during the production of course papers and Bachelor's theses. Students are provided with access to methodical study resources that have been produced

by lecturers in the e-environment. These materials encourage students to engage in independent work while they are learning about the subjects.

Students participate in research projects on a regular basis. A Project that serves as an excellent example is the: "Obesity, Dietary Habits and Vitamin D and Omega-3 Fatty Acid Parameters During Pregnancy (2020-2023)" project. This project is a component of the Fundamental and Applied Research Projects (FLPP) of the Latvian Council of Science (LCS). It has been determined that the following bachelor's theses have been successfully completed and defended: "Pregnant Women's Diet and Its Effect on the Weight of the Newborn; B Vitamins in the Diet of Pregnant Women in Latvia; Iron Deficiency Anaemia and Dietary Habits of Pregnant Women in Latvia; The Role of Vitamin D in Pregnancy; Omega-3 Fatty Acids in the Diet and Erythrocytes of Pregnant Women." Student theses at the bachelor's level investigate and explore a wide variety of current challenges in the field of nutrition science. Some of the topics of theses are: "Dietary habits of adolescent floorball team players, comparison in age groups"; "Habits and trends in the use of sugar and sweeteners among social network users living in Latvia" etc. (SAR p. 576).

The Republic of Latvia's regulatory framework requires a competent commission comprising employer and industry representatives to assess final theses. Final theses defenses allow companies to learn about nutrition science research, which is laudable. To ensure students' disciplined approach to research, the subject is defended, then the pre-thesis, and finally the Bachelor's thesis. Thus, the student obtains necessary counsel and guidance to complete an excellent bachelor's thesis, whose scores have positive trend in improvement (SAR p. 576).

The topics of students' final theses are relevant to the field and correspond to the study programme. The criteria is well met.

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

The Professional Bachelor's study course "Nutrition" leads to a degree in health care and qualifies students as nutritionists. The programme can be completed in either four years of full-time studies or four years and six months of part-time studies. Every academic year is divided into two semesters, and each semester concludes with an assessment period to assess the knowledge, skills, and competences acquired by students. As to Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No. 305 of the Republic of Latvia. The content of the study programme is topical, the content of the study courses is interconnected and complementary, corresponds to the objectives of the programme and ensures the achievement of learning outcomes, and in majority meets the needs of the industry, labor market and scientific trends. In the light of future changes in the credit system to ECTS, planning the study process for the transition from CP to ECTS should make an effort in avoiding the discrepancies regarding the associated credits to courses. Implementing study methods helps achieve course and program goals and learning. The implementation of student-centered teaching is complied within the study program. Even though the various methods have been implemented in study programs, there is room for improvement. Even if the criteria is well met, there are some suggestions that should be taken into account for the future implementation. The number of clinical placements in medical, educational, social care, and non-governmental organizations shows positive trend, that should be followed with cooperation with employers in expanding the placement locations, developing regional placement locations throughout the territory of Latvia to address the problem of decentralization of human resources in health care in Latvia. It should also be considered to improve and implement more the student exchange within the clinical placement within Erasmus + mobility

programme, spreading placement in the EU territory. Students have high motivation and participate in research projects on a regular basis. The topics of students' final theses are relevant to the field and correspond to the study programme. The criteria is well met.

Strengths:

1. The study courses of the professional Bachelor's study programme are designed and continuously developed in accordance with the professional standard of nutritionist in Latvia.
2. Close collaboration with Latvian Association of Diet and Nutrition Specialists, Union of Professional Organisations of Medical Practitioners of Latvia (LĀPPOS) and the Ministry of Health.
3. Placement includes list of institutions such as: Rehabilitation Centre Līgatne; Ministry of Health, scientific research institute Bior, Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (SPKC); Riga Health Centre, Rehabilitation Centre Līgatne, Rehabilitation Centre; Jaunķemeri, Riga Psychoneurology and Narcology Centre, Children's Clinical University; Hospital, Pauls Stradiņš Clinical University Hospital, Jūrmala Hospital.
4. Students participate in research projects on a regular basis.

Weaknesses:

1. The study course descriptions, and reading lists published in study course descriptions, the study course content and descriptions regular update is necessary.
2. Study courses and their content do not fully comply with the needs of the relevant industry, labor market and science trends; it does not follow the rapid science and technology development in the field of profession.
3. Possibilities of involvement of students in scientific work should be seized more.
4. Number of placements does not offer as many possibilities as it could, throughout Latvia and the EU, using ERASMUS+ programme.
5. Lack of interdisciplinarity and work with various professions to solve complex problems of profession, obtained during the study programme.

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1. According to the Self-Assessment Report (SAR, Part II, Study Programme Nutrition, Paragraph 3.3.1) the study provision is available at the RSU Medical Education Technology Centre (MITC). The Centre houses the facilities required for the study courses. Notable example is modern kitchen-type premises that are used for practical classes. Other examples include body composition and metabolism measuring equipment, indirect calorimetry device, Q-NRG metabolic monitor for a spontaneously breathing patient, portable bioimpedance device AKERN BIA 101 BIVA, body component analyser TANITA MC-780, printer, calipers, as well as height meters and scales. Each year, the department's budget includes funds to renew and supplement the resources needed for the study process.

In terms of informative provision the students have access to the resources of the RSU library, these include the subscribed multidisciplinary databases with 730 e-books (Ebook Central (ProQuest)) and

2,122 e-books (EBSCO eBook Academic Collection) on the topics relevant to the study programme. Primo unified search engine lists around 100 e-journal titles under Nutrition and Dietetics. Most of the latest books, however, are available in the Medical Education and Technology Center library. The database access includes PEN: Practice-based Evidence in Nutrition, Ebook Central (ProQuest) and EBSCO eBook Academic Collection. Additionally, more than 100 E-journals are available through Primo search engine for Nutrition and Dietetics field.

The study provision is sufficient to provide a high-quality study process.

2.3.2. Not applicable.

2.3.3. Based on the information provided in the SAR p. 580, the study programme is planned to be financed from state budget funds and the funds of individuals and legal entities setting the tuition fee in accordance with the state budget funding without social security in the amount of EUR 4890 of study year. The number of students planned to reach in the four years of study of the full-time study programme is 81 students with 21 students admitted in the first year of studies, and 1-2 students predicted to drop out in the following years. As the study programme is implemented in two streams - full-time and part-time, it is planned to finance the part-time study programme from the funds of private individuals and legal entities. It is planned to reach a total of 82 students in the study programme of four years and six months, with 22 students enrolled in the first year of studies, and 3-5 students predicted to drop out in the following years. The tuition fee for the study programme currently amounts to EUR 2800 per year, increasing it to EUR 3100 in the coming years, analyzing the restrictions on the demand and possible other reasons as high inflation.

Based on the Table 2 provided in the SAR p. 581, the cost of full-time study programme implementation shows that average cost per student exceeds the average revenue per student by roughly EUR 700. In the part-time stream the difference between cost and revenue is slightly lower and being around EUR 250, while still costs exceeding revenues.

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

Both study programme implementation forms show that the study programme is carefully considered and financially analyzed and planned. As stated in the analysis, it is planned to increase tuition fees in the future because of various reasons, which can negatively impact the already existing average cost and revenue gap that already exist in both forms of implementation - the full-time and part-time study programme. Not to mention, if the predicted student numbers are not met, it will also leave a negative outprint, which has to be carefully considered and taken into account. Possible alternative solutions have to be found. The study provision, encompassing both physical facilities and informational resources, is sufficient for facilitating a high-quality study process. The presence of modern equipment, regular budget allocations for resource renewal, and extensive access to e-resources contribute to the effectiveness of the overall educational experience.

Strengths:

None.

Weaknesses:

1. There is a significant gap between average cost and revenue numbers per student, which raises a question of sustainability of the study programme, especially if the student number goals are not met and the tuition fees may increase.

Assessment of the requirement [6]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The study programme ensures the necessary resource provision and fulfills the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and ensures the achievement of learning outcomes.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1. SAR (p. 582) shows that the qualification of the academic staff involved in the implementation of the study programme "Nutrition" is in conformity with the conditions for implementation of the study programme and the requirements of regulatory enactments. The study programme, objectives of the relevant study courses and learning outcomes are successfully achieved. The staff complement: 1. the Director of the professional Bachelor's study programme has the education of a dietician and continuously improves her professional and academic qualifications;

2. The teaching staff involved in the study programme are: 91 lecturers, of whom 2 are professors and leading researchers, 7 - associate professors, 13 - assistant professors, 21 lecturers, 43 of assistants, lesson teachers and guest lecturers.

3. Clinical placement supervisors are nutritionists certified by the Latvian Association of Diet and Nutrition Specialists with a Master's degree in health care or five years of professional experience, or eligible to train.

4. 65 lecturers have graduated from RSU study programmes (from one to four), while 27 lecturers are currently (in the academic year 2022/2023) studying in one of the programmes.

5. 27 out of 91 lecturers have a doctorate degree, which is 30% of the total number of lecturers; 7 lecturers are still continuing their doctoral studies. It should also be noted that supervisors and reviewers of students' final theses in about 25% of cases have a doctorate degree.

6. Heads of clinical practice are also currently studying for a doctorate, combining the clinical work of a nutritionist with academic studies, which has been acknowledged very positively, as it makes an even greater contribution to the acquisition of clinical skills. The already acquired qualification of study programme "Nutrition" teaching staff, which can be assessed as very good, and the active participation of lecturers in further education help to achieve excellent study results.

2.4.2. Over the period of assessment, there have been no significant changes in the composition of teaching staff (SAR, p. 583). Nevertheless, the increase in the number of lecturers, successfully completing their doctoral studies in the RSU Second level professional higher education programme "Medicine" (49721)" has increased (SAR, p.583 provides an example). Several lecturers and visiting staff have been recruited to ensure that the implementation of the study programme takes place without problems. According to interviews in site visits with staff, the Director of the study programme regularly engages in both educational and professional qualification improvement activities and has shown agility in responding to changes needed also based on student feedback and gaps in human resources.

During the accreditation period, new lecturers have been recruited who have started teaching after obtaining their Master's degree or are pursuing doctoral studies, and are highly qualified professionals in their field. These are involved in the implementation of study course "Clinical Placement I"; and in study courses "Introduction in Basics of Nutrition", "Nutrition Policy" and "Food Legislation", and in study course "Healthy Food Preparation". Furthermore, 4 representatives of the

professional environment are involved as invited lecturers in the implementation of the study programme.

2.4.3. Not applicable.

2.4.4. As detailed in Annex 24.7. "Analysis Composition Academic_Staff Nutrition_Science" and Annex 6.4. "Ac_staff_publications_IF factor_Facult_Publ_Health_Soc_Welf" even though 32% of elected academic members of staff in the Faculty of Rehabilitation on the list has not shown CV and references, all other members of the academic staff in the last six years have published in peer-reviewed editions, including international editions, or have five years of practical experience in accordance with the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

2.4.5. As per SAR (p. 584-585), and confirmed in expert group on-site visit interviews with key stakeholders of the study programme "Nutrition", there is a mechanism for mutual cooperation of the teaching staff in the implementation of the study programme which therefore ensures the achievement of the aims of the study programme and the interconnection of study courses within the study programme. There is continuous cooperation between the Council of the Faculty of Rehabilitation, lecturers within the Department of Sports and Nutrition, the Faculty of Rehabilitation, students, employers, graduates, and other departments. This is promoted in particular by the Director of the study programme, who captures internal evidence by analyzing the results of the study course assessment questionnaires, recommendations and comments of students. These results are discussed with the heads of study courses and the lecturers involved, so that consensus is built for changes to be made so as to improve the study process as necessary. In particular, before the beginning of each semester, the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study course, the study work organizer and the head of placement, together with the head of the study course, review the planning of the study course and topical issues related to its implementation.

Therefore, there is communication with heads of the study courses during the planning and implementation phases annually. The reviews assist the programme director to plan for the next academic year. Subsequently, heads of study courses whose study courses require changes are contacted and discussions ensue for implementation of improvements. Also, before each semester, the content, outcomes and interconnection of the study course with other study courses are discussed. These discussions with lecturers are important to fine-tune study programmes to not only promote improvement and continuity but also to avoid the overlapping of study content.

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

The qualification of the teaching staff involved in the study programme matches the requirements for its implementation and the regulatory enactments, enabling the study programme's aims and learning outcomes and the relevant study courses to be met. The RSU takes steps to ensure that changes in the teaching staff do not impair the quality of the study programme or its compliance with regulatory requirements. In the last six years, all academic staff members whose CV's have been submitted, have written in peer-reviewed journals, including international editions or five years of practical experience per the Law on Higher Education Institutions. A framework for teaching staff cooperation in implementing the study programme promotes its success and the interconnectedness of study courses.

Strengths:

1. The qualification of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme "Nutrition" complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme.
2. There is a growing number of staff with doctorate degrees.
3. There is ample cooperation amongst key stakeholders that enable successful running, improvement and maintenance of study programmes.

Weaknesses:

None.

Assessment of the requirement [7]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The academic staff, visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting docents, visiting lecturers and visiting assistants have the necessary academic qualifications and experience in line with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements set out in the respective regulatory enactments. This is confirmed by: SAR (p. 581-583), interviews during the site visit and the following annexes.

Even though experts point out that about 32% of teaching staff have not submitted CVs, experts assess this requirement as fully compliant.

24.7_Analysis_of_the_Composition_of_the_Academic_Staff_Nutrition.pdf

6.2_Anx_Biographies_teaching_staff_PBSP_Nutrition_EN_396pages.pdf

6.4_Anx_Ac_staff_publications_IF factor_Facult_Rehabilitation.pdf

8.1_Anx_Data_on_international_lecturers_Faculty_of_Rehabilitation.pdf

2.5. Assessment of the Compliance

Requirements

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Annex - 17.1_pielik_PBSP_Fiziot_atbilstiba_izglitibas_standartam_ENG.pdf confirms that the study programme complies with State Education Standard corresponding to Cabinet Regulations No 305 of 13 June 2023 "Regulations on State Standard for Professional Higher Education" <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/342818-noteikumi-par-valsts-profesionalas-augstakas-izglitibas-standartu>.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The study programme complies with the profession standard "Profession Standard of Nutrition

Specialist" (Approved by the decree No. 262 of the Ministry of Education and Science of 3 June 2003). (available online: <https://registri.visc.gov.lv/profizglitiba/dokumenti/standarti/ps0184.pdf>). However, as it was stated in the onsite meeting, the study programme complies also with the newest standard that can be accessed here:

<https://registri.visc.gov.lv/profizglitiba/dokumenti/standarti/2017/PS-268.pdf>

- 3 3 - The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in all languages in which the study programme is implemented, and they comply with the requirements set forth in Section 561 , Paragraph two and Section 562 , Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

The study course descriptions are prepared in English and Latvian that can be accessed under annexes - 20_Anx_Study_course_description_Nutrition.pdf and 20_pielik_Kursu_apr_Uzturs.pdf. Descriptions comply with regulations set forth in Law on Higher Education Institutions. The programme is implemented in Latvian. However, the study course descriptions and reading lists published in study course descriptions are not fully revised since the last reaccreditation period. Updating the study course content and descriptions is necessary.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The provided Diploma sample - 24.1_Anx_Sample_Diploma_and_Supplement_PBSP_Nutrition.pdf complies with the procedure by which state-recognised documents of higher education are issued according to Cabinet Regulation No. 202 "Kārtība, kādā izsniedz valsts atzītus augstāko izglītību apliecinošus dokumentus

- 5 5 - The academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements set forth in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 6 6 - Academic study programmes provided for less than 250 full-time students may be implemented and less than five professors and associated professors of the higher education institution may be involved in the implementation of the mandatory and limited elective part of these study programmes provided that the relevant opinion of the Council for Higher Education has been received in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 7 7 - At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of an academic doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field of science. At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a professional doctoral study programme in arts (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 8 8 - The teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme are proficient in the official language in accordance with the regulations on the level of the official language knowledge and the procedures for testing official language proficiency for performing professional duties and office duties.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Based on the acquired information onsite as well as relevant annexes:

24.4_Anx_Certification_Regarding_Latvian_Language_of_the_Academic_Staff.pdf and 6.2_Anx_CV_ENG_visas_programmas.7z, it can be evaluated that the

language proficiency of teaching staff is compliant with Cabinet Regulation. Nr. 733 "

Regulations Regarding the Extent of the Knowledge of the Official Language, the Procedures for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language and the State Fee for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language".

- 9 9 - The teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language, if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Sample of attached study agreement 24.8_Anx_Study contract sample_Health Care study direction.pdf complies with Cabinet Regulation. Nr. 70 "Studiju līgumā obligāti ietveramie noteikumi".

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Sample of attached study agreement 24.8_Anx_Study contract sample_Health Care study direction.pdf complies with Cabinet Regulation. Nr. 70 "Studiju līgumā obligāti ietveramie noteikumi".

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

RSU has provided confirmation that students are guaranteed compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the study programme's license is revoked. It is ensured based on the Section 55(8) of the Law on Higher Education Institutions and Cabinet of Ministers No 795 of 11 December 2018 "Regulations on Licensing of study programmes", Paragraph 13.4. The relevant document can be found under Annexes - 24.3_Anx_Certification_of_Compensation_of_Losses_to_Students.pdf.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Additionally, the programme complies with Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 268 Regulations on the Therapeutic Expertise of Medical Personnel and Students Acquiring the First or Second-Level Professional Higher Medical Education and the Extent of Their Theoretical and Practical Knowledge and Medical Treatment Law.

Assessment of the requirement [8]

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Study programme partially complies with regulatory enactments. The study course descriptions and reading lists published in study course descriptions are not fully revised since the last reaccreditation period. Updating the study course content and descriptions is necessary.

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

The Professional bachelor study programme "Nutrition" is compliant with the study field "Health Care". The aim of the Professional bachelor study programme "Nutrition" is to train professionals with the highest level of professional Bachelor's education in health care by ensuring high quality professional higher education and to provide health, educational and social care institutions with qualified and competitive professionals in accordance with the needs of the national healthcare and rehabilitation system and the requirements of the professional standard. The title, code, degree to be obtained, professional qualification or degree and professional qualification of the study programme, aims, objectives and learning outcomes are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation, as well as the implementation language, are reasonable and justified. There should be clarity in the form on SAR (p.563) as regards the distinction in years and months between full time and part-time courses. Economic and / or social justification of the study programme, dynamics of the number of students and employment indicators of the graduates of the study programme are justified as there is demand on the market for this profession. The Professional Bachelor's study programme "Nutrition" leads to a degree in health care and qualifies students as nutritionists. The programme can be completed in either four years of full-time studies or four years and six months of part-time studies. The content of the study programme is topical, the content of the study courses is interconnected and complementary, corresponds to the objectives of the programme and ensures the achievement of learning outcomes, and in majority of the study content meets the needs of the industry, labor market and scientific trends. In the light of future changes in the credit system to ECTS, planning the study process for the transition from CP to ECTS should make an effort in avoiding the discrepancies regarding the associated credits to courses. Implementing study methods, such as lectures, practical classes, seminars, discussions, students' independent work (group projects, individual projects, individual research projects) and presentation of the projects prepared. helps achieve course and programme goals and learning outcomes. The implementation of student-centered teaching is complied within the study programme. Even though the various methods have been implemented in the study programme, there is room for improvement, especially with involvement of students in scientific work and interdisciplinary teams. The number of clinical placements in medical, educational, social care, and non-governmental organizations shows positive trend, that should be followed with cooperation with employers in

expanding the placement locations, developing regional placement locations throughout the territory of Latvia to address the problem of decentralization of human resources in health care in Latvia. It should also be considered to improve and implement more the student exchange within the clinical placement within Erasmus + mobility programme, and placement in the EU territory. Students have high motivation and participate in research projects on a regular basis. The topics of students' final theses are relevant to the field and correspond to the study programme. The qualification of the teaching staff involved in the study programme matches the requirements for its implementation and the regulatory enactments, enabling the study programme's aims and learning outcomes and the relevant study courses to be met. The RSU takes steps to ensure that changes in the teaching staff do not impair the quality of the study programme or its compliance with regulatory requirements. In the last six years, all academic staff members have written in peer-reviewed journals, including international editions or five years of practical experience per the Law on Higher Education Institutions. A framework for teaching staff cooperation in implementing the study programme promotes its success and the interconnectedness of study courses.

Strengths:

1. The study courses of the professional Bachelor's study programme are designed and continuously developed in accordance with the professional standard of nutritionist in Latvia.
2. Close collaboration with Latvian Association of Diet and Nutrition Specialists, Union of Professional Organisations of Medical Practitioners of Latvia (LĀPPOS) and the Ministry of Health.
3. Placement includes list of institutions such as: Rehabilitation Centre Līgatne; Ministry of Health, scientific research institute Bior, Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (SPKC); Riga Health Centre, Rehabilitation Centre Līgatne, Rehabilitation Centre; Jaunķemeri, Riga Psychoneurology and Narcology Centre, Children's Clinical University; Hospital, Pauls Stradiņš Clinical University Hospital, Jūrmala Hospital.
4. Students participate in research projects on a regular basis.
5. Even though not all CV's were submitted, from the presented data; the qualification of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme "Nutrition" complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme.
6. Teaching staff qualifications are in conformity with the study programme "Nutrition" requirements.
7. There is a growing number of staff with doctorate degrees.
8. There is ample cooperation amongst key stakeholders that enable successful running, improvement and maintenance of the study programme.

Weaknesses:

1. The study course descriptions, and reading lists published in study course descriptions, the study course content and descriptions regular update is necessary.
2. Some of the study topics of the relevant industry, labor market and science trends, that follow the rapid science and technology development in the field of profession are not implemented in the study programme.
3. Possibilities to involve students in research work show positive trends, which the experts recommend exploring and expanding in the future. Possibilities of involvement of students in scientific work are very limited and could be expanded.
4. Number of placements does not offer as many possibilities as it could, throughout Latvia and the EU, using ERASMUS+ programme.
5. Lack of interdisciplinarity and work with various professions to solve complex problems of profession, obtained during the study programme.

Evaluation of the study programme "Nutrition"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Nutrition"

Short-term recommendations

There should be clarity in the form on SAR (p.563) as regards the distinction in years and months between full time and part-time courses.

Long-term recommendations

Establish a regular update of study course descriptions, reading lists, and content, ensuring accurate and current information, and implement a structured approach for continuous monitoring and revision within the next assessment period to enhance the overall quality and relevance of the study materials.

Create study courses and their content that align with the evolving needs of the relevant industry, labor market, and current science and technology trends within the profession, aiming to ensure responsiveness to rapid developments in the field and implementing necessary adjustments within the next assessment period.

Sustain and enhance the positive trends in student involvement in scientific work by developing a structured plan that encourages and supports continued participation, ensuring a consistent and nurturing environment for student engagement in scientific activities, and implementing this plan to foster ongoing positive trends within the next assessment period.

Maximize placement opportunities by expanding collaborations throughout Latvia and the EU, leveraging the ERASMUS+ programme to its full potential, with the goal of providing students with valuable experiences, and implement this within the next assessment period.

Address the lack of interdisciplinarity and collaboration with various professions in solving complex problems, aiming to foster a more holistic and diverse educational experience, and ensure the integration of interdisciplinary approaches within the next assessment period.

II - "Nursing" ASSESSMENT

II - "Nursing" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1 The aim of the Professional bachelor study programme "Nursing" (42723) is to provide students of the study programme with a scientific foundation for professional activity, developing the ability to independently conduct scientific research, developing analytical skills in care, skills and techniques to act independently in different care situations, using evidence-based problem solution methods, and observing the requirements of professional ethical standards (SAR, p. 500). The PBSP Nursing complies with the aim of the study field "Health Care" to provide excellent, research-based and inclusive education to health care professionals to promote sustainable development of public health and well-being, realizing everyone's potential throughout life (SAR, p. 22). The inclusion of PBSP Nursing in the study field "Health Care" is justified and follows from the aim of the given study

programme, the learning outcomes to be achieved, the content of the programme and the degree and qualification to be awarded.

2.1.2. The PBSP 'Nursing' is a full-time study programme with the implementation duration of 4 years and the amount of 160 Latvian credits (CP)/240 ECTS. The languages of instruction – Latvian and English. The degree to be acquired – professional bachelor's degree in health care and the qualification to be obtained – nurse (general care nurse).

The admission requirements (full time studies, Latvian – secondary education; full time studies, English – secondary education and English language proficiency at least at B2 level) (SAR, p. 502) correspond to the aim and objectives of the programme (SAR, p. 500).

The code of the study programme according to the classification of Latvian education – 42723, where the first part of the code 42 indicates that the type of the study programme Nursing is professional higher education programme (fifth level professional qualification and professional bachelor's degree) and the digits of the second part of the code 723 indicate that the thematic area of education is Health Care, but the group of educational programmes is Nursing.

The study results of the Bachelor's study programme correspond to Level 6 of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (LQF), which is described in the Cabinet of Ministers' Regulations No. 322 "Regulations on the Classification of Education in Latvia" (June 13, 2017).

The name of the study programme submitted for evaluation is the PBSP Nursing (42723), the name of programme is indicated as Nursing also in the SAR (p. 500), but later in the text (SAR, pp. 505 - 559) another name of programme is used, namely, "Nursing Studies". This is not a significant difference, but it would be better to use one and the same name of the programme.

The name, aims, objectives of the study programme, learning outcomes as well as the qualification to be obtained after completing the programme comply with the requirements of the Directive 2001/19/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2001, Medical Treatment Law, Law On the Regulated Professions and the Recognition of Professional Qualifications, Cabinet of Ministers' Regulation No 68 Minimum Requirements of Educational Programmes for the Acquisition of the Professional Qualification of Dentist, Pharmacist, Nurse and Midwife, Cabinet of Ministers' Regulation No 268 Regulations on the Therapeutic Expertise of Medical Personnel and Students Acquiring the First- or Second-Level Professional Higher Medical Education and the Extent of Their Theoretical and Practical Knowledge, occupational standard "Nurse (general care nurse)" (the Standard was approved at the meeting of the Tripartite Cooperation Sub-Council of Vocational Education and Employment on 12.08.2020, Minutes No. 6), Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No. 322 "Regulations on the Classification of Education in Latvia" (June 13, 2017), Cabinet Regulations No. 305 "Regulations on the National Standard for Professional Higher Education" (June 13, 2023) (following the new amendments to the regulatory framework: the sixth professional qualification levels).

The name of the study programme, the degree and qualification to be obtained, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and admission requirements are interrelated.

2.1.3. During the reporting period, changes (objective, task and learning outcomes to be achieved in the study programme have been updated) in the study programme parameters have been implemented to ensure the development of the programme including the commendations provided by experts in 2021. The changes are analysed, justified, and supported. (Annexes 4.1, 11)

2.1.4. There is a shortage of nurses in Latvia, similarly globally (SAR, p. 511-512). The number of students in the study programme has gradually increased from 170 (Riga 138, Liepāja 32) in 2016/2017 to 240 (Riga 183, Liepāja 57) in 2021/2022 academic year. Similarly, the number of first year students has increased from 29 (Riga 18, Liepāja 11) in 2016/2017 to 195 (Riga 162, Liepāja 33) first year students in 2022/2023. The number of drop-out students is high; for example, in the

academic year 2021/2022 a total of 44 first year, 12 in the second year, 10 in the third year and 39 in the fourth year, which is altogether 105 drop-out students; 91 from Riga and 14 from Liepaja. Out of Student drop-out rates within the study programme by academic year (Annex 16). The challenge of drop-out students has been recognized and monitored, and activity has been implemented by the position of process coordinator to support the students' study process. (SAR, p. 517). In the Development Plan of the study programme, the following activity has been presented: "Develop a student support system that would take into account the specifics of working student professionals aimed at addressing the threat of termination of studies without a degree", but no scheduled time or responsible person has been presented for this activity. (Annex 4.) The graduated students, both from Riga and Liepaja branch, are well employed in the nurses' profession but also in other fields or work abroad. The SAR (p. 513) reports that 92% of RSU graduates are successfully employed in the labour market. The experts found that employers in the Liepaja area pointed out the importance of having a Nursing study programme in Liepaja to provide nursing professionals for local and regional needs in society.

2.1.5. Not applicable.

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

The inclusion of Professional bachelor study programme "Nursing" (42723) in the study field "Health Care" is justified and follows from the aim of the given study programme, the learning outcomes to be achieved, the content of the programme and the degree and qualification to be awarded.

The name of the PBSP "Nursing", the degree and qualification to be obtained, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and admission requirements are interrelated.

The parameters of the Professional bachelor study programme "Nursing" (42723) including the commendations provided by experts in 2021 were analyzed, justified, and supported. The economic and social justification of the study programme is evident because there is a need for nursing professionals in Latvian society, and the graduates from Riga and Liepaja branch become highly employed. There are rather many drop-out students, especially at Riga.

Strengths:

1. Changes in the study programme parameters have been implemented to ensure the development of the programme, including the commendations provided by experts in 2021. The changes are analysed, justified, and supported.
2. The graduated students become well employed.

1. Weaknesses:

Rather many drop-out students, especially in Riga.

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1. The professional bachelor study programme "Nursing" contains 160 CP (240 ECTS), including 146 CP compulsory studies (part A), 8 CP restricted elective studies (part B), and 6 CP free elective (part C) studies (SAR, 520). The study programme contains 60 CP placements, which is less than half of the total of 160 CP required in Directive 2013/55/EU of the European Parliament and the Council as follows: "The training of nurses responsible for general care shall comprise a total of at least three years of study, which may in addition be expressed with the equivalent ECTS credits, and shall consist of at least 4 600 hours of theoretical and clinical training, the duration of the theoretical

training representing at least one third and the duration of the clinical training at least one half of the minimum duration of the training.” The content of the study programme consists of courses related to evidence-based nursing and patient and work environment safety, indicating the topical contents of the studies. As a whole, the courses are interconnected and complementary and ensure the expected learning outcomes regarding theoretical knowledge and practical skills. The literature related to the courses is relevant and topical. (SAR, Annexes 18.1, 19, 20) The study programme complies with national (Cabinet Regulations No. 305 “Regulations on the National Standard for Professional Higher Education, June 2023). The courses meet the needs of health care services and evidence-based practice, as the study programme is updated systematically based on the feedback collected from students, academic staff, employers, and professional organisations such as the Latvian Nurses Association. (SAR, 505, 521, Annexes 4.1, 18.2)

2.2.2. Not applicable.

2.2.3. The study implementation teaching and learning methods include lectures, seminars, group work, analyses of problem situations and search for solutions, utilisation of electronic library, simulations, and placement learning. The study programme applies student-centred principles in educational processes. The study programme has developed videos to be used in studies and implemented different e-platforms (Moodle, Teams, Zoom). These forms of digitalized teaching and learning methods made it possible to implement the study programme during the COVID-19 time. It also supports students' independent studies, which account for about 60% of the total study volume. The Medical Education Technology Centre (MITC) is used, for example, in teaching clinical skills. (SAR, 524-530). The study programme collaborates with many other study programmes in the field of “Health Care”, for example Public Health and Epidemiology, Social Welfare, Sports and Nutrition among others, to provide specific knowledge as well as multidisciplinary knowledge needed in nursing studies. (SAR, p. 524)

2.2.4. The study programme contains in total eight (8) internship periods in health care services and one placement related to patient and society education during the four study years. In total, the number of credit points regarding placements is 60 CP / 90 ECTS (SAR, 534), corresponding to the national and EU requirements (SAR, p. 534, Annexes 19, 20). The placement is based on agreements between the RSU “Nursing” study programme and the placement places, which are coordinated by the RSU Riga and Liepaja branch academic staff. The representatives of the placements meet the academic staff at least once per study year to collect feedback and discuss issues related to placement learning and supervision. The study placement is organised in health and social care institutions, where students are involved in the clinical work under the supervision of the placement supervisor. Placement with English language is planned by heads of the study courses in cooperation with FPHSW and Liepaja branch placement coordinators and health and social care institutions based on the agreements. (SAR, p. 533-534)

The Expert group found that the internship periods are well organised in cooperation with the university and the placements. The students and graduates were satisfied with the supervision and achievement of the learning objectives.

2.2.5. Not applicable.

2.2.6. The PBSP “Nursing” students prepare their bachelor’s theses (10 CP/ 15 ECTS) in the 8th semester. The objective is “a student's independent research on a topical problem in health care, and is a compulsory part of the study programme, the aim of which is to provide an opportunity to assess readiness to independently use the acquired knowledge and skills in solving research and

professional problems". (Annex 20) The supporting courses in earlier semesters are basic statistics (CP 2 / ECTS 3) and research methods (CP 2 / ECTS 3) along with other courses such as evidence based nursing and "course papers". The topics of the theses are relevant and topical to nursing science, including bachelor's theses titled "Preventive measures to prevent errors in the medication administration in intensive care unit", "Factors affecting sleep quality of patients in intensive care unit" and "Self-assessment of skills of enterally and parenterally fed patients in home care" (Annex 22). Independent scientific work and learning are emphasised in the goal of the study programme as "developing the ability to conduct scientific research independently", referring to the studies of the Bachelor's Thesis. This is an ambitious goal and could be considered further revising the wording of the goal for example "developing the ability to search, critically analyze, and summarize scientific and evidence-based knowledge", since "conducting scientific research independently" may refer to EQF levels (7-) 8 which is a doctorate level.

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

The content of the Professional bachelor study programme "Nursing" (42723) is topical. As a whole, the courses are interconnected and complementary and ensure the expected learning outcomes. The literature related to the courses is relevant and topical. The study programme complies with the national regulation. The courses of the study programme are updated systematically based on the feedback collected from students, academic staff, employers, and professional organisations such as the Latvian Nurses Association.

The study implementation teaching and learning methods include lectures, seminars, group work, analyses of problem situations and search for solutions, utilisation of electronic library, simulations, and placement learning. The study programme applies student-centred principles to educational processes.

The study programme collaborates with other study programmes in the field of Health Care to provide specific knowledge as well as multidisciplinary knowledge needed in nursing studies.

The number of credit points regarding placements is 60 CP / 90 ECTS, which is less than EU requirements ("the duration of the theoretical training representing at least one third and the duration of the clinical training at least one half of the minimum duration of the training). The placement is based on agreements between the RSU PBSP in "Nursing" and the placement. The representatives of the placements meet at least once per study year to collect feedback and discuss issues related to placement learning and supervision. Placement with English language is planned by heads of the study courses in cooperation with FPHSW and Liepaja branch placement coordinators based on the agreements.

The topics of the theses are relevant and topical to nursing science. The emphasis on the goal of the study programme is "developing the ability to conduct scientific research independently," referring to the studies of the Bachelor's Theses. This could be considered further, since "conducting scientific research independently" may refer to EQF levels 7-8.

Strengths:

1. Student-centred principles are applied in teaching and learning.
2. The teaching and learning methods are appropriate and relevant.
3. The study programme collaborates with other study programmes in the field of Health Care to provide specific knowledge as well as multidisciplinary knowledge needed in the nursing programme.
4. The placement places are well organised.
5. The Bachelor's Thesis topics are very relevant in nursing.

Weaknesses:

1. There are fewer placement studies that are required in the EU directive.

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1. For the implementation of the study programme at Riga campus and Liepaja branch, the RSU provides well-technically equipped (computers, data projectors) classrooms and simulation centers, as well as good wireless internet connections and e-learning environments (Moodle, Teams, Zoom, videos). The library facilities include several (28) on-line databases, and the library open access loan is available for students and academic staff 24/7 on the Riga campus and on weekdays at the Liepaja branch. (SAR, 538-541)

2.3.2. Not applicable.

2.3.3. The resources of the study programme consist of the provision of financial resources (state budget funds, funds of individuals and legal entities), infrastructure, and material and technical provisions. The tuition fee in the Latvian flow is 5705€ and in the English flow is 7500€. To cover the costs of the study programme, the number of students planned to be achieved in the Latvian flow in four years of study is 508 (first year, 144 enrolling students, planned with 18 drop-out students in the second year and 6 drop-out students in the third year, unchanged number of students in the fourth year) and 52 enrolled students in the English flow (SAR, 542-543). Recently, however, the number of drop-out students has been rather high. For example, in the academic year 2021/2022 a total of 44 first years, 12 in the second, 10 in the third year and 39 in the fourth year (Annex 16). The SAR (p. 543) reports that the number of students in the study programme is sufficient to cover the costs of the study programme. The expert group found that the number of drop-out students needs to be carefully considered to ensure a sufficient funding base.

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

The RSU provides well-technically equipped classrooms, simulation centers, and library services, as well as good wireless internet connections and e-learning environments, to implement the Professional bachelor study programme "Nursing" (42723) at the Riga campus and Liepaja branch. The financial resources are reasonable, and other resources are at a very good level to implement the programme. The budget is estimated to have a limited number of drop-out students. The number of drop-out students is still rather high, so the actions that have been taken since the last accreditation should continue to reduce the number of drop-out students.

Strengths:

1. The resources to implement the PBSP "Nursing" both at the Riga campus and at the Liepaja branch, are overall very good.

Weaknesses:

1. There are rather many drop-out students, especially at Riga, which could have an impact on the

financial situation in the future.

Assessment of the requirement [6]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

After analysing the documents and meeting with the PBSP Nursing managers, academic staff, students, graduates, and employers, the experts have confirmed that the PBSP Nursing at RSU is well materially provided and ensures that students receive a high quality education.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1. The qualification of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the professional bachelor study programme “Nursing” (42723) fully complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements in the regulatory documents. It enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses.

All members of the teaching staff conduct scientific activities in a scientific field related to the educational programme.

RSU provides its teaching staff with opportunities for growth and professional development in accordance with the Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia No. 662 of 11 September 2018 on the education and professional qualification required for teachers (SAR, page 544). The University is regularly concerned about improving the qualifications and professional skills of its teaching staff. For this purpose, RSU regularly offers courses organised by the Center for Educational Development (PIC) (evidenced by interviews with the representatives of the Centre for Educational Growth).

From 1 January 2017, 69 lecturers of the PBSP Nursing participated in activities of the Centre for Educational Growth. They attended more than 180 training courses (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.4.1).

Academic staff regularly participate in research work at the local and international scientific conferences. Lecturers regularly participate in Erasmus+, Nordplus mobility, teaching in foreign higher education institutions (proved by interviews with academic staff). For improving the quality of the study programme, as well as for implementation of new modern teaching methods, the University involves foreign visiting academic staff.

2.4.2 A higher education institution takes measures to ensure that changes in the composition of the teaching staff do not have a negative impact on the quality of the educational programme and the compliance of the educational programme with the requirements established by regulations. The composition of the teaching staff in the professional bachelor study programme “Nursing” (42723) is stable. Faculty have both academic and practical experience in the health sectors, including nursing. During the reporting period, changes in the composition of the teaching staff occurred both among permanent teachers and among visiting teachers. Changes are associated with ensuring continuity and interaction between generations (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.4.1).

Since the educational programme has a professional meaning, it is necessary that as many new teachers as possible be involved in the educational process, and this is partly due to the need to ensure high qualifications of nurses in accordance with the requirements of the Directive (Directive

2005/36/EC).

There is a constant updating of teaching staff. New teaching staff, being involved in the implementation of the educational programme, ensure continuity in student learning through the experience of their graduates. It is important to emphasise that the teaching staff improves their qualifications and is elected to higher positions in the University. Updating of teaching staff takes place within the framework of the programme.

2.4.3. Not applicable.

2.4.4. Each member of academic staff has publications in peer-reviewed national and international journals during the last six years (Annex 6.1; 6.4.2) or at least 5 years of practical experience. All lecturers have more than 7 years of experience in academic work in health care. Several lecturers are authors or co-authors of scientific publications, including on research methodology, scientific writing and dissemination of research results, as well as several collective monographs developed mainly in the field of psychology. Some lecturers prepare peer-reviewed international publications and review scientific articles. Several lecturers work on the editorial boards of scientific journals, participate in funded research projects, and are experts in various projects. Lecturers are also members of professional organisations, work at and represent international organisations. Projects carried out by the academic staff contribute to the development of scientific capacity and competitiveness, which could be also characterised by the increase in the number of scientific articles in the Web of Science databases and Scopus journals, which strengthens the authority and recognisability of RSU as a center of study and science ((SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.4.2).

The described criterion is in accordance with the Law on Higher Educational Institutions.

2.4.5. Mutual cooperation of the teaching staff in the implementation of the study programme has been established, this was proven by the interview with the teaching staff and Programme Director. RSU organises meetings, where any issues related to the implementation of the programme and the organisation of training (theoretical and practical classes) are discussed in detail. A very important fact is that during these meetings there is an exchange of views and an exchange of best practices. Cooperation between the lecturers of different study courses is promoted in the Study Programme to create optimal and logically sequential content of study courses and the planning of the course by study semesters, thereby ensuring that the knowledge from previously mastered courses serves as the basis for successful mastering of the next courses, as well as to adapt the content of the courses to be studied to the specificity of the speciality (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.4.5).

At the end of academic year 2020/2021, due to updating of the professional standard for a nurse (general care nurse) (2020), a working group of RSU, working groups of lecturers and a summer school for lecturers were set up to discuss the interlinking of study courses, to prevent overlapping of topics, to adapt the content of the study course according to the developments in the professional standard. Lecturers assessed such appointments positively, stressing that they enabled them to see the placement of a study course taught in the whole study programme, to understand the succession of topics, review different study courses, delve into specific topics.

The entire described process proves the achievement of the goals of the educational programme and the interrelation of training courses within the professional bachelor study programme "Nursing" (42723).

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

The qualification of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the professional bachelor

study programme “Nursing” (42723) fully complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements in the regulatory documents. It enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses. A higher education institution takes measures to ensure that changes in the composition of the teaching staff do not have a negative impact on the quality of the educational programme and the compliance of the educational programme with the requirements established by regulations. A mechanism for mutual cooperation of the teaching staff in the implementation of the study programme has been established, it ensures the achievement of the aims of the study programme and the interconnection of study courses within the study programme.

Strengths:

1. Constant updating of teaching staff.
2. Qualified teaching staff in the field of Nursing.
3. High level of involvement of researchers in research activities.

Weaknesses:

None

Assessment of the requirement [7]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The qualification of the academic staff and visiting professors, visiting lecturers (all teaching staff) completely complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements in the regulatory documents.

2.5. Assessment of the Compliance

Requirements

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The PBSP “Nursing” complies with the Cabinet Regulations No. 305 “Regulations on the State Standard for Professional Higher Education” (June 13, 2023) (following the new amendments to the regulatory framework: the sixth professional qualification levels).

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The RSU has provided the document in Annex (18.2_Anx_Compl_with_occupational_standard_Nursing) providing the evidence that the PBSP Nursing complies with the occupational standard “Nurse (general care nurse)” (The Standard was approved at the meeting of the Tripartite Cooperation Sub-Council of Vocational Education and Employment on 12.08.2020, Minutes No. 6).

- 3 3 - The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in all languages in which the study programme is implemented, and they comply with the requirements set forth in Section 561 , Paragraph two and Section 562 , Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The RSU has provided the study course descriptions for the PBSP Nursing both in Latvian and English (Annex 20_Anx_Study_course_description_PBSP_Nursing.pdf).

The descriptions of the study courses are compliant with the regulations set forth in the Law on Higher Education Institutions. The descriptions of the study courses: define the requirements for the commencement of the acquisition of the study course; determine the aims for the implementation of the study course and the planned learning outcomes; outline the content of the study course necessary for the achievement of learning outcomes, contain the study course topic layout, mandatory and supplementary literature, indicate other sources of information; describe the organization and tasks for students' independent work; determine the assessment criteria of learning outcomes.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The sample of the diploma and its supplement (Annex 24.1.0_pielik_Diplom_Bak_Nursing_ENG) is issued for completing the study programme in accordance with the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 202 of 16.04.2013 "Procedures for Issuing State-Recognized Higher Education Certificates"

- 5 5 - The academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements set forth in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 6 6 - Academic study programmes provided for less than 250 full-time students may be implemented and less than five professors and associated professors of the higher education institution may be involved in the implementation of the mandatory and limited elective part of these study programmes provided that the relevant opinion of the Council for Higher Education has been received in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 7 7 - At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of an academic doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field of science. At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a professional doctoral study programme in arts (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 8 8 - The teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme are proficient in the official language in accordance with the regulations on the level of the official language knowledge and the procedures for testing official language proficiency for performing professional duties and office duties.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The RSU has provided annexes

(24.4_AnxCertification_Regarding_Latvian_Language_of_the_Academic_Staff.pdf and 6.2_AnxBiographies_teaching_staff_PBSP_Nursing_Studies_EN_431pages.pdf) confirming that the language proficiency of the teaching staff is compliant with Cabinet Regulation. No. 733 "Regulations Regarding the Extent of the Knowledge of the Official Language, the Procedures for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language and the State Fee for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language".

- 9 9 - The teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language, if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The RSU has provided the annexes

(24.5_AnxCertification_Regarding_the_English_Language_Knowledge.pdf and 6.2_AnxBiographies_teaching_staff_PBSP_Nursing_Studies_EN_431pages.pdf) confirming that the members of the teaching staff to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level proficiency in the English language.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The sample of the study agreement is fully compliant with the Law on Higher Education Institutions Section 46, paragraph 2, and the Cabinet Regulations No 70 of 23.01.2007 "The Mandatory Provisions to be included in the study agreement" (24.8_AnxCStudy contract sample_Health Care study direction.pdf).

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

In annex 24.2 (24.2_pielik_Apliecinajumi_par_parnemsanu_eng.7z) it is indicated that students of the PBSP "Nursing" will be provided with the opportunity to continue their education either at University of Latvia PBSP "Nursing" or RSU PBSP "Midwife".

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

RSU has provided confirmation that students are guaranteed compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the study programme's licence is revoked. It is ensured based on the Section 55(8) of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education and Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No 795 of 11 December 2018 "Regulations on Licensing of Study Programmes", Paragraph 13.4. The relevant document can be found under Annex - 24.3_AnxCertification_of_Compensation_of_Losses_to_Students.pdf.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The PBSP "Nursing" complies with:

the Directive 2001/19/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2001, Medical Treatment Law,

Law On the Regulated Professions and the Recognition of Professional Qualifications,

Cabinet of Ministers' Regulation No 68 Minimum Requirements of Educational Programmes for the Acquisition of the Professional Qualification of Dentist, Pharmacist, Nurse and Midwife,

Cabinet of Ministers' Regulation No 268 Regulations on the Therapeutic Expertise of Medical Personnel and Students Acquiring the First- or Second-Level Professional Higher Medical Education and the Extent of Their Theoretical and Practical Knowledge.

Assessment of the requirement [8]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Study programme fully complies with regulatory enactments

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

The inclusion of Professional bachelor study programme "Nursing" (42723) in the study field "Health Care" is justified and follows from the aim of the given study programme, the learning outcomes to be achieved, the content of the programme, and the degree and qualification to be awarded. The name of the PBSP Nursing, qualification to be obtained, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and admission requirements are interrelated. The expert group found that the study programme is implemented based on the same criteria and principles at Riga and at Liepaja. During the reporting period, changes in the study programme parameters have been implemented to ensure the development of the programme, including the commendations provided by experts in 2021. The changes are analysed, justified, and supported. The challenge of drop-out students has been recognized and monitored, and an important activity has been implemented by the position of process coordinator to support the students' study process. The graduated students are very well employed in the nurse's profession.

The content and the learning material of the study programme are topical and relevant and ensure the expected learning outcomes. The study programme complies with the national regulation. The courses of the study programme are updated systematically based on the feedback collected from students, academic staff, employers, and professional organisations such as the Latvian Nurses Association. The study implementation includes various teaching and learning methods, analyses of problem situations and search for solutions, utilisation of electronic library, simulations, and placement learning. The study programme applies student-centred principles to educational processes. The study programme collaborates with other study programmes in the field of Health Care to provide specific knowledge as well as multidisciplinary knowledge needed in the studies of nursing.

The internship complies with the requirements of regulatory enactments. In total, the number of credit points regarding placements is 60 CP / 90 ECTS corresponding to the national requirements.

The placement is based on agreements between the RSU PBSP in Nursing and the placement. The academic staff and the representatives of the placements meet at least once per study year to collect feedback and discuss issues related to placement learning and supervision.

The topics of the Bachelor's Thesis are very relevant and topical to nursing science. The emphasis on the goal of the study programme was "developing the ability to conduct scientific research independently," referring to the studies of the Bachelor's Thesis. This could be considered further, since "conducting scientific research independently" may refer to EQF levels 7-8.

The RSU provides well-technically equipped classrooms, simulation centers, and library services, as well as good wireless internet connections and e-learning environments, to implement the PBSP in Nursing at Riga campus and Liepaja branch.

The financial resources are reasonable, and other resources are at a very good level to implement the programme. The budget is estimated to have a limited number of drop-out students.

The qualification of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the professional bachelor study programme "Nursing" (42723) fully complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements in the regulatory documents. It enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses. A higher education institution takes measures to ensure that changes in the composition of the teaching staff do not have a negative impact on the quality of the educational program and the compliance of the educational program with the requirements established by regulations. A mechanism for mutual cooperation of the teaching staff in the implementation of the study programme has been established, it ensures the achievement of the aims of the study programme and the interconnection of study courses within the study programme.

Strengths:

1. During the reporting period, changes in the study programme parameters have been implemented to ensure the development of the programme, including the commendations provided by experts in 2021. The changes are analysed, justified, and supported.
2. The graduated students are well employed.
3. The content of the study programme is topical and relevant and ensures the expected learning outcomes. The literature related to the courses is relevant and topical. The study programme complies with national regulations and professional standards.
4. Student-centred principles are applied in teaching and learning.
5. The teaching and learning methods are appropriate and relevant.
6. The study programme collaborates with other study programmes in the field of Health Care to provide specific knowledge as well as multidisciplinary knowledge needed in the nursing studies.
7. The placement places are well organised.
8. The Bachelor's Thesis topics are relevant.
9. The resources to implement the PBSP in Nursing both at Riga campus and at Liepaja branch, are overall a very good level.
10. Constant updating of teaching staff.
11. Qualified teaching staff in the field of Nursing.
12. High level of involvement of researchers in research activities.

Weaknesses:

1. There are fewer placement studies that are required in the EU directive.
2. Rather many drop-out students, especially at Riga, which could have an impact on the financial situation.

Evaluation of the study programme "Nursing"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Nursing"

Short-term recommendations

Continue and create activities such as personal study-paths to reduce the number of drop-out students.

Long-term recommendations

Increase the number of placement credit points to correspond to the requirements of the EU directive.

II - "Midwife" ASSESSMENT

II - "Midwife" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1. The aim of the professional bachelor study programme "Midwife" (42723) (PBSP Midwife) is to prepare a medical practitioner who, in accordance with the competence specified in regulatory enactments and principles of holistic care, ensures person-centred care, participates in medical treatment, organises and manages physiological pregnancy, physiological childbirth and physiological postnatal period, cares for healthy newborns and infants (SAR, p. 844). The PBSP Midwife complies with the aim of the study field "Health Care" to provide excellent, research-based and inclusive education of health care professionals to promote sustainable development of public health and well-being, realising everyone's potential throughout life (SAR, p. 22). The inclusion of the PBSP Midwife in the study field "Health Care" is justified and follows from the aim of the given study programme, the learning outcomes to be achieved, the content of the programme and the degree and qualification to be awarded.

2.1.2. The PBSP "Midwife" is a full-time study programme with the implementation duration of 4 years and the amount of 160 Latvian credits (CP)/240 ECTS. The language of instruction – Latvian. The degree to be acquired – professional bachelor's degree in health care and the qualification to be obtained – midwife. The admission requirements – secondary education – correspond to the aim and objectives of the programme (SAR, p. 846).

The code of the study programme according to the classification of Latvian education – 42723, where the first part of the code 42 indicates that the type of the study programme Midwife is professional bachelor's programme (fifth level professional qualification (according to Cabinet Regulations No. 322 "Regulations on the Classification of Education in Latvia" (June 13, 2017) and according to Cabinet Regulations No. 305 "Regulations on the National Standard for Professional Higher Education" (June 13, 2023) and following the new amendments to the regulatory framework - the sixth professional qualification levels) and the digits of the second part of the code 723 indicate that the thematic area of education is Health Care, but the group of educational programmes is Nursing, which is considered to be a related profession.

The study results of the bachelor's study programme correspond to Level 6 of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (LQF), which is described in the Cabinet of Ministers' Regulations No. 322

“Regulations on the Classification of Education in Latvia” (June 13, 2017).

The name of the study programme submitted for evaluation is PBSP Midwife (42723), also in SAR (p. 844) the name of the programme is given as Midwife, but later in the text (SAR, p. 851 – 874) another name of the programme “Midwifery” is used. This is not a significant difference, but it would be preferable to use one with the same name of the programme.

The name, aims, objectives of the study programme, learning outcomes as well as the qualification to be obtained after completing the programme comply with the requirements of the Directive 2001/19/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2001, Medical Treatment Law, Law On the Regulated Professions and the Recognition of Professional Qualifications, Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 68 Minimum Requirements of Educational Programmes for the Acquisition of the Professional Qualification of Dentist, Pharmacist, Nurse and Midwife, Cabinet of Ministers’ Regulation No 268 Regulations on the Therapeutic Expertise of Medical Personnel and Students Acquiring the First- or Second-Level Professional Higher Medical Education and the Extent of Their Theoretical and Practical Knowledge, occupational standard “Patient Care. Occupational Requirements for Midwife” (07.06.2023.), Cabinet of Ministers’ Regulations No. 322 “Regulations on the Classification of Education in Latvia” (June 13, 2017), Cabinet Regulations No. 305 “Regulations Regarding the State Standard for Professional Higher Education” (June 13, 2023). The name of the study programme, the qualification to be obtained, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and admission requirements are interrelated.

2.1.3 The corrections and changes made since previous accreditation relate to the change of study programme director; the learning outcomes have been updated; and changes to the admission requirements have been made according to Education Law. Further, the study programme will not be implemented in English and not at the Liepaja branch. (SAR, p. 850) The corrections made to the study programme’s parameters within the assessment of the study field are analysed, justified, and supported.

2.1.4. In Latvian society, it is expected to have a need for midwives because, currently, many of the working midwives will retire within 5 to 10 years. The number of enrolled students in the study programme from academic year 2016/2017 to 2021/2022 has varied between 20-50 students, with 45 in 2021/2022. The number of students in the academic year 2022/2023 was 24 in the first study year, 25 in the second year, 26 in the third, and 26 in the fourth year. The number of drop-out students in the academic year 2021/2022 was 11 in the first study year, 1 in the second year, 3 in the third, and 6 in the fourth year. In the academic year 2022/2023 of the total number of students, 61 had state funded places and 40 had private funded places. (SAR, p. 854-856, Annex 16) Graduate employment is high. Graduate employment of the 2018 and 2019 graduates of PBSP “Midwife” indicates employment at 93% and 91%, respectively. (Annex 10).

2.1.5. Not applicable.

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

The inclusion of the PBSP “Midwife” in the study field “Health Care” is justified and follows from the aim of the given study programme, the learning outcomes to be achieved, the content of the programme and the degree and qualification to be awarded. The name of the PBSP “Midwife”, qualification to be obtained, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and admission requirements are interrelated. The corrections made to the PBSP “Midwife” are analysed, justified, and would be supported. Dynamics of the number of students and employment indicators of the graduates of the PBSP “Midwife” show that the study programme is economically and socially justified..

Strengths:

1. The corrections made to the study programme's parameters within the assessment of the study field are analysed, justified, and supported.
2. The graduated students are well employed.

Weaknesses:

None.

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1.

The content of the programme is topical, and the study courses are logically interconnected based on the pedagogical principle "from simplest to most complex". The courses are relevant for midwife education, and they are updated annually based on the feedback collected from students, academic staff, employers, and supervisors. However, some of the courses are for several study programmes for example, the "Introduction to Evidence-Based Care" course, which includes important content but no specific references to midwifery education, which are available and need to be included in references to contextualise the learning material for midwife students. In some courses, most of the references are more than 10 years old, for example, "Philosophy and Medical Ethics" and should be revised for more recent references published, for instance, in the Nursing Ethics Journal, which includes articles related to nursing and midwifery, or in the Midwifery Journal, which contains articles related to ethics. (SAR, p. 856-858, Annex 20.1)

The study programme complies with the national (Cabinet Regulations No. 305 "Regulations on the National Standard for Professional Higher Education, June 2023) and the study programme has been developed in accordance with the profession standard for a midwife and current midwifery education guidelines (Annex 17.2: Compliance of the Study Programme with the Industry-Specific Regulatory Framework) which defines in point 14.3.3. "at least 40 deliveries. If this amount cannot be met, it can be reduced to 30 deliveries, with students assisting in a further 20 deliveries". The expert group got the impression that the numbers of deliveries / treatment of childbirth varied between midwife students and could be less. The programme contains 160 CP of which the placement studies are 34 CP (51 ECTS) which is less than the EU directive requires "full-time training of at least three years as a midwife, which may in addition be expressed with the equivalent ECTS credits, consisting of at least 4 600 hours of theoretical and practical training, with at least one third of the minimum duration representing clinical training" (Directive 2013/55/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 November 2013 amending Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications).

2.2.2. Not applicable.

2.2.3. The study programme implementation teaching and learning methods include lectures, seminars, group work, simulations, learning on the e-platforms (Moodle, Zoom, Teams), and utilising electronic data-bases provided by the library 24/7. The study programme is based on student-centred and self-directed learning. The other principles in implementing the studies are as follows: collaboration with the Latvian Midwives Association (students are offered to participate in all meetings), implementation of research approaches in study courses, digital transformation as a part of many courses by means of e-learning environments and the Gynzone platform, international projects, and placement reflexes. The expert group found that the study methods used in the study programme enhance the achievement of expected learning outcomes.

2.2.4. The study programme contains 34 CP/ 51 ECTS internship studies in total, which is less than the EU Directive (2013/55/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 November 2013 amending Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications) requires. Internship places are in an industry-company or organisation in a clinical environment in inpatient and outpatient medical treatment institutions. The internships are based on cooperation agreements with 29 institutions; they are guided by the head of the study course, lecturers, and placement supervisor. The director of the study programme contacts internship supervisors before and after placement to clarify the aims and tasks of the placement and other issues. (SAR, p. 862-863) The timing of the internships during education is appropriate. (Annex 9.1., Annex 19) Studies in the placements are supported by appropriate learning material and documents, such as the student's individual placement goals, placement logbook, and placement hours registration sheet. Student assessment at placement is criteria-based. (Annex 9.1.) The expert group found that the placements are well coordinated and supervised.

2.2.5. Not applicable.

2.2.6. The PBSP "Midwife" students prepare their bachelor's theses (10 CP/ 15 ECTS) in the relevant topics in the field of midwifery. The objective is "a student's independent research on a topical problem in health care, and is a compulsory part of the study programme, the aim of which is to provide an opportunity to assess readiness to independently use the acquired knowledge and skills in solving research and professional problems". (Annex 20) The supporting courses in earlier semesters are basic statistics (CP 2 / ECTS 3) and research methods (CP 2 / ECTS 3) along with other courses such as introduction to evidence based care. The process of studying the bachelor's theses starts in the third year, informing them of the possible topics and supervisors, and at fourth year with e-seminars. Students' topics are approved in three phases (quality Council, Faculty council meeting, RSU Dean's Council). Students have the possibility of preparing their thesis for international projects in which the supervisor is a member.

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

The content of the programme is topical, and the study courses are logically interconnected based on the pedagogical principle "from simplest to most complex". The courses are relevant for midwife education, and they are updated annually based on the feedback collected from students, academic staff, employers, and supervisors. Some of the courses are for several study programmes, for example, the "Introduction to Evidence-Based Care" course, which includes important content but no specific references to midwifery education, which are available and need to be included in references to contextualise the learning material for midwife students.

The study programme has been developed in accordance with the profession standard for a midwife and current midwifery education guidelines (Annex 17.2: Compliance of the Study Programme with the Industry-Specific Regulatory Framework) which define in point 14.3.3. " at least 40 deliveries. If this amount cannot be met, it can be reduced to 30 deliveries, with students assisting in a further 20 deliveries". The expert group got the impression that the numbers of deliveries / treatment of childbirth varied between midwife students and could be less.

Student-centred, modern teaching and learning methods and learning environments are in use. The PBSP "Midwife" students prepare their bachelor's theses (10 CP/ 15 ECTS) on the relevant topics in the field of midwifery.

Strengths:

1. The content of the PBSP "Midwife" studies is topical.
2. Modern teaching and learning methods and environments based on student-centred principles are

in use.

3. The topics of Bachelor's Theses are topical and relevant to midwifery education.

Weaknesses:

1. In the Philosophy and Medical Ethics course, many of the references are more than ten years old, and there is no midwifery specific literature in the reference list.

2. The number of deliveries / treatments for childbirth varied between midwife students and could be less than the minimum number of deliveries required.

3. There are fewer placement studies that are required in the EU directive.

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1. For the implementation of the bachelor study programme "Midwife", RSU provides well-technically equipped (computers, data projectors) classrooms and simulation centers, as well as good wireless internet connections and e-learning environments (Moodle, Teams, Zoom, videos). The library facilities include several on-line databases, and the library open access loan is available for students and academic staff 24/7 on the Riga campus. (SAR, 538-541)

In addition, the RSU provides high level simulation facilities to master technical and non-technical skills needed in the placements and in the profession. High quality models and simulation equipment for the field of obstetrics are available including a simulation room "Birthing room". (SAR, p. 866-867) Based on the discussion with the midwife students, graduates, academic staff, employers, the expert group got the impression that the study process was well planned, implemented and evaluated. The study programme is planned to be financed by the state fund and funds of individuals and legal entities. The tuition fee is EUR 4890. The number of students planned to be in the study programme in four years is planned to be 105, taking into account the expected number of drop-out students.

2.3.2. Not applicable.

2.3.3. The resources of the study programme consist of the provision of financial resources (state budget funds, funds of individuals and legal entities), infrastructure, and material and technical provisions. To cover the costs of the study programme, the number of students planned to be achieved in four year studies is 105, as follows: in the first year 30 enrolling students, with 4 drop-out students in the second year, 4 drop-out students in the third year, and the remaining students in the fourth year. The study programme is estimated to have a negative result because of the increased infrastructure costs, but will be balanced by the additional performance funding provided by the Ministry of Education and Science. (SAR, pp. 868-867)

The average income per student was EUR 3839/year, and average cost per student was EUR 5597/year. Funding was distributed as follows: academic staff - 49%; department resources - 4%; students' clinical training and placement - 2%; other direct expenditure - 1%, scholarships - 3%;

fixed costs – 5%; overheads – 36% (SAR, page 868-869).

The number of drop-out students has been rather high. For example, in the academic year 2021/2022 a total of 11 first year, 1 in the second, 3 in the third year and 6 in the fourth year (Annex 16). It is higher than planned: The number of students planned to be achieved in the study programme in four years of studies is 105 students, enrolling 30 students in the first year, planning a drop-out of 4 students in the second year, a drop-out of 4 students in the third year and with the number of students remaining unchanged in the fourth year (SAR, page 868).

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

The RSU provides well-technically equipped classrooms, simulation centre, and library services, as well as good wireless internet connections and e-learning environments, to implement the PBSP “Midwife”. The financial resources are reasonable, and other resources are at a very good level to implement the programme. The budget is estimated to have a limited number of drop-out students. The number of drop-out students is still rather high, so the actions that have been taken since the last accreditation should continue to reduce the number of drop-out students.

Cost-effectiveness of the study programme is not ensured, but will be balanced by the additional performance funding.

Strengths:

1) The resources to implement the PBSP “Midwife” are overall at a very good level.

Weaknesses:

1) Cost-effectiveness of the study programme is not ensured.

Assessment of the requirement [6]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

After analysing the documents and meeting with the PBSP “Midwife” managers, academic staff, students, graduates, and employers, the experts have confirmed that the study programme at RSU is well materially provided and ensures that students receive a high quality education.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1. The qualification of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the Professional bachelor study programme “Midwife” (42723) fully complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements in the regulatory documents. It enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses.

The implementation of the professional bachelor study programme “Midwife” is carried out by 22 elected teaching staff: 3 professors, 4 associate professors, 5 lecturers, 2 assistants, 8 teachers (see Appendix 24.7).

The procedure for the application and selection of academic staff at RSU is governed by the “Regulations of Rīga Stradiņš University on academic positions” and “Process of Rīga Stradiņš

University "Elections of Academic Staff"" and the general requirements as knowledge of the official language in accordance with the requirements of regulations of the Republic of Latvia; knowledge of foreign languages at a level sufficient to occupy an academic position; continuous improvement of their academic, scientific and pedagogical qualifications.

All members of the teaching staff conduct scientific activities in a scientific field related to the educational programme.

RSU provides its teaching staff with opportunities for growth and professional development in accordance with the Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia No. 662 of 11 September 2018 on the education and professional qualification required for teachers (SAR, page 871). The University is regularly concerned about improving the qualifications and professional skills of its teaching staff. For this purpose, RSU regularly offers courses organised by the Center for Educational Development (PIC) (evidenced by interviews with the representatives of the Centre for Educational Growth).

From 1 January 2017, 45 lecturers of the Bachelor's study programme "Midwife" participated in activities of the Centre for Educational Growth. They attended more than 160 training courses.

Academic staff regularly participate in research work at the local and international scientific conferences. 12 lecturers, or approximately 52% of all the elected lecturers involved in the implementation of the study programme since 2017, have been employed in RSU's scientific projects at least once. The qualifications and experience of the teaching staff meet the requirements for implementing the study programme and the legal regulations (SAR, part II, paragraph 3.4.1).

2.4.2 A higher education institution takes measures to ensure that changes in the composition of the teaching staff do not have a negative impact on the quality of the educational programme and the compliance of the educational programme with the requirements established by regulations. The composition of the teaching staff in the educational programme is stable. Faculty have both academic and practical experience in the health sectors, including midwife. (SAR, part II, paragraph 3.4.2).

There is a constant updating of teaching staff. New teaching staff, being involved in the implementation of the educational programme, ensure continuity in student learning through the experience of their graduates. It is important to emphasise that the teaching staff improves their qualifications and is elected to higher positions in the University. Updating of teaching staff takes place within the framework of the programme.

2.4.3. Not applicable.

2.4.4. Each member of academic staff has publications in peer-reviewed national and international journals during the last six years (Annex 6.1; 6.4.2) or at least 5 years of practical experience. All lecturers have more than 7 years of experience in academic work in health care. Several lecturers are authors or co-authors of scientific publications, including on research methodology, scientific writing and dissemination of research results, as well as several collective monographs developed. Some lecturers prepare peer-reviewed international publications and review scientific articles.

Several lecturers work on the editorial boards of scientific journals, participate in funded research projects, and are experts in various projects. Lecturers are also members of professional organisations, work at and represent international organisations. Projects carried out by the academic staff contribute to the development of scientific capacity and competitiveness, which could be also characterised by the increase in the number of scientific articles in the Web of Science databases and Scopus journals, which strengthens the authority and recognisability of RSU as a centre of study and science (SAR, part II, paragraph 3.4.1).

2.4.5 Mutual cooperation of the teaching staff in the implementation of the study programme has been established, this was proven by the interview with the teaching staff and Program Director. RSU organises meetings of programme directors, where any issues related to the implementation of the programme and the organisation of training (theoretical and practical classes) are discussed in detail. A very important fact is that during these meetings there is an exchange of views and an exchange of best practices. Cooperation between the lecturers of different study courses is promoted in the Study Programme to create optimal and logically sequential content of study courses and the planning of the course by study semesters, thereby ensuring that the knowledge from previously mastered courses serves as the basis for successful mastering of the next courses, as well as to adapt the content of the courses to be studied to the specificity of the speciality (SAR, part II, paragraph 3.4.1).

Documentation by means of self-assessment report and the various annexes on staff, as well interviews with management and leadership, academic members, graduates and students shows that the heads of departments and teaching staff cooperate for coordination and implementation of study content and are actively involved in the implementation of study programme "Midwife". This is organised on several levels. Regular meetings are held discussing details of content so as to prevent repetition between different study courses. Students are also invited to give feedback to faculty by means of questionnaires or verbally/ directly, to draw attention to similar content in different study courses. The entire described process proves the achievement of the goals of the educational programme and the interrelation of training courses within the educational programme.

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

The qualification of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the Professional bachelor study programme "Midwife" (42723) fully complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements in the regulatory documents. It enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses. A higher education institution takes measures to ensure that changes in the composition of the teaching staff do not have a negative impact on the quality of the educational programme and the compliance of the educational programme with the requirements established by regulations. A mechanism for mutual cooperation of the teaching staff in the implementation of the study programme has been established, it ensures the achievement of the aims of the study programme and the interconnection of study courses within the study programme.

Strengths:

1. Constant updating of teaching staff.
2. Qualified teaching staff in the field of Midwife.
3. High level of involvement of researchers in research activities.
4. Involvement of high qualified foreign visiting professionals as teachers.
5. Constant participation in the training courses for development teaching and personal skills.

Weaknesses:

None.

Assessment of the requirement [7]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The qualifications of the academic staff Professional bachelor study programme “Midwife” (42723) fulfils the requirements specified in the relevant regulatory acts.

2.5. Assessment of the Compliance

Requirements

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The PBSP Midwife complies with the State Professional Higher Education Standard – Cabinet of Ministers’ Regulations No. 305 “Regulations on the State Standard of the Professional Higher Education” (13 June,2023).

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The RSU has provided the document in Annex (18.2_Anx_Compl_with_occupational_standard_Midwifery) providing the evidence that the PBSP Midwife complies with the occupational standard “Patient Care. Occupational Requirements for Midwife” (07.06.2023.)

- 3 - The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in all languages in which the study programme is implemented, and they comply with the requirements set forth in Section 561 , Paragraph two and Section 562 , Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The RSU has provided the study course descriptions for the PBSP Midwife both in Latvian and English (Annex 20_Anx_Study_course_description_Midwifery).

The descriptions of the study courses are compliant with the regulations set forth in the Law on Higher Education Institutions. The descriptions of the study courses: define the requirements for the commencement of the acquisition of the study course; determine the aims for the implementation of the study course and the planned learning outcomes; outline the content of the study course necessary for the achievement of learning outcomes, contain the study course topic layout, mandatory and supplementary literature, indicate other sources of information; describe the organization and tasks for students’ independent work; determine the assessment criteria of learning outcomes.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The sample of the diploma and its supplement (Annex 24.1_Anx_Diploma and supplement_Midwifery) are issued for completing the study programme in accordance with the Cabinet of Ministers’ Regulation No. 202 of 16.04.2013 “Procedures for Issuing State-Recognized Higher Education Certificates”.

- 5 5 - The academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements set forth in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 6 6 - Academic study programmes provided for less than 250 full-time students may be implemented and less than five professors and associated professors of the higher education institution may be involved in the implementation of the mandatory and limited elective part of these study programmes provided that the relevant opinion of the Council for Higher Education has been received in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 7 7 - At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of an academic doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field of science. At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a professional doctoral study programme in arts (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 8 8 - The teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme are proficient in the official language in accordance with the regulations on the level of the official language knowledge and the procedures for testing official language proficiency for performing professional duties and office duties.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The RSU has provided annexes

(24.4_Anx_Certification_Regarding_Latvian_Language_of_the_Academic_Staff.pdf and 6.2_Anx_Biographies_teaching_staff_PBSP_Midwifery_EN_264pages) confirming that the language proficiency of the teaching staff is compliant with the Cabinet Regulation No. 733 "Regulations Regarding the Extent of the Knowledge of the Official Language, the Procedures for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language and the State Fee for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language".

- 9 9 - The teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language, if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The sample of the study agreement is fully compliant with the Law on Higher Education Institutions Section 46, paragraph 2, and the Cabinet Regulations No 70 of 23.01.2007 "The Mandatory Provisions to be included in the study agreement" (24.8_Anx_Study contract sample_Health Care study direction.pdf).

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

In Annex 24.2. (24.2_pielik_Apliecinajumi_par_parnemsanu_eng.7z) it is indicated that students of the PBSP “Midwife” will be provided with the opportunity to continue their education at RSU PBSP “Nursing”.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

RSU has provided the confirmation that students are guaranteed compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the study programme’s licence is revoked. It is ensured based on the Section 55(8) of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education and Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No 795 of 11 December 2018 “Regulations on Licensing of Study Programmes”, Paragraph 13.4. The relevant document can be found under Annex 24.3_Anx_Certification_of_Compensation_of_Losses_to_Students.pdf.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The PBSP “Midwife” complies with:
the Directive 2001/19/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2001, Medical Treatment Law,
Law On the Regulated Professions and the Recognition of Professional Qualifications,
Cabinet of Ministers’ Regulation No 68 Minimum Requirements of Educational Programmes for the Acquisition of the Professional Qualification of Dentist, Pharmacist, Nurse and Midwife,
Cabinet of Ministers’ Regulation No 268 Regulations on the Therapeutic Expertise of Medical Personnel and Students Acquiring the First- or Second-Level Professional Higher Medical Education and the Extent of Their Theoretical and Practical Knowledge.

Assessment of the requirement [8]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Study programme fully complies with regulatory enactments.

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

The inclusion of the Professional Bachelor study programme “Midwife” (42723) in the study field “Health Care” is justified and follows from the aim of the given study programme, the learning outcomes to be achieved, the content of the programme, and the degree and qualification to be

awarded. The name of the PBSP “Midwife”, qualification to be obtained, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and admission requirements are interrelated. The expert group found that the corrections made to the PBSP “Midwife” were analysed, justified, and would be supported. The dynamics of the number of students and employment indicators of the graduates of the PBSP “Midwife” show that the study programme is economically and socially justified.

The content of the study programme is topical, and the study courses are logically interconnected based on the pedagogical principle “from simplest to most complex.”. The courses are relevant for midwife education, and they are updated annually based on the feedback collected from students, academic staff, employers, and supervisors. Some of the courses are for several study programs; for example, the “Introduction to Evidence-Based Care” course includes important content but no specific references to midwifery education, which are available and need to be included in references to contextualise the learning material for midwife students.

The study programme has been developed in accordance with the profession standard for a midwife and current midwifery education guidelines (Annex 17.2: Compliance of the Study Programme with the Industry-Specific Regulatory Framework) which define in point 14.3.3. "at least 40 deliveries. If this amount cannot be met, it can be reduced to 30 deliveries, with students assisting in a further 20 deliveries". The expert group got the impression that the numbers of deliveries/treatment of childbirth varied between midwife students and could be less. There are fewer placement studies that are required in the EU directive. The number of placement hours (credit points) is less than the EU Directive requires.

Student-centred, modern teaching and learning methods and learning environments are in use. The PBSP “Midwife” students prepare their bachelor’s theses (10 CP/ 15 ECTS) on the relevant topics in the field of midwifery.

The RSU provides well-technically equipped classrooms, simulation centre and library services, as well as good wireless internet connections and e-learning environments, to implement the PBSP “Midwife”. The financial resources are reasonable, and other resources are at a very good level to implement the programme. The budget is estimated to have a limited number of drop-out students. The number of drop-out students is still rather high, so the actions that have been taken since the last accreditation should continue to reduce the number of drop-out students. The study programme is estimated to have a negative result because of the increased infrastructure costs, but will be balanced by the additional performance funding provided by the Ministry of Education and Science.

The qualification of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the Professional bachelor study programme “Midwife” (42723) fully complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements in the regulatory documents. It enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses. A higher education institution takes measures to ensure that changes in the composition of the teaching staff do not have a negative impact on the quality of the educational program and the compliance of the educational program with the requirements established by regulations. A mechanism for the mutual cooperation of the teaching staff in the implementation of the study programme has been established; it ensures the achievement of the aims of the study programme and the interconnection of study courses within the study programme.

Strengths:

1. The corrections made to the study programme’s parameters within the assessment of the study field are analysed, justified, and supported.
2. The graduated students are well employed.
3. The content of the PBSP “Midwife” studies is topical.
4. Modern teaching and learning methods and environments based on student-centred principles are in use.
5. The topics of Bachelor’s Theses are topical and relevant to midwifery education.

6. The resources to implement the PBSP "Midwife" are overall at a very good level.
7. Constant updating of teaching staff.
8. Qualified teaching staff in the field of "Midwife".
9. High level of involvement of researchers in research activities.
10. Involvement high qualified foreign visiting professionals as teachers
11. Constant participation in the training courses for development teaching and personal skills

Weaknesses:

1. In the Philosophy and Medical Ethics many of the references are more than ten years old and there is no midwifery specific literature in the reference list.
2. The numbers of deliveries / treatment of childbirth varied between midwife students and can be less.
3. Increase the number of placement credit points to correspond to the requirements of the EU directive.
4. Cost-effectiveness of the study programme is not ensured.

Evaluation of the study programme "Midwife"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Midwife"

Short-term recommendations

- | |
|--|
| Review the literature of multidisciplinary courses and include references related to midwifery. |
| Continue and create activities to reduce the number of drop-out students. |
| Ensure and measure the number of deliveries / treatments of childbirth cared for by a student to correspond to the requirements. |

Long-term recommendations

- | |
|--|
| Recommendation to monitor the cost-effectiveness of the Professional Bachelor study programme "Midwife" (42723). |
| Increase the number of placement credit points to correspond to the requirements of the EU directive. |

II - "Public Health" ASSESSMENT

II - "Public Health" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1. The aim of the professional bachelor study programme "Public Health" (42726) (PBSP Public Health) is to prepare specialists for work in the fields of public health corresponding to the development trends of the Latvian and European public health sector, and whose level of theoretical knowledge and practical skills after graduation from the study programme allow them to start

independent professional activity, as well as to continue their education in relevant Master's level study programmes (SAR, p. 114). The PBSP "Public Health" complies with the aim of the study field "Health Care" to provide excellent, research-based and inclusive education of health care professionals to promote sustainable development of public health and well-being, realising everyone's potential throughout life (SAR, p. 22). The inclusion of the PBSP "Public Health" in the study field "Health Care" is justified and follows from the aim of the given study programme, the learning outcomes to be achieved, the content of the programme and the degree and qualification to be awarded.

2.1.2. The PBSP "Public Health" is a full-time study programme with the implementation duration of 4 years and the amount of 160 Latvian credits (CP)/240 ECTS. The language of instruction – Latvian. The degree to be acquired – professional bachelor's degree in health care and the qualification to be obtained – public health specialist.

The admission requirements – secondary education – correspond to the aim and objectives of the programme (SAR, p. 115).

The code of the study programme according to the classification of Latvian education – 42726, where the first part of the code – 42 – indicates that the type of the study programme Public Health is professional higher education programme (Level 5 professional qualification and professional bachelor's degree) (according to Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No. 305 Regulations on the National Standard for Professional Higher Education (June 13, 2023) - the sixth professional qualification levels) and the digits of the second part of the code 726 indicate that the thematic area of education is Health Care, but the group of educational programmes is Public Health.

The study results of the bachelor's study programme correspond to Level 6 of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (LQF), which is described in the Cabinet of Ministers' Regulations No. 322 "Regulations on the Classification of Education in Latvia" (June 13, 2017).

The name, aims, objectives of the study programme, learning outcomes, as well as the qualification to be obtained after completing the programme comply with the requirements of the Cabinet of Ministers' Regulations No. 322 "Regulations on the Classification of Education in Latvia" (June 13, 2017), Cabinet Regulation No. 305 "Regulations Regarding the State Standard for Professional Higher Education" (June 13, 2023). The name of the study programme, qualification to be obtained, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and admission requirements are interrelated.

2.1.3. The description and analysis of changes in the bachelor study programme "Public Health" parameters during the accreditation period (until 2022) indicated the following corrections (SAR, p. 116-121). The aim of the study programme was updated as follows: "to prepare specialists corresponding to Latvian and European public health sector development trends for work in public health areas, whose level of theoretical knowledge and practical skills after graduating from the study programme enable them to start their independent professional activity, as well as continue education in relevant Master level study programmes". The tasks of the study programme were updated as follows: 1. To ensure professional Bachelor level studies in public health in accordance with applicable regulatory enactments governing the study process – CM Regulations No. 305 "Regulations on the National Standard of Professional Higher Education" and the professional standard for a Public Health Specialist, as well as in accordance with the guidelines on public health education developed by the Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region (ASPHER1). 2. Within general education study courses of the programme, to provide students with the possibility to obtain knowledge in aspects of philosophy, ethics, psychology, law, economics, business, which are relevant to public health science and practices. 3. To ensure mastering of theoretical knowledge in public health and raise awareness of the role of evidence-based decision-making in public health. 4. In professional specialisation study courses and study placement of the programme, to provide students with a basis for professional activities, to promote their analytical

abilities and skills in solving various public health problems. 5. To promote the competitiveness of graduates in the labour market of Latvia and the European Union.

The correction made would be supported.

2.1.4. The task of public health professionals is to assess public health from a broad perspective to identify physical and mental risk factors and build a health-promoting environment through appropriate evidence-based interventions (SAR, p. 122-124). Thus the study programme is economically and socially justified because public health professionals are needed to improve the health of the population in Latvia and more broadly in other countries internationally.

The number of enrolled students has gradually increased from 22 (2016/2017) to 41 (2021/2022), but the share of drop-out students is high 14 (first year 11 students, second year 2 students, fourth year 1 student) in the academic year 2021/2022 that is around 27%. (Annex 16) The statistics related to employment of the graduates from the study programme show that they are well employed (Annex 10). Public health professionals are needed in the Latvian society. Graduates of the study programme most often work in Latvia as employees (95%) in ministries, public health institutes, local governments, and non-governmental organisations and less likely as self-employed persons or develop private businesses. 84% of 2018 and 2019 graduates (n=37) are employed, while 8% are unemployed (Annex 10).

2.1.5. Not applicable.

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

The inclusion of the PBSP “Public Health” in the study field “Health Care” is justified and follows from the aim of the given study programme, the learning outcomes to be achieved, the content of the programme and the degree and qualification to be awarded. The name of the PBSP “Public Health”, qualification to be obtained, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and admission requirements are interrelated.

The corrections made to the study programme’s parameters within the assessment of the study field are analysed, justified, and supported. The study programme is economically and socially justified because public health professionals are needed to improve the health of the population in Latvia and, more broadly, in other countries internationally.

The number of enrolled students has gradually increased, but the share of drop-out students is high, being around 27% in the academic year 2021/2022.

Strengths:

1. Socially and economically justified study programme.

Weaknesses:

1. Rather high drop-out number of students.

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1. The content of the professional bachelor study programme “Public Health” is topical, it complies with national and international regulations, it ensures the provision of Bachelor’s level

studies in public health in accordance with the current legislation regulating the study process - Cabinet Regulations No 305 "Regulations on the National Standard for Professional Higher Education" and the Professional Standard for Public Health Specialist, as well as in accordance with the Guidelines on Public Health Education developed by the Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region (ASPHER1), and corresponds to the tasks of the study programme (SAR, of the study programme, Part II, Parameters of the study programme) for example, task No 2. to provide students with opportunities to acquire knowledge of philosophy, ethics, psychology, law, economics and business aspects that are binding on public health science and practice within the framework of general study courses of the programme. Implementation of this task is reflected in the structure of the study programme, in the first structural part of the study programme – general education study courses, including humanities and social sciences courses, including study courses that develop basic social, communicative and organisational skills, including study courses, which include a module for developing the professional competence of entrepreneurship.

The second and third structural parts of the professional bachelor study programme "Public Health" include industry-specific theoretical course and information technology study courses as well as the field-specific professional specialisation study courses, they reflect the third and fourth tasks of the study programme, which are to ensure the acquisition of theoretical knowledge of public health and promote understanding of the role of evidence-based decision-making in public health and to provide students with the basis for their professional activity, improve their analytical skills and ability in addressing a range of public health problems through the professional specialisation study courses and placements of the programme. The third structural part of the study programme, including industry-specific theoretical courses ensures the study programme reflects that the study programme meets the needs of the industry and labour market.

The content and structure of the professional bachelor study programme "Public Health" is created and regularly reviewed in cooperation with employers, students, academic professionals through the work of the StP Quality Council to ensure its compliance with industry, labour market needs and scientific trends. The example, illustrating the study programme compliance with the labour market needs, is provided in SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.1., on 26.01.2022, the StP Quality Council decided to supplement the content and volume of the course "Occupational Medicine, Occupational Health and Civil Protection" due to the forthcoming changes to Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 723 of 08.08.2008 "Regulations Regarding the Requirements for Competent Authorities and Competent Specialists in Labour Protection Issues and the Procedures for Assessing Competence", which provides for wider involvement of public health professionals. Thus, the content of the course was supplemented with the necessary topics to ensure the successful competitiveness of StP graduates in this field of work;

The content of the study programme (SAR, Part II, Annex 19) is closely related with the learning outcomes of the study programme. It is illustrated in the Annex 18.1. Mapping of the study courses for the achievement of learning outcomes of the study programme. The mapping tasks are achieved, and one of the tasks is „the learning outcomes formulated for the study courses included in the study programme are reviewed, evaluating their compliance with the requirements for the student-centred approach and analysing the relevance between the study course and the learning outcomes of the study“. Expert panel concludes that the content of the study programme ensures the achievement of learning outcomes.

The content of the study programme is organised in a logical manner, the courses are interconnected. The first semester includes the fundamental theoretical study courses (SAR, Part II, Annex 19) creating understanding of human body, physical and psychic aspects of its functioning (for example, "Biology", "Anatomy", "Normal Physiology", etc.), health, the multitude of factors affecting it and possibilities to determine them (for example, "Basics of Public Health", "Environmental Health", "Mathematical Statistics", "Informatics", etc.). The proportion of industry-specific study courses (e.g. "Prevention, Health Promotion and Education", "Health Communication

in Public Health”, “Public Health Policy Development”, etc.) is increasing in the range of study courses to be studied in the coming semesters.

The content of the study programme corresponds to the scientific trends, because one of the study programme’s structural parts is the preparation of a research paper. At the end of the 2nd year of studies, students draft a course paper, preparing a literature review on a topic of public health, thereby demonstrating not only the acquired understanding of the field of public health, but also their skills in formulating the research matter, aim and tasks and critical analysis and systemisation of sources of information. In the further semesters there are the study courses providing skills for independent research work, which will be further needed in the development of the Bachelor’s thesis (e.g. “Basics of Research Methodology”, “Mathematical Statistics” (in-depth course), “Research Data Processing”, etc.).

The study courses are planned in a complementary manner. StP has purposefully designed a supply of restricted elective study courses (Part B courses) to promote the acquisition of knowledge and skills necessary for the profession. At the same time, the planning of restricted elective courses by semester has been coordinated with the study courses of the compulsory part to perfect and substantively supplement, deepen knowledge in the specific fields. For example, in the 3rd year of studies, part A provides study courses showing the aetiology of diseases, their social nature and the possibilities for prevention. In addition, part B courses such as “Oral Health”, “Oncology”, “Introduction to Psychosomatics”, etc. In the fourth year of studies, when the Bachelor’s thesis is being developed, part B offers a course on the processing of research data to provide additional support for the analysis of the Bachelor’s thesis data, etc. (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.1.).

It was confirmed by the administration of the Faculty of Public Health and Social Welfare, that the content of the professional bachelor study programme Public Health is based on the Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region (ASPHER) guidelines. The study programme’s content is also influenced by the outcomes of international collaboration. There was an example provided during the on-site visit about the visiting professor’s from Miami University visiting during which the lectures in the field of statistics were given. However, concerning the workload of the study programme, the students during the on-site visit mentioned the workload was hardly manageable in the first year of studies, however the mentor’s programme was really helpful. Students could not confirm the orientation week in the beginning of the studies. Students were highly satisfied with the statistics study course, provision of SPSS statistical analysis package and help provided by the statistics laboratory, and the sufficiency of working places in the statistics laboratory. The graduates confirmed that the content of the studies was absolutely useful in the work environment, except some very specific topics, which were relevant in the workplace.

2.2.2. Not applicable.

2.2.3. The study implementation methods (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.1., Annex 20.1, Study course descriptions), such as classes, seminars (including case analyses), including training practical skills, applied in the public health-specific study courses, teaches the students to plan a research project, to gather and present health-defining information, to calculate health indicators, to carry out a practical analysis of public health challenges, etc. Students are taught to look for complex solutions for particular public health problems, it reflects the aim of the professional bachelor study programme “Public Health”, which is to prepare specialists for work in the fields of public health corresponding to the development trends of the Latvian and European public health sector, and whose level of theoretical knowledge and practical skills after graduation from the study programme allows them to start independent professional activity, as well as to continue their education in relevant Master’s level study programmes (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.3.). The study method work in small groups develops students’ skills of communication, cooperation, establishing dialogue, defining and expressing an opinion, as well as the ability to compromise, it complies with the

learning outcome: upon completion of the study programme the graduates are able to communicate and discuss public health matters with colleagues, representatives of other professions and different groups of society, in accordance with the professional ethical standards of a public health professional. Independent learning of students, as well as undertaking responsibility and control over their own study process is promoted through students' independent work.

It complies with the learning outcome: upon completion of the study programme the graduates are able to solve problems related to public health both independently and in a team, to make and justify decisions in a reasoned manner, to evaluate their prospective impact on public health at different levels, and also, the study method independent work, which develops students' control and over own study process proves that student-centred learning and teaching principles are considered. "Public Health" graduates during the on-site visit stated, and expert panel agrees on it, there should be more Erasmus possibilities, more project management, communication competences, marketing skills. The expert panel agrees with the opinion of the graduates, the study process could be more interactive, because the students are different, more group work, and some other interactive work. Interprofessional training could be beneficial, working with the simulation technique.

2.2.4. To promote mastering of students' practical skills and knowledge, the 1st, 3rd and 4th year of studies include study internships (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.1.) (for example, "Placement in Biology and Ecology" – in the 1st year of studies, "Environmental Health Placement" – in the 2nd year of studies, "Placement in Food Chain Monitoring", "Placement in Safety of the Human Living Environment", "Placement in Epidemiological Monitoring", "Placement in Health Promotion" – in the 3rd year of studies and "Placement in Occupational Health" – in the 4th year of studies). Study internships provide the required professional skills balancing the theoretical knowledge with practical skills. Study internships are coordinated with the relevant study courses in the curriculum (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.1., Table 4). For example "Placement in Biology and Ecology" is coordinated with the theoretical study course Biology.

Aim of the internship: to give students an opportunity to strengthen theoretical knowledge, to acquire competence appropriate to the study programme, and to acquire practical skills necessary for specialists in the respective field (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.4.). It complies with the learning outcome of the study programme (SAR, Part II, Parameters of the Study Programme): upon completion of the study programme the graduate is able to use the acquired theoretical foundations and skills in their professional activity. The task of the internship is to test and use the mastered theoretical knowledge and skills in real work, learn to evaluate the state of public health (for example, internship in epidemiological monitoring of infectious and non-infectious diseases), identify risk factors (for example, internship in safety of the human living environment, internship in environmental health), learn to make decisions independently in the implementation of interventions (for example, internship in health promotion) and subsequently evaluate their professional performance receiving feedback from internship supervisors and defence of the internship (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.4). The tasks of the internships are clear and achievable, because every internship has a detailed description (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.4., Annex 9.1. Description of the organisation of student placement), containing the information about the aim, general provision of the internship, site and conduct of the internship, topics, detailed programme, preparation and assessment of the internship report.

The organisation of the internships is clearly described in the SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.4. Part of placements take place in RSU structural units such as internship in occupational health and internship in environmental health – at the RSU Department of Occupational and Environmental Medicine and the RSU Institute for Occupational Safety and Environmental Health; or at scientific research bases of cooperation partners, for example, internship in biology and ecology takes place at the Faculty of Biology of the University of Latvia (Slītere National Park, Kolka). Most internships are organised in cooperation with sector-specific state administration institutions, for example, in

the Health Inspectorate – internship in safety of the human living environment, Centre for Disease Prevention and Control – internship in epidemiological monitoring, Food and Veterinary Service – internship in food chain monitoring. Some of the internships are organised outside Riga, in the regions, for example, in branches of the Health Inspectorate, Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, Food and Veterinary Service or in various local governments of Latvia for internship in health promotion. The implementation of the internships complies with the National Education Standard (Cabinet Regulations No 305 of 13 June 2023 “Regulations on National Standard for Professional Higher Education” <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/342818-noteikumi-par-valsts-profesionalas-augstakas-izglitiba-standartu>), as well as with the professional standard “Professional Standard of a Public Health Specialist” (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.1., Annex 17.1 and Annex 18.2).

2.2.5. Not applicable.

2.2.6. The thematic areas of the students’ Bachelor’s theses (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.6.), for example thematic area public health, health promotion and prevention reflects one of the most important work areas of public health specialists, and it complies with the aim of the professional bachelor study programme “Public Health” (SAR, Part II, Parameters of the Study Programme), which is to prepare specialists for work in the fields of public health corresponding to the development trends of the Latvian and European public health sector, and whose level of theoretical knowledge and practical skills after graduation from the study programme allows them to start independent professional activity, as well as to continue their education in relevant Master’s level study programmes. The thematic areas epidemiology, environmental and occupational health, health care organisation, management and financing reflects the learning outcome, which is - upon the completion of the study programme the graduates are able to understand and analyse health from the physical, mental and social aspect of human functioning. For example the topics Prevalence of physical activity habits and psycho-emotional health complaints in young people, Addictive substance use habits and family factors characterization for adolescents in Latvia, Frequency of anxiety symptoms of Latvian medical workers during COVID-19 emergency reflect the ability of the students to analyse health from different aspects of human functioning.

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

The content of the professional bachelor study programme “Public Health” is topical, it complies with national and international regulations, it ensures the provision of Bachelor’s level studies in public health in accordance with the current legislation regulating the study process -Cabinet Regulations No 305 “Regulations on the State Standard for Professional Higher Education” and the Professional Standard for Public Health Specialist, as well as in accordance with the Guidelines on Public Health Education developed by the Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region (ASPHER1), and corresponds to the tasks of the study programme. The content of the study programme corresponds to the scientific trends. The study courses are planned in a complementary manner. It was confirmed by the academic staff during the on-site visit, the study programme’s content is also influenced by the outcomes of international collaboration. However, concerning the workload of the study programme, the students during the on-site visit mentioned the workload was hardly manageable in the first year of studies. Students could not confirm the orientation week in the beginning of the studies. “Public Health” graduates during the on-site visit provided the suggestions to shorten the public health bachelor studies from 4 to 3 years, more project management, communication competences, marketing skills. Study process could be more interactive, according to the graduates, more group work, and some other interactive work. Interprofessional training could be beneficial, working with the simulation technique.

The study implementation methods, such as classes and seminars, work in small groups and independent work of the students contribute greatly to the achievement of the learning outcomes. Independent work of the students is considered as the principle ensuring student-centred learning and teaching approach. Internships are being planned and organised in an appropriate manner, they are reflected in the aim and learning outcomes of the study programme and substantiated by the requirements of regulatory enactments. The main areas of the topics of the students' Bachelor's theses reflect the main work areas of the graduates of "Public health" and fully comply with the learning outcomes.

Strengths:

1. The content of the professional bachelor study programme "Public Health" complies with the guidelines on Public Health Education developed by the Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region.
2. The topic areas of the students' Bachelor's theses reflect the main work areas of the graduates of
3. "Public health" and fully comply with the learning outcomes.

Weaknesses:

1. Lack of interactive study methods and group work.
2. Insufficient interprofessional training and lack of using simulation techniques.
3. Insufficient level of project management, communication and marketing skills.

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1. The infrastructure, informative provision (library resources), material and technical fully comply, financial provision partly comply with requirements of the professional bachelor study programme "Public Health" (42726) and demonstrate achievements of programme learning outcomes.

The premises ensuring the study process are modern, well-equipped (each room has a computer with internet connection, a projector, an interactive board). Students have the option to download main software for free to do their study work on personal computers. Free internet and computers with internet connection (located in different places in the building of the education institution), are available to students in premises of the higher education institution. Common use premises have recreational areas.

The study base formed for the study field is used for providing the StP – library, classroom, technical supplies (for example, the possibilities offered by the Medical Education Technology Centre, the Anatomical Theatre, the Department of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, etc. – replicas, simulations, technical equipment for different laboratory work, etc.), computers, cameras, internet connection, etc. Specific learning resources are almost entirely provided in e-studies, including descriptions of study courses, tasks and tests, if any, as well as required readings. Educational literature is mostly provided through e-books and e-journals or by scanning key pieces of text and by

placing in e-studies, using internet sources – with a view to provide students with the possibility to read on e-devices (however, in some cases teachers specifically ask students to work in the library - SAR, page 135-136).

The library provides lecturers and students with access to Latvian and international electronic resources, including information in public health areas. The SPSS software is available on computers in the library. It should be noted that the Statistical Unit, by promoting the scientific activities of RSU students and lecturers, offers consultations on research methodologies, data input, the use of data processing programmes, methods of statistical processing of data, analysis, interpretation and graphic presentation of results (SAR, page 136). The library facilities include several on-line databases and the library open access loan is available for students and academic staff 24/7 in Riga campus.

2.3.2. Not applicable.

2.3.3. The study programme is planned to be financed from state budget funds and the funds of individuals and legal entities setting the tuition fee in accordance with the state budget funding without social security of EUR 4890 per year of studies. The tuition fee can be subject to discounts in accordance with internal norms and regulations. The number of students planned to be achieved in the StP in four years of studies is 112 students, enrolling 29 students in the first year of studies and planning a small drop-out in the following years. Following high inflation and under conditions of a rapid increase in prices of energy sources, the result of the study programme is negative, because there is shortage of funding from state budget funds in accordance with CM Regulations No.994 – study base costs no longer cover infrastructure maintenance costs. The information on additional performance funding allocated, which was approved in the budget of the Ministry of Education and Science. (SAR, page 138).

The number of students (112) indicated in the budget estimate for the programme in 4 years of study is the optimal group size. The cost-effectiveness of the study programme is not related to an insufficient number of students, but to insufficient funding from the State budget. The State budget funding for 1 budget place as of 1 September 2023 is EUR 5554 per academic year. There are 97 budget places, but the programme also has fee-paying students with an Excellence Discount, who ensure that the drop-out expenses are covered in the final years of their studies. The cost per student per academic year for the bachelor study programme “Public Health” is EUR 5829. The cost-effectiveness of the study programme is planned to be achieved by gradually increasing the tuition fee for fee-paying students and by optimising the study organisation process: reviewing the proportion of classes and lectures, ensuring that there are two full groups each year and keeping a close eye on the number of students in groups, merging them as necessary. In the budget proposals for 2024, the Ministry of Education and Science has submitted a request to increase the base cost of one study place to EUR 1 867.60, while the Ministry of Health has requested that the Health care study programmes be funded at the optimal ratio, which would increase the funding of 1 budget place to over EUR 6500, which would be sufficient to ensure the cost-effectiveness of the study programme (SAR, page 139-140).

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

All resources are available to students and teaching staff. This has been confirmed during the interview with the Directors of the Study programmes, students and teaching staff. During the StP evaluation it was confirmed that the programme is fully equipped, it has all necessary equipment,

modern, technically designed classrooms, and technical provision. Necessary library resources and databases are available for students. Negative cost-effectiveness of the study programme is not related to an insufficient number of students, but to insufficient funding from the State budget. The cost-effectiveness of the study programme is planned to be achieved by gradually increasing the tuition fee for fee-paying students and by optimising the study organisation process. Considering the budget proposals for 2024, increasing the funding of budget places which would be sufficient to ensure the cost-effectiveness of the study programme is already requested.

Strengths:

1. Advanced material and technical base for student training.
2. The study programme provides students with extensive RSU Library resources and databases, student portal MyRSU, e-studies.

Weaknesses:

- 1) None.

Assessment of the requirement [6]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Advanced material and technical base for student training; plenty of high-quality library resources.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1. The qualification of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the Professional bachelor study programme "Public Health" (42726) fully complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements in the regulatory documents. It enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses.

The implementation of the professional bachelor study programme is carried out by 60 teachers: 36 of the lecturers elected to RSU academic positions: 8 are professors, 6 are associate professors, 11 are assistant professors (see Appendix 24.7; 24.2). The composition of teaching staff in the study programme is stable. Lecturers have both academic and practical work experience in the field of public health. In the reporting period, changes in academic staff have occurred among both permanent lecturers and invited teachers. To promote the achievement of the aim of the study programme and learning outcomes, lecturers with extensive academic and professional experience are involved in teaching of study courses.

The procedure for the application and selection of academic staff at RSU is governed by the "Regulations of Rīga Stradiņš University on academic positions", "Process of Rīga Stradiņš University "Elections of Academic Staff"" and the general requirements as knowledge of the official language in accordance with the requirements of regulations of the Republic of Latvia; knowledge of foreign languages at a level sufficient to occupy an academic position; continuous improvement of their academic, scientific and pedagogical qualifications.

All members of the teaching staff conduct scientific activities in a scientific field related to the educational programme.

RSU provides its teaching staff with opportunities for growth and professional development in accordance with the Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia No. 662 of 11 September 2018 on the education and professional qualification required for teachers (SAR, page 142). The University is regularly concerned about improving the qualifications and professional skills of its teaching staff. For this purpose, RSU regularly offers courses organised by the Center for Educational Development (PIC) (evidenced by interviews with the representatives of the Centre for Educational Growth). From 1 January 2017, 45 lecturers of the Bachelor's study programme participated in different activities of the Centre for Educational Growth.

The site visit interviews showed the capacity and capability of the staff of achieving the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme across the various systems and public health specialisations required for the successful running of the relevant study courses. There is a transparent mechanism for academic promotions. Academic staff regularly participate in research work at the local and international scientific conferences.

2.4.2. A higher education institution takes measures to ensure that changes in the composition of the teaching staff do not have a negative impact on the quality of the educational programme and the compliance of the educational programme with the requirements established by regulations. The composition of the teaching staff in the educational programme is stable. Faculty have both academic and practical experience in the health sectors, including public health. (SAR, part II, paragraph 3.4.1).

It is important to emphasise that the teaching staff improves their qualifications and is elected to higher positions in the University. Updating of teaching staff takes place within the framework of the programme.

Highly qualified lecturers who are experts in the field and specialise in the respective study course topics are involved in the implementation of the study programme. For example, the Department of Public Health and Epidemiology has long-term cooperation with most of the invited adjunct lecturers (SAR, part II, paragraph 3.4.1). The composition of permanent lecturers is also stable and the number of permanent lecturers has increased. The number of lecturers with a doctoral degree has increased.

2.4.3. Not applicable.

2.4.4. Each member of Academic staff has publications in peer-reviewed national and international journals during the last six years (Annex 6.1; 6.4.2) or at least 5 years of practical experience in accordance with the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

All lecturers have more than 7 years of experience in academic work in health care. Several lecturers are authors or co-authors of scientific publications, including on research methodology, scientific writing and dissemination of research results, as well as several collective monographs developed. Some lecturers prepare peer-reviewed international publications and review scientific articles.

Projects carried out by the academic staff contribute to the development of scientific capacity and competitiveness, which could be also characterised by the increase in the number of scientific articles in the Web of Science databases and Scopus journals, which strengthens the authority and recognisability of RSU as a centre of study and science (SAR, part II, paragraph 3.4.2, page 144).

2.4.5. Mutual cooperation of the teaching staff in the implementation of the study programme has been established, this was proven by the interview with the teaching staff and Programme Director. RSU organises meetings of programme directors, where any issues related to the implementation of the programme and the organisation of training (theoretical and practical classes) are discussed in

detail. A very important fact is that during these meetings there is an exchange of views and an exchange of best practices. Cooperation between the lecturers of different study courses is promoted in the Study Programme to create optimal and logically sequential content of study courses and the planning of the course by study semesters, thereby ensuring that the knowledge from previously mastered courses serves as the basis for successful mastering of the next courses, as well as to adapt the content of the courses to be studied to the specificity of the Public Health (SAR, part II, paragraph 3.4.2, page 144).

Documentation by means of self-assessment report and the various annexes on staff, as well interviews with management and leadership, academic members, graduates and students shows that the heads of departments and teaching staff cooperate for coordination and implementation of study content and are actively involved in the implementation of study programme. This is organised on several levels. Regular meetings are held discussing details of content so as to prevent repetition between different study courses. Students are also invited to give feedback to faculty by means of questionnaires or verbally/ directly, to draw attention to similar content in different study courses. The entire described process proves the achievement of the goals of the educational programme and the interrelation of training courses within the educational programme.

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

The qualification of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the Professional bachelor study programme "Public Health " fully complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements in the regulatory documents. It enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses. A higher education institution takes measures to ensure that changes in the composition of the teaching staff do not have a negative impact on the quality of the educational program and the compliance of the educational programme with the requirements established by regulations. A mechanism for mutual cooperation of the teaching staff in the implementation of the study programme has been established, it ensures the achievement of the aims of the study programme and the interconnection of study courses within the study programme.

Strengths:

1. All members of the teaching staff have publications in high-ranking journals

Weaknesses:

None.

Assessment of the requirement [7]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The qualification of the teaching staff of the Professional bachelor study programme "Public Health " fully complies with the requirements of the study programme.

2.5. Assessment of the Compliance

Requirements

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The PBSP Public Health complies with the State Professional Higher Education Standard – Cabinet of Ministers Regulations’ No. 305 “Regulations on the State Standard of the Professional Higher Education” (13 June,2023).

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The RSU has provided the document in Annex (18.2_Anx_Compl_StP_with_Professional Standard_Publ_Health) providing the evidence that the PBSP Public Health complies with the occupational standard “Professional Standard of a Public Health Specialist” (https://registri.visc.gov.lv/profizglitiba/dokumenti/standarti/20170614_Profesiju_standarti_5.pdf)

- 3 - The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in all languages in which the study programme is implemented, and they comply with the requirements set forth in Section 561 , Paragraph two and Section 562 , Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The RSU has provided the study course descriptions for the PBSP Public Health both in Latvian and English (Annex 20_Anx_Study_course_description_PBSP_Pub_Health).

The descriptions of the study courses are compliant with regulations set forth in Law on Higher Education Institutions. The descriptions of the study courses: define the requirements for the commencement of the acquisition of the study course; determine the aims for the implementation of the study course and the planned learning outcomes; outline the content of the study course necessary for the achievement of learning outcomes, contain the study course topic layout, mandatory and supplementary literature, indicate other sources of information; describe the organization and tasks for students’ independent work; determine the assessment criteria of learning outcomes.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The sample of the diploma and its supplement (Annex 24.1_Anx_Sample_Diploma_and_Supplement_PBSP_Publ_Health) are issued for completing the study programme in accordance with the Cabinet of Ministers’ regulations No. 202 of 16.04.2013 “Procedures for Issuing State-Recognized Higher Education Certificates”.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 6 6 - Academic study programmes provided for less than 250 full-time students may be implemented and less than five professors and associated professors of the higher education institution may be involved in the implementation of the mandatory and limited elective part of these study programmes provided that the relevant opinion of the Council for Higher Education has been received in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 7 7 - At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of an academic doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field of science. At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a professional doctoral study programme in arts (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 8 8 - The teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme are proficient in the official language in accordance with the regulations on the level of the official language knowledge and the procedures for testing official language proficiency for performing professional duties and office duties.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The RSU has provided annexes

(24.4_AnxCertification_Regarding_Latvian_Language_of_the_Academic_Staff.pdf and

6.2_AnxBiographies_teaching_staff_PBSP_Public_Health_EN_352pages) confirming that the

language proficiency of the teaching staff is compliant with the Cabinet Regulation No. 733

“Regulations Regarding the Extent of the Knowledge of the Official Language, the Procedures for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language and the State Fee for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language”.

- 9 9 - The teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language, if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The sample of the study agreement is fully compliant with the Law on Higher Education Institutions Section 46, paragraph 2, and the Cabinet Regulations No 70 of 23.01.2007 “The Mandatory Provisions to be included in the study agreement” (24.8_AnxCStudy contract sample_Health Care study direction.pdf).

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Annex 24.2_pielik_Apliecinajumi_par_parnemsanu_eng.7z states that students of the PBSP Public

Health will be provided with the opportunity to continue their education at RSU PBSP Nutrition.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

RSU has provided the confirmation that students are guaranteed compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the study programme's license is revoked. It is ensured based on the Section 55(8) of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education and Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No 795 of 11 December 2018 "Regulations on Licensing of study programmes", Paragraph 13.4.

The relevant document can be found under Annex

24.3_Anx_Certification_of_Compensation_of_Losses_to_Students.pdf.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Assessment of the requirement [8]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Study programme fully complies with regulatory enactments.

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

The inclusion of the Professional bachelor study programme "Public Health" (42726) in the study field "Health Care" is justified and follows from the aim of the given study programme, the learning outcomes to be achieved, the content of the programme and the degree and qualification to be awarded. The name of the PBSP "Public Health", qualification to be obtained, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and admission requirements are interrelated.

The corrections made to the study programme's parameters within the assessment of the study field are analysed, justified and would be supported. The study programme is economically and socially justified because public health professionals are needed to improve the health of the population in Latvia and more broadly in other countries internationally.

The number of enrolled students has gradually increased from, but the share of drop-out students is high being in the academic year 2021/2022 around 27%.

The content of the professional bachelor study programme "Public Health" is topical it complies with national and international regulations, it ensures the provision of Bachelor's level studies in public health in accordance with the current legislation regulating the study process Cabinet Regulations No 305 "Regulations on the State Standard for Professional Higher Education" and the Professional Standard for Public Health Specialist, as well as in accordance with the Guidelines on Public Health

Education developed by the Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region (ASPHER1), and corresponds to the tasks of the study programme. The content of the study programme corresponds to the scientific trends. The study courses are planned in a complementary manner. It was confirmed by the academic staff during the on-site visit, the study programme's content is also influenced by the outcomes of international collaboration. However, concerning the workload of the study programme, the students during the on-site visit mentioned the workload was hardly manageable in the first year of studies. Students could not confirm the orientation week in the beginning of the studies. "Public Health" graduates during the on-site visit provided the suggestions to shorten the public health bachelor studies from 4 to 3 years, more project management, communication competences, marketing skills. Study process could be more interactive, according to the graduates, more group work, and some other interactive work. Interprofessional training could be beneficial, working with the simulation technique.

The study implementation methods, such as classes and seminars, work in small groups and independent work of the students contribute greatly to the achievement of the learning outcomes. Independent work of the students is considered as the principle ensuring student-centred learning and teaching approach. Internships are being planned and organised in an appropriate manner, they are reflected in the aim and learning outcomes of the study programme and substantiated by the requirements of regulatory enactments. The main areas of the topics of the students' Bachelor's theses reflect the main work areas of the graduates of Public health and fully comply with the learning outcomes.

All resources are available to students and teaching staff. This has been confirmed during the interview with the Directors of the Study programmes, students and teaching staff. During the evaluation it was confirmed that the programme is fully equipped, it has all necessary equipment, modern, technically designed classrooms, and technical provision. Necessary library resources and databases are available for students.

Negative cost-effectiveness of the study programme is not related to an insufficient number of students, but to insufficient funding from the State budget. The cost-effectiveness of the study programme is planned to be achieved by gradually increasing the tuition fee for fee-paying students and by optimising the study organisation process. Considering the budget proposals for 2024, increasing the funding of budget places which would be sufficient to ensure the cost-effectiveness of the study programme is already requested.

The qualification of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the Professional bachelor study programme "Public Health " fully complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements in the regulatory documents.

The PBSP "Public Health" is evaluated as good, despite several weaknesses, related with a high drop-out number of the students, lack of interactive study methods and insufficient interprofessional training, but there are also strengths, proving, that the overall content of the study programme and material resources, as well as the teaching staff comply with the public health education guidelines.

Strengths:

1. Socially and economically justified study programme.
2. The content of the professional bachelor study programme "Public Health" complies with the guidelines on Public Health Education developed by the Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region.
3. The topic areas of the students' Bachelor's theses reflect the main work areas of the graduates of Public health and fully comply with the learning outcomes.
4. Advanced material and technical base for student training.
5. The study programme provides students with extensive RSU Library resources and databases, student portal MyRSU, e-studies.
6. Constant updating of teaching staff.

7. High level of involvement of researchers in research activities.
8. Involve highly qualified foreign visiting professionals as teachers.

Weaknesses:

1. Rather high drop-out number of students.
2. Lack of interactive study methods and group work.
3. Insufficient interprofessional training and lack of using simulation techniques.
4. Insufficient level of project management, communication and marketing skills.
5. Cost-effectiveness of the study programme is negative, but it is planned to be achieved.

Evaluation of the study programme "Public Health"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Public Health"

Short-term recommendations

Study implementation methods should be supplemented by interactive methods, more group works should be introduced.

Interprofessional training and more tasks using the simulation technique could be helpful.

Project management, communication and marketing skills should be developed on a higher level.

To reduce the drop-out of the students by monitoring the achievements during the semester.

To monitor the cost-effectiveness of the study programme.

Long-term recommendations

None.

II - "Health Management" ASSESSMENT

II - "Health Management" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1. The Joint academic master study programme "Health Management" (45345) (Joint AMSP Health Management) of Rīga Stradiņš University (RSU) is implemented together with "RISEBA" University of Applied Sciences. The aim of the Joint AMSP "Health Management" is to prepare highly qualified specialists for professional management work and research in health sector possessing the fundamental theoretical and practical knowledge and abilities in health management and health economics, strategic management of human resources and ensuring a sustainable development of organisation, as well as theoretical knowledge and practical skills in the area of health management scientific research (SAR, p. 294). The Joint AMSP "Health Management" complies with the aim of the study field "Health Care" to provide excellent, research-based and inclusive education of health care professionals to promote sustainable development of public health and well-being, realising everyone's potential throughout life (SAR, p. 22). The inclusion of the Joint AMSP "Health

Management” in the study field “Health Care” is justified and follows from the aim of the given study programme, the learning outcomes to be achieved, the content of the programme and the degree to be awarded.

2.1.2. The Joint AMSP “Health Management” is a full-time study programme with the implementation duration of 2 years and the amount of 80 Latvian credits (CP)/120 ECTS. The languages of instruction – Latvian and English. The degree to be obtained – Master of Social Sciences in Management and Administration. The admission requirements (full time studies in Latvian – bachelor’s degree or second level professional higher education in Social Sciences, Medical Engineering or Health Care with the right to continue studies in a master's degree programme; entrance examination; full time studies in English – bachelor’s degree or second level professional higher education in Social Sciences, Medical Engineering or Health Care with the right to continue studies in a master's degree programme. For studies in English, a minimum level of B2 proficiency in English; entrance examination) (SAR, p. 296, 296). The admission requirements correspond to the aim and objectives of the study programme (SAR, p. 294).

The code of the study programme according to the classification of Latvian education – 45345, where the first part of the code – 45 – indicates that the type of the Joint AMSP “Health Management” is an academic master’s programme and the digits of the second part of the code 345 indicate that the thematic area of education is Business studies and Administration, but the group of educational programmes is Management and administration. The learning outcomes of the Joint AMSP “Health Management” correspond to Level 7 of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (LQF), which is described in the Cabinet of Ministers’ Regulations No. 322 “Regulations on the Classification of Education in Latvia” (June 13, 2017).

The name, aims, objectives of the study programme, learning outcomes, as well as the degree to be obtained after completing the study programme comply with the requirements of the Cabinet of Ministers’ Regulations No. 322 “Regulations on the Classification of Education in Latvia” (June 13, 2017), Cabinet Regulations No 240 “Regulations on the National Standard for Academic Education” (13 May, 2014). The name of the study programme, qualification to be obtained, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and admission requirements are interrelated.

2.1.3. The Joint AMSP “Health management” is jointly implemented by RSU and the RISEBA University of Applied Sciences and was changed from a professional study programme to an academic study programme, respective changes were made to the accreditation sheet of RSU study field “Health Care” (Decision No. 2021/10-I of the AIC Study Quality Commission of 8 September 2021). This required changes to code of the study programme 47 726 to 45 345), the volume of the study programme (from 60 to 80 CP), the duration of studies (from one year and six months to two years), the degree and qualification awarded (from “professional Master's degree in Health Management and qualification of the head of a company and institution” to the “degree of the Master of Social Sciences in Management and Administration”). The implementation of changes to the study programme started with admission for academic year 2022/2023, with a transition period until May 2023, until which the professional Master’s degree and the respective qualification should have been awarded. Within the assessment procedure, the admission requirements and objectives of the study programme have been amended to match those of the partnering university. (SAR, p. 298-299)

The corrections made to the study programme’s parameters within the assessment of the study field are analysed, justified and would be supported.

2.1.4. The economic and social justification is clearly presented in the SAR (p. 301-303) as follows: the continuing challenges facing the health sector relating to globalisation of the health care services market, increasing competition and demand for a patient-centred approach, the

involvement of patients in the treatment process, the increase in their experience and knowledge, new channels of information, digitisation and other development trends, the environment and processes for the provision of health services are also changing. A health sector manager requires knowledge of the strategic management of the company, the creation of appropriate processes and the provision of resources. This requires new knowledge of innovation, business management, business competitiveness in the context of the new challenges. (SAR, p. 301-303)

Graduates of the programme work in health care institutions in Latvia and abroad, as well as in health care administration, health insurance institutions and municipalities. (SAR, p. 302-303)

All these challenges make the study programme justified at academic master's level. The number of student enrollment has gradually increased from 33 (2016/2017) to 58 (2021/2022). In the academic year 2022/2023 altogether 99 students were studying the programme, while in the academic year 2021/2022 in total 22 students dropped -out from the study programme. (Annex 16)

Overall, the experts found the AMSP "Health Management" is economically and socially justified.

2.1.5. The Joint AMSP "Health management" is jointly implemented by RSU and the RISEBA University of Applied Sciences.

The main study premises are RSU and RISEBA, while students have the possibility to participate in student exchange or double-degree programmes combining studies in Latvia and abroad. The aim of the programme is to prepare highly qualified professionals for manager's work with fundamental interdisciplinary theoretical and practical knowledge at macro, meso and micro level of health care. The joint study programme united competences of both higher education institutions – RSU and RISEBA. RSU implements study course at the level of health system management and organisation (for example, "Health System Design", "Public Health and Epidemiology", etc.), but RISEBA – in the context of operations of healthcare companies (for example, "Financial Management of Health Care Institutions", "Strategic Human Resource Management", "Leadership and Change Management", etc.). RSU implements about 50% and RISEBA – 50% of study courses (SAR, p. 304-305), but in counting another way: courses taught by RSU are 18 (65 CP/ 94.5 ECTS) and RISEBA 17 courses (41 CP/ 61.5 ECTS) (SAR, p. 315).

Joint implementation of the study process is ensured by joint study planning, a common approach in the development of study course materials and organisation of examinations. Uniform methodological materials for the development of Master's thesis and implementation of placement have been developed in the study programme, which create a common basis for academic requirements of the study process. Joint internship defence and state examination boards are established in the study programme, RSU and RISEBA have agreed on a common approach to the submission of a Master's thesis – using the electronic system established by RSU, where papers of students enrolled by RSU and RISEBA students are placed.

The study programme has a single Quality Council, the process of the programme has been approved, information is exchanged between the institutions of higher education regarding assessments of student study courses, a single quality monitoring process is implemented. The Quality Council has representatives of both institutions of higher education, students and employers. The SAR and the discussions with the representatives (students, academic staff from RSU and RISEBA, employers) showed that the AMSP "Health management" has a joint quality study process.

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

The inclusion of the Joint AMSP "Health Management" in the study field "Health Care" is justified and follows from the aim of the given study programme, the learning outcomes to be achieved, the content of the programme and the degree and qualification to be awarded. The name of the Joint AMSP "Health Management", degree to be obtained, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and

admission requirements are interrelated.

The corrections made to the study programme's parameters within the assessment of the study field are analysed, justified and would be supported. The Joint AMSP "Health Management" is economically and socially justified. The number of enrolled students has gradually increased. The share of drop-out students is around one-fifth. The SAR and the discussions with the representatives (students, academic staff from RSU and RISEBA, employers) showed that the AMSP "Health Management" has a joint quality study process.

Strengths:

1. A Joint study programme with successful mutual RSU and RISEBA planning and implementation of the curriculum and management of the study programme.

Weaknesses:

1. The number of drop-out students is around one-fifth of the total number of students.

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1. The content of the Joint academic master study programme "Health Management" (45345) is topical, because the content of new study modules has been created in cooperation with foreign institutions of higher education: University of Exeter in the United Kingdom, APOLLON University of Applied Sciences (APOLLON Hochschule der Gesundheitswirtschaft) in Germany and the University of Wuppertal (Bergische Universität Wuppertal) in Germany (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.1.). The content of the study programme, offering study modules "Economic Modelling in Health Care" (New study courses are implemented at RSU for the implementation of the module, such as "Data Analysis in Health Care", "Economic Modelling Techniques", Process Management in Health Care"), "Digital Health" (the new study courses "Data Analysis in Health Care", "Introduction to Digital Health", "Application of Digital Health"), the module "Entrepreneurship, Health Care Organisation Management and Administration" (the new study courses "Entrepreneurship and Innovations in HealthCare", "Business Management", "Competition in Business Management of Health Care") focus on the knowledge on the use of the economic modelling approach in decision making at the level of companies and health care system that a manager requires, provides knowledge on different elements of digital health, which include IT system architecture and data exchange technologies, electronic medical records (EMR) and electronic health register (EHR) systems, customer relationship management (CRM) systems in health care and financing and accounting systems in health care, offers students in-depth knowledge in the implementation of new and innovative business approaches (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.1.). The study modules comply with the aim of the Joint academic master study programme Health Management (45345) and the learning outcomes (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.1., Annex 18.1. Mapping of the study courses for the achievement of learning outcomes of the study programme), which are formulated as knowledge, skills and competences and meet the requirements of the organisation manager's standard and the seventh level of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (LQF 7), which is defined in the organisation manager's standard (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.1.). Like the health sector, the study programme is interdisciplinary, and its aims apply both to mastering the theory of the health management science sector and practical use in health care systems and company management.

Study courses of the study programme are organised in the complementary manner (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.1., Annex 19. Planning of the study programme) and are interconnected, they ensure consistent acquisition of knowledge and its practical use, for example, to provide knowledge and understanding by developing the ability of prospective specialists to synthesise knowledge, to promote active attitudes towards studies, to learn theories and conceptual issues of health

management, the skills to use them in the performance of management tasks and an understanding of the practical application of different management tools to solve certain problems in resolving specific problems in the field of health, for example, digital learning tools for situation analysis, individual and group work are integrated in study courses “Health System Design” and “Information Management in Health Systems” that are necessary for mastering of the topics included in the study course “Summer School in Health Management” and practical activities (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.1.).

The study programme meets the needs of the labour market, the prove is that the representatives of employers (for example, Healthcare Employers’ Association, Riga Hospital invited to the final examination board of study programmes (national degree examination and defence of the Master’s thesis), providing an opportunity for feedback on students’ knowledge and preparedness for the work environment.

The study programme complies with the scientific trends, because the research papers of students make a contribution to the development of the health sector. Research papers analyse current health sector problems in Latvia, as a result of which recommendations are provided for solving existing problems based on data analysis and economic calculations. This type of research is important for the social, economic and national economic development of Latvia as a whole.

The compliance of the Joint academic master study programme with the State Educational Standard is illustrated in the Annex 17.1. Compliance of the study programme with the national educational standard (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.1.).

The graduates of health management meet the expectations of employers, they are completely satisfied with an excellent preparation of the graduates and with a good cooperation with the university. The expert group agrees with the employers’ opinion, the University should be more communicative with the employers, to organise open door events. Relationships between the University and health policy makers should be more developed, it is important to share the master thesis with recommendations to whom they were addressed. According to the Ministry of Health opinion, which was delivered during the on-site visit, knowledge is very good, but there are some areas uncovered, for example, prevention of addiction, reproductive health, public health policy making and planning, as well as project making skills.

2.2.2. The study content of the Joint academic master study programme “Health Management” (45345) is regularly updated and the latest scientific and academic literature on health management is used (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.2.). The development of a Master's thesis is based on the analysis of conceptual approaches and solutions to health management science, and students are recommended topics of research papers, which are updated annually on the basis of recommendations from industry institutions, including the Ministry of Health, the National Health Service, clinical university hospitals, etc. The latest scientific publications should be used in the Master’s thesis (the Regulations for Writing a Master’s Thesis provide that at least five scientific sources not more than five years old must be used). Conclusions and recommendations in Master’s theses are prepared in the context of conceptual solutions of health management science, they confirm the conformity of the degree obtained by students with the latest achievements and knowledge of health care and management science (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.2.).

2.2.3. The study implementation methods, such as lecture, practical examples, group tasks, interactive discussions, writing individual papers and lectures given by the visiting lecturers representing health sector, active participation, all they contribute to the achievement of the aim of the study courses and the study programme, which is formulated that the study programme aims to prepare highly qualified specialists for professional management work and research in health sector possessing the fundamental theoretical and practical knowledge and abilities in health management and health economics, strategic management of human resources and ensuring a sustainable

development of organisation, as well as theoretical knowledge and practical skills in the area of health management scientific research. The aim of the study programme can be achieved only by a high level of students' involvement in the group work, discussions and efficient self-learning. Also, students' participation in the scientific conferences is essential in the achievement of the aim of the study programme (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.3.).

The practical direction of learning is highly contributing to the achievement of the learning outcomes, for example, learning outcome number 2 in the parameters of the study programme: students are able to independently choose the most appropriate methodology and set of types of solutions and use them in practice to rectify health management problems; and able to use currently relevant leadership and change management skills in practice.

The study methods they are contributing to the achievement of the learning outcomes by enabling students to get engaged in the learning process, to develop critical thinking, active listening skills. Student-centred learning and teaching methods are applied by organising the studies focused on the skills and practices ensuring independent solving problems and cases. It is implemented by applying the principles of active learning and involving students in various health sector projects, including international ones (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.3.).

The joint study programme is being implemented in two institutions, RSU and RISEBA, the institutions have divided the courses between them. For example, RSU implements study courses at the health sector management level and RISEBA – at the health organisation management level. RSU is implementing the study courses in the fields of public health, health system design and theory of legal aspects of the management of the sector, which provide basic knowledge on the activities of the health sector. RISEBA focuses on the health organisation management courses.

In the opinion of the expert group, it is an example of good practice, because every institution of higher education which is involved in the implementation of the joint study programme, is using its strongest resources and gives added value to the programme.

2.2.4. The internship is being implemented at the end of the second semester. Its volume is 4 CP (6 ECTS credits). The students are given the possibility to choose the place of the internship. It can be in the students' home country or Latvia. In case the foreign students wish to have the internship in Latvia, the RSU looks for a placement organisation that is prepared to ensure placement in English, for example, such organisations are the Centre for Disease Prevention and Control or private medical institutions.

The other alternative is to participate in the international summer school organised within the programme, which is implemented in cooperation with universities in Germany (APOLLON University of Applied Sciences and the University of Wuppertal), it is recognized as the internship. The idea of the summer school came during the Covid-19 restrictions, when not all students could have access to placement on site. The tasks of the internship are described in the description of the organisation of placement of the students (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.4., Annex 9. Description of the organisation of placement of the students).

For example, one of the tasks of the internship is to use strategic analysis, problem analysis, or other business analytics tools to measure the company's performance. This tasks in compliance with the learning outcome: upon the completion of the study programme the students are able to make evidence-based decisions in health management science and practice, as well as to understand their necessity, assessing the prospective impact on the field of health management, setting goals for further action, justifying the formulation of proposals for legislation and changes of a structural and organisational nature.

The cooperation agreement on provision of placement in RSU Faculty of Public Health and Social Welfare and RISEBA inter-university professional Master's study programme "Health Management" is being signed among placement arranger, placement provider and the trainee. The agreement is the main document, describing obligations and rights of the parties.

Both organisations, RSU and RISEBA, are responsible for providing the practice, they both have prepared and approved the description of the organisation of placement of the students (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.4., Annex 9. Description of the organisation of placement of the students).

2.2.5. Not applicable.

2.2.6. The list of the topics of students' final theses (22_Anx_Titles of students' Master thesis_Health_Manag.pdf) includes the topics recommended by the Ministry of Health and its subordinate institutions, including placement organisations, therefore, they reflect the latest development in the labour market. The list is covering the topics that are topical at both global and national level, including the thematic areas of projects implemented by the university. Every year, directors of the programme from both higher education institutions review the topics of final papers of students in the programme, which are approved by the Council of the RSU Faculty of Public Health and Social Welfare. The list of topics of the students' final theses include the research topics, which cover the design and performance assessment of health systems, health and pharmaceutical policy, economic evaluation of health and medical technologies, health care quality and patient safety systems, economic efficiency of health care, safety of health care workers, human resources management, integrated health care, management of chronic patients, digital health, etc (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.6.). All the topics are compliant with the learning outcomes of the study programme, stating that upon the completion of the study programme, the graduates are able to identify and justify aspects of health management required for research, choose appropriate research approaches, and obtain and analyse data. Able to conduct independent research activity, completing all stages of a study, observing the ethical aspects of professional activity. Annex 22 (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.6.) reflects the topics of the students' final theses and the grades. Some of the topics are analysing the health management problems at a national level, for example National level electronic health record interoperability in Latvian health sector, the assessment is excellent, also there are some regional importance topics, for example Quality of the process of codifying DRG payments and its impact on the amount of the received financing by "Daugavpils Regional Hospital Ltd", with the excellent assessment grade. It was mentioned during the on-site visit and the expert group agrees with it, that the relationships between the University and health policy makers should be more developed, in order to ensure sharing the recommendations of the master thesis to whom they were addressed.

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

The study modules comply with the aim of the Joint academic master study programme Health Management, is to prepare highly qualified specialists for management work in health sector, who have fundamental theoretical and practical knowledge and skills in health management and health economics, strategic management of human resources and ensuring a sustainable development of organisation, as well a theoretical knowledge and practical skills in scientific research of health management ensuring the achievement of learning outcomes and compliance with the needs of the industry and scientific trends, and the learning outcomes. Relationships between the University and health policy makers should be more developed, it is important to share the master thesis with recommendations to whom they were addressed. According to the Ministry of Health opinion, knowledge is very good, but there are some areas uncovered, for example, prevention of addiction, reproductive health, public health policy making and planning, as well as project making skills. The development of a Master's thesis is based on the analysis of conceptual approaches and solutions to health management science, and students are recommended topics of research papers, which are updated annually on the basis of recommendations from industry institutions, including the Ministry of Health, the National Health Service, clinical university hospitals, etc. The joint study programme is

being implemented in two institutions, RSU and RISEBA, the institutions have divided the courses between them. For example, RSU implements study courses at the health sector management level and RISEBA – at the health organisation management level. The students are given the possibility to choose the place of the internship. It can be in the students' home country or Latvia. In case the foreign students wish to have the internship in Latvia, the RSU looks for a placement organisation that is prepared to ensure placement in English, for example, such organisations are the Centre for Disease Prevention and Control or private medical institutions. This list of the topics of students' final theses includes the topics recommended by the Ministry of Health and its subordinate institutions, including placement organisations, therefore, they reflect the latest development in the labour market. The list is covering the topics that are topical at both global and national level, including the thematic areas of projects implemented by the university.

Strengths:

1. Collaboration between two institutions, RSU and RISEBA, creates added value for the Joint study programme Health Management, because every university brings the best experience to the content of the study programme.

Weaknesses:

1. The relationship between the RSU and health policy makers is insufficient.
2. Some important areas are left uncovered in the content of the study programme, for example, prevention of addiction, reproductive health, public health policy making and planning, as well as project making skills

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

The list of the topics of students' final theses includes the topics recommended by the Ministry of Health and its subordinate institutions, including placement organizations, therefore, they reflect the latest development in the labour market, as well as based on the newest achievements and findings in health management. The list is covering the topics that are topical at both global and national level. However, some important areas are left uncovered in the content of the study programme, for example, prevention of addiction, reproductive health, public health policy making and planning, as well as project making skills.

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1. The joint study programme is being implemented in two institutions, RSU and RISEBA, the institutions have divided the courses between them. For example, RSU implements study courses at the health sector management level and RISEBA – at the health organisation management level. Breakdown of the programme into study courses between the institutions of higher education: courses taught by RSU – 18 (65 CP / 94.5 ECTS), courses taught by RISEBA – 17 (41 CP / 61.5 ECTS). Study courses taught by RISEBA are ensured by 13 lecturers, of whom seven have a doctoral degree (54%). Three lecturers of the business environment, three – from the academic environment (SAR, page 317).

The RISEBA library provides university students and employees with the necessary literature for the

study process, access to information search systems and databases. Every year, RISEBA offers students to participate in Speed Dating with a mentor in order to find the most suitable mentor for future cooperation (RISEBA webpage).

The resources of the study programme are provided by the library resources, databases of scientific literature, e-books and periodicals at the disposal of RSU. Lecturers of study courses update the list of recommended readings annually and contact the RSU Library to make sure that new sources are purchased, if necessary. Software acquisition needs are included in the budget plan of the relevant structural unit (SAR, page 312-313).

A special software "MedModel" is purchased annually, as well as open source software "R" is used for the needs of the study programme for modelling of health care processes. The study programme uses a lot of open access resources: open-access scientific publications and editions and reports of international organisations such as the European Commission, the World Health Organisation, etc. For research purposes, students use data from international databases, as well as data at the disposal of the Ministry of Health, the National Health Service and the Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, which can be received upon request (SAR, page 313).

To be able to link the theoretical knowledge acquired to practice, students are recommended to participate in Latvian and international sectoral conferences, on which students prepare a report, which is discussed in groups to implement interactive learning methods.

The study process and communication are organised in the e-learning environment using an interactive and student-centred learning approach.

The study programme is planned to be financed from state budget funds and the funds of individuals and legal entities setting the tuition fee in the Latvian flow of EUR 3000, in the English flow – EUR 4100 per year of studies. The study programme is cost-effective (SAR, page 313-315).

The infrastructure, informative provision (library resources), financial provision, material and technical fully comply with requirements of the Joint Academic master study programme "Health Management" (45345) and demonstrate achievements of programme learning outcomes.

The experts panel considers that the study provision is sufficient from both universities for the implementation of the study programme, create prerequisites for the achievement of the learning outcomes and indicate the possibility to ensure a high-quality study process.

2.3.2. Not applicable.

2.3.3. The study programme is planned to be financed from state budget funds and the funds of individuals and legal entities setting the tuition fee in the Latvian flow of EUR 3000, in the English flow – EUR 4100 per year of studies. The study programme in the Latvian flow has state funding for 18 budget funded places. The number of students planned to be achieved in the Latvian flow in two years of studies is 64 students, enrolling 36 students in the first year, planning a drop-out of 8 students in the second year. The number of students planned to be achieved in the English flow in two years of studies is 22 students, enrolling 12 students in the first year, planning a drop-out of 2 students in the second year. Such a number of students is optimal to ensure a high-quality study process and to make the study programme cover its implementation, as well as development costs. (SAR, pages 313-314).

The average income per student is EUR 3220/year in the Latvian flow, and average cost per student is EUR 1430/year. Funding is distributed as follows: Academic staff, % - 49, Department resources, % - 12, Scholarship costs, % - 4, Fixed costs, % - 2, Overheads, % - 33 (SAR, page 314).

The average income per student is EUR 2837/year in the English flow, and average cost per student is EUR 2356/year. Funding is distributed as follows: Academic staff, % - 58, Department resources % - 24, Fixed costs, % - 3, Overheads, % - 15 (SAR, page 314-315).

The study programme is cost-effective. The state budget funding for 1 budget place from 1 September 2023 is EUR 3438 per academic year and 16 state-funded places are provided. The

programme currently has an average of 54 students per academic year, which ensures a positive financial result. In order to maintain profitability, the minimum number of students per group, as set out in the RSU internal regulations, of 12 students must be enrolled in the study programme each year (SAR, page 315).

It should be taken into account that student drop-out rates were increased during last year (data till 2021/2022), especially among first year students, which could impact the programme's financial side in the future. For example, in the academic year 2020/2021 it was 13 students in total, but in the 2021/2022 it was 22 students in total (SAR, Annex 16).

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

The infrastructure, including informative resources such as library materials, financial support, and technical resources, wholly align with the demands of the StP, showcasing tangible accomplishments in meeting programme learning objectives. The allocated funding for the study programme is effectively utilised to guarantee the comprehensive execution of the educational process.

Strengths:

1. Advanced material and technical base for student training.
2. The study programme provides students with extensive RSU, RISEBA Library resources and databases, student portal MyRSU, e-studies.

Weaknesses:

1. Increased number of drop-out students during last year, which could impact the programme's financial side in the future.

Assessment of the requirement [6]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Analyzing the documents and meeting with the StP director, academic staff, students, graduates and employers, the experts have confirmed that the StP at RSU is well materially provided and ensures that students have a high quality education.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1. The implementation of the Joint academic master's study programme "Health Management" is carried out by 15 lecturers, 13 of whom have been elected to the academic positions at RSU. Out of 13 elected representatives of the academic staff, 2 are professors and one associate professor. In addition, the academic staff involved in the implementation of the RISEBA part of the study programme includes three professors and 1 associate professor. The total number of professors and associate professors elected to implement the study programme meets the legal requirements (Annex 24.7).

The procedure for the application and selection of academic staff at RSU is governed by the "Regulations of Rīga Stradiņš University on academic positions", "Process of Rīga Stradiņš University "Elections of Academic Staff" and the general requirements as knowledge of the official language in

accordance with the requirements of regulations of the Republic of Latvia; knowledge of foreign languages at a level sufficient to occupy an academic position; continuous improvement of their academic, scientific and pedagogical qualifications.

All members of the teaching staff conduct scientific activities in a scientific field related to the educational programme.

Lecturers have both academic and practical work experience in the field of public health. In the reporting period, changes in academic staff have occurred among both permanent lecturers and invited teachers. To promote the achievement of the aim of the study programme and learning outcomes, lecturers with extensive academic and professional experience are involved in teaching of study courses.

RSU provides its teaching staff with opportunities for growth and professional development in accordance with the Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia No. 662 of 11 September 2018 on the education and professional qualification required for teachers (SAR, part II, paragraph 3.4.1, page 317). The University is regularly concerned about improving the qualifications and professional skills of its teaching staff. For this purpose, RSU regularly offers courses organised by the Center for Educational Development (PIC) (evidenced by interviews with the representatives of the Centre for Educational Growth). From 2017 13 lecturers of the Joint academic master's study programme "Health Management" participated in continuing education activities of the Centre for Educational Growth (PIC) attending more than 100 training activities of different content. (SAR, part II, paragraph 3.4., page 317).

The site visit interviews showed the capacity and capability of the staff of achieving the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme across the various systems and public health specialisations required for the successful running of the relevant study courses. There is a transparent mechanism for academic promotions. Academic staff regularly participate in research work at the local and international scientific conferences.

The qualification of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the „Joint Academic Master study programme "Health Management" (45345)" fully complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements in the regulatory documents. It enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses.

2.4.2. A higher education institution takes measures to ensure that changes in the composition of the teaching staff do not have a negative impact on the quality of the educational programme and the compliance of the educational programme with the requirements established by regulations. The composition of the teaching staff in the educational programme is stable. Faculty have both academic and practical experience in the health sectors, including public health.

It is important to emphasise that the teaching staff improves their qualifications and is elected to higher positions in the University. Updating of teaching staff takes place within the framework of the programme.

Highly qualified lecturers who are experts in the field and specialise in the respective study course topics are involved in the implementation of the study programme. The development plan of teaching staff of the programme includes the attraction of foreign lecturers and the increase of qualification of existing lecturers.

Academic staff of the programme is stable, with a constant potential for improvement. The graduates of the programme working in the field of public health are involved as adjunct lecturers to the extent possible.

2.4.3. Not applicable.

2.4.4. Each member of Academic staff has publications in peer-reviewed national and international

journals during the last six years (Annex 6.1; 6.4.2).

All lecturers have more than 7 years of experience in academic work in health care. Several lecturers are authors or co-authors of scientific publications, including on research methodology, scientific writing and dissemination of research results, as well as several collective monographs developed. Some lecturers prepare peer-reviewed international publications and review scientific articles.

Projects carried out by the academic staff contribute to the development of scientific capacity and competitiveness, which could be also characterised by the increase in the number of scientific articles in the Web of Science databases and Scopus journals, which strengthens the authority and recognisability of RSU as a centre of study and science.

Visiting professors are involved in the implementation of the programme, for example, professor from the APOLLON University of Applied Sciences in Germany. He is an expert in economics, business administration and health care. His research activity particularly focuses on the management of health care processes, modelling and simulation of processes. He also supports different companies in the development of their organisation with human resources management, cost analysis in health care institutions and financing of health systems as a basis (SAR, part II, paragraph 3.4.2, page 318).

2.4.5. Mutual cooperation of the teaching staff in the implementation of the study programme has been established, this was proven by the interview with the teaching staff and Programme Director. RSU organises meetings of program directors, where any issues related to the implementation of the programme and the organisation of training (theoretical and practical classes) are discussed in detail. A very important fact is that during these meetings there is an exchange of views and an exchange of best practices. Cooperation between the lecturers of RSU and RISEBA is promoted in the Study Programme to create optimal and logically sequential content of study courses and the planning of the course by study semesters, thereby ensuring that the knowledge from previously mastered courses serves as the basis for successful mastering of the next courses, as well as to adapt the content of the courses to be studied to the specificity of the Health Management. Lecturers of RSU and RISEBA are involved in the implementation of joint practical classes, the organisation of examination of students' knowledge, adaptation and updating of study materials.

Documentation by means of self-assessment report and the various annexes on staff, as well interviews with programme Director, academic members, graduates and students shows that the heads of departments and teaching staff cooperate for coordination and implementation of study content and are actively involved in the implementation of study programmes. This is organised on several levels. Regular meetings are held discussing details of content so as to prevent repetition between different study courses. Students are also invited to feedback to faculty by means of questionnaires or verbally/ directly, to draw attention to similar content in different study courses. The entire described process proves the achievement of the goals of the educational programme and the interrelation of training courses within the educational programme.

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

The qualification of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the Joint Academic Master study programme "Health Management" fully complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements in the regulatory documents. It enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses. A higher education institution takes measures to ensure that changes in the composition of the teaching staff do not have a negative impact on the quality of the educational

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

Strengths:

1. Good cooperation between two institutions (RSU and RISEBA).
2. Qualified teaching staff.
3. Involvement high qualified foreign visiting professionals as teachers.
4. Constant participation in the training courses for development teaching and personal skills.

Weaknesses:

- 1) None.

Assessment of the requirement [7]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The qualification of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the Joint Academic Master study programme "Health Management" " fully complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme.

2.5. Assessment of the Compliance

Requirements

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The RSU has provided the document in Annex (17.1_Anx_Compl_with_Nat_Ed_Stand_Health_Manag) providing the evidence that the joint AMSP "Health Management" complies with Cabinet Regulations No 240 "Regulations of the National Standard for Academic Education" (approved on 13.05.2014)

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 3 3 - The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in all languages in which the study programme is implemented, and they comply with the requirements set forth in Section 561 , Paragraph two and Section 562 , Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The RSU has provided the study course descriptions for the joint AMSP "Health Management" both in Latvian and English (20_Anx_Study_course_description_Health_Management)

The descriptions of the study courses are compliant with regulations set forth in Law on Higher Education Institutions. The descriptions of the study courses: define the requirements for the commencement of the acquisition of the study course; determine the aims for the implementation of the study course and the planned learning outcomes; outline the content of the study course necessary for the achievement of learning outcomes, contain the study course topic layout, mandatory and supplementary literature, indicate other sources of information; describe the organization and tasks for students' independent work; determine the assessment criteria of learning outcomes.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The sample of the diploma and its supplement (Annex 24.1_Anx_diploma and supplement_Health_manag) are issued for completing the study programme in accordance with the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 202 of 16.04.2013 "Procedures for Issuing State-Recognized Higher Education Certificates".

- 5 5 - The academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements set forth in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

In accordance with the Annex (24.7.1_Annex_Cert_compliance_KAMSP_Health_Management_Akad_staff_AL_55.1.3), RSU confirms that the academic staff involved in the implementation of the joint AMSP "Health Management" meets the requirements set out in Clause 3 of Paragraph 1 of Section 55 of the Law on Higher Education

- 6 6 - Academic study programmes provided for less than 250 full-time students may be implemented and less than five professors and associated professors of the higher education institution may be involved in the implementation of the mandatory and limited elective part of these study programmes provided that the relevant opinion of the Council for Higher Education has been received in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 7 7 - At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of an academic doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field of science. At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a professional doctoral study programme in arts (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 8 8 - The teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme are proficient in the official language in accordance with the regulations on the level of the official language knowledge and the procedures for testing official language proficiency for performing professional duties and office duties.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The RSU has provided annexes (24.4_Anx_Certification_Regarding_Latvian_Language_of_the_Academic_Staff.pdf and 6.2_Anx_Biographies_teaching_staff_KPMSP_Health_Management_EN_77pages) confirming that

the language proficiency of the teaching staff is compliant with Cabinet Regulations No. 733 “Regulations Regarding the Extent of the Knowledge of the Official Language, the Procedures for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language and the State Fee for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language”.

- 9 9 - The teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language, if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The RSU has provided the annexes (24.5_Anx_Certification_Regarding_the_English_Language_Knowledge.pdf and 6.2_Anx_Biographies_teaching_staff_KPMSP_Health_Management_EN_77pages) confirming that the members of the teaching staff to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level proficiency in the English language.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The sample of the study agreement fully complies with the Law on Higher Education Institutions Section 46, paragraph 2, and the Cabinet Regulations No. 70 of 23.01.2007 “The Mandatory Provisions to be included in the study agreement” (24.8_Anx_Study contract sample_Health Care study direction.pdf).

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

In Annex 24.2_pielik_Apliecinajumi_par_parnemsanu_eng.7z

It is indicated that students of the joint AMSP “Health Management” will be provided with the opportunity to continue their education in one of the following study programmes: RSU AMSP “Public health” and PMSP “International Marketing and Business Management” and RISEBA AMSP “Health Management”.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

RSU has provided the confirmation that students are guaranteed compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the study programme’s licence is revoked. It is ensured based on Section 55(8) of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education and Cabinet of Ministers’ regulations No 795 of 11 December 2018 “Regulations on Licensing of study programmes”, Paragraph 13.4. The relevant document can be found under Annex 24.3_Anx_Certification_of_Compensation_of_Losses_to_Students.pdf.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The RSU has provided the annex (15_Anx_Compliance of the joint StP_Health_Manag) confirming that the joint AMSP Health Management complies with the requirements set for joint study programmes (Section 55.1 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions).

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Assessment of the requirement [8]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Study programme fully complies with regulatory enactments.

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

The inclusion of the joint AMSP “Health Management” in the study field “Health Care” is justified and follows from the aim of the given study programme, the learning outcomes to be achieved, the content of the programme and the degree and qualification to be awarded.

The name of the joint AMSP “Health Management”, qualification to be obtained, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and admission requirements are interrelated.

The corrections made to the study programme’s parameters within the assessment of the study field are analysed, justified and would be supported.

AMSP “Health Management” is economically and socially justified. The number of enrolled students has gradually increased. The share of drop-out students is around one-fifth.

The SAR and the discussions with the representatives (students, academic staff from RSU and RISEBA, employers) showed that the AMSP “Health Management” has a joint quality study process.

The study modules comply with the aim of the joint academic master study programme “Health Management”, is to prepare highly qualified specialists for management work in health sector, who have fundamental theoretical and practical knowledge and skills in health management and health economics, strategic management of human resources and ensuring a sustainable development of organisation, as well a theoretical knowledge and practical skills in scientific research of health management ensuring the achievement of learning outcomes and compliance with the needs of the industry and scientific trends, and the learning outcomes. Relationships between the University and health policy makers should be more developed, it is important to share the master thesis with recommendations to whom they were addressed. According to the Health Ministry opinion, knowledge is very good, but there are some areas uncovered, for example, prevention of addiction, reproductive health, public health policy making and planning, as well as project making skills. The development of a Master's thesis is based on the analysis of conceptual approaches and solutions to health management science, and students are recommended topics of research papers, which are updated annually on the basis of recommendations from industry institutions, including the Ministry of Health, the National Health Service, clinical university hospitals, etc. The joint study programme is being implemented in two institutions, RSU and RISEBA, the institutions have divided the courses between them. For example, RSU implements study courses at the health sector management level and RISEBA – at the health organisation management level. The students are given the possibility to choose the place of the internship. It can be in the students’ home country or Latvia. In case the foreign students wish to have the internship in Latvia, the RSU looks for a placement organisation that is prepared to ensure placement in English, for example, such organisations are the Centre for

Disease Prevention and Control or private medical institutions. This list of the topics of students' final theses includes the topics recommended by the Ministry of Health and its subordinate institutions, including placement organisations, therefore, they reflect the latest development in the labour market. The list is covering the topics that are topical at both global and national level, including the thematic areas of projects implemented by the university.

The infrastructure, including informative resources such as library materials, financial support, and technical resources, wholly align with the demands of the study programme, showcasing tangible accomplishments in meeting program learning objectives.

The allocated funding for the study programme is effectively utilised to guarantee the comprehensive execution of the educational process.

The qualification of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the Joint Academic Master study programme "Health Management" fully complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements in the regulatory documents. It enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses. A higher education institution takes measures to ensure that changes in the composition of the teaching staff do not have a negative impact on the quality of the educational program and the compliance of the educational programme with the requirements established by regulations. A mechanism for mutual cooperation of the teaching staff in the implementation of the study programme has been established, it ensures the achievement of the aims of the study programme and the interconnection of study courses within the study programme.

Strengths:

1. A Joint study programme with mutual (RSU and RISEBA) planning and implementation of the curriculum and management of the study programme.
2. Collaboration between two institutions creates added value for the joint study programme "Health Management", because every university brings the best experience to the content of the study programme.
3. Advanced material and technical base for student training.
4. The study programme provides students with extensive RSU, RISEBA Library resources and databases, student portal MyRSU, e-studies.
5. Constant updating of teaching staff.
6. Qualified teaching staff.
7. Involvement of high qualified foreign visiting professionals as teachers.
8. Constant participation in the training courses for development teaching and personal skills.

Weaknesses:

1. The number of drop-out students is around one-fifth of the total number of students.
2. Relationship between the RSU and health policy makers is insufficient.
3. Some important areas are left uncovered in the content of the study programme, for example, prevention of addiction, reproductive health, public health policy making and planning, as well as project making skills.

Evaluation of the study programme "Health Management"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Health Management"

Short-term recommendations

The content of the study programme must be updated, paying additional attention to the knowledge and skills development in prevention of addiction, reproductive health, public health policy making and planning, as well as project making skills.

Recommendation to evaluate the reason for drop-out students to reduce the number in the future.

Long-term recommendations

Stronger relationship should be developed between the RSU and health policy makers, by organising annual meetings and discussions regarding the curriculum updates.

II - "Rehabilitation" ASSESSMENT

II - "Rehabilitation" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1. SAR (p. 384 - 404) provides information about the Academic master study programme "Rehabilitation" (45722), which information was corroborated during expert group on-site visit interviews and Annex 17.1 (AMSP_Rehabil_atbilstība valsts izglītības standartam_ENG). This information confirms that there is compliance of the Academic master study programme "Rehabilitation" with the study field "Health Care".

The aim of the Academic master study programme "Rehabilitation" is to deepen knowledge in rehabilitation science and develop competence in evidence-based practice that will enable alumni to introduce and implement high- quality, innovative rehabilitation services in health care and other fields, as well as to actively participate in and strengthen scientific research in the field of rehabilitation.

2.1.2. Academic Master Study Programme "Rehabilitation" according to MK regulation no. 322. "Rehabilitation" (IKK- 45722) has been implemented at RSU since 2015 and is part of the study field implemented by RSU, it will correspond to the thematic group of education "Medical services" (ISCED code - 0915). The Academic Master Study Programme "Rehabilitation" planning corresponds to Cabinet Regulation No. 240 Regulations Regarding the State Academic Education Standard, as adopted on 13 May 2014. The content of the 2-year full time study programme (in Latvian and in English) ensures a set of knowledge, skills and competences in accordance with the knowledge, skills and competence of framework level 7 set out in the classification of education in Latvia. The total credit value of the Academic master study programme "Rehabilitation" is 80 CP/ 120 ECTS, of which 60 CP (90 ECTS) are theoretical study courses and 20 CP (30 ECTS) are the master's thesis. Graduates are awarded a Master's degree of health sciences in Health Care.

2.1.3. SAR (p. 240) Table 1 shows that there have been no significant changes in the main parameters of the Academic master study programme "Rehabilitation" since the previous accreditation, except for minor adjustments to ensure that the defined objective, tasks and outcomes to be achieved of the study programme are clearly and comprehensively formulated. There is a change in the Academic master study programme "Rehabilitation" goal that now emphasizes the deepening of knowledge in rehabilitation science and the development of competence for the implementation of evidence-based practices. In addition, the task formulations

emphasize the opportunities provided by the Academic master study programme “Rehabilitation” for the development of students' knowledge, skills and competences, as well as add one task for opportunities to discover and use the benefits, challenges and opportunities of inter-professional and inter-sectoral cooperation in the study process. The formulations of results have been optimized, such that fragmentation of results was eliminated, and their total number decreased to 8. There was also a changed format of the entrance examination that allows the applicant to better reflect and express his motivation for studying at the Academic master study programme “Rehabilitation”. As a result of the experience of using online classes during the pandemic, the Academic master’s programme is now hybrid by combining face-to-face classes with remote online classes. This increases flexibility for students and is believed to contribute to student attraction and retention.

2.1.4. SAR (p. 384 - 404) provides information about the Academic master study programme “Rehabilitation”, which information was corroborated during interviews provides both economic as well as social justification for the study programme.

The Academic master study programme “Rehabilitation” was created to provide alumni of the Faculty of Rehabilitation, namely physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech therapists, orthopedic technicians, and nutritionists with Master’s level studies in health care with a focus on rehabilitation in accordance with the current policy documents of the Latvian health care sector at that time, such as the programme Human Resources Development in Health Care 2006-2015. This emphasizes the importance of education to provide the field with a sufficient number of qualified specialists. Getting these specialists qualified to Master level has become a necessity across Europe. Therefore the market is stable.

2.1.5. Not applicable.

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

The Academic master study programme “Rehabilitation” is compliant with the study field “Health Care”. The aim of the Academic master study programme “Rehabilitation” is to train specialists with the master level of education in health care by training highly skilled professionals to provide health, educational and social care institutions with qualified and competitive therapists in accordance with the needs of the national healthcare and rehabilitation system and the requirements of the state standard. The title, code, degree to be obtained, of the study programme, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation, as well as the implementation languages - Latvian and English, are reasonable and justified. Economic and social justification of the study programme, dynamics of the number of students and employment indicators of the graduates of the study programme are justified as there is demand on the market for this profession.

Strengths:

1. There is compliance of the Academic Master Study Programme “Rehabilitation” with the study field. Study content is in line with the academic and professional requirements for the various disciplines, namely physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech therapists, orthopedic technicians, nutritionists and art therapists.
- 2, There is a demand for these professionals to become specialists requiring a Master level qualification and therefore there is a market for these professions ensuring study programme viability in terms of employability.

Weaknesses:

None.

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1. The content of the study courses is derived from the aims and learning outcomes of the study course, which in turn are derived from the aim and the learning outcomes of the study programme. The link is evident in the mapping of the study programme. Each learning outcome of the programme (1-8) corresponds to several study courses. The mapping of the level of learning is based on the required knowledge, competences and skills at qualification level 7. As a result of the mapping, it was concluded that the study courses implemented within the framework of the Academic master study programme “Rehabilitation” cover all eight defined outcomes of the programme. They provide the necessary knowledge, skills and competences to meet the requirements of level 7 of the Latvian qualifications Framework (LQF), to obtain a Master's degree of health sciences and further qualify for doctoral studies. The WHO initiative “Rehabilitation 2030” is topical in the field of rehabilitation, which clearly outlines the directions for strengthening the field of rehabilitation in health care. Attention is paid to the qualification upgrading of rehabilitation specialists and interdisciplinary cooperation in provision of services. The WHO has explained the competence framework of rehabilitation specialists, emphasizing five development directions: placement, professionalism, learning and development, management and leadership, and research. In fact, those directions of competence development are also included in the aim and content of the Academic master study programme “Rehabilitation” (Annex 18.1).

In expert opinion, it is necessary that the study course descriptions, and reading lists published in study course descriptions, the study course content and descriptions are regularly updated. This should be maintained in the following reaccreditation period.

Reviewing the strategic aim of the programme — to deepen knowledge in rehabilitation science and develop competence in evidence-based practice — reveals that the wording has been refined to provide students with theoretical and practical knowledge, develop research skills, and promote professional and personal growth in line with level 7 of the Latvian Qualifications Framework. The programme's format ensures graduates understand responsible and safe use of information technologies in professional activities, research, and lifelong learning (e-learning environment, RSU library databases, interactive methods in individual and group work). The study programme content is based on the content of separate study courses, continuity and interconnection of the study courses, which was given much thought during the development of AMSP “Rehabilitation” and now during the implementation of the programme (SAR p. 247).

2.2.2. The Faculty of Rehabilitation has developed methodological guidelines approved by the Council on the elaboration and defense of the Master's thesis, which complement the process described in the document “RSU Regulation on the Elaboration and Defence of the Qualification Paper, Student Research Paper, Bachelor's Thesis and Master's Thesis”.

The student, potential supervisor, and Director of study programme or Department of Rehabilitation (DoR) head choose the final paper topic and supervisor. The Department of Rehabilitation and Rehabilitation Research Laboratory (RRL) priority research areas have shaped Master's theses developed and defended since 2017. Research areas identified by the DoR include daily functioning across ages, environmental impact on abilities, quality of life and functioning in children with disabilities, use of assistive technologies in rehabilitation, and temporary and chronic work incapacity. The RRL's research directions focus on human functioning and limitations, socio-economic and organizational issues in rehabilitation, and current clinical issues. Students can participate in ongoing research projects at DoR and RSU, utilize the RSU Research Platform (available in Latvian and English), or choose a research topic relevant to their field of expertise. The

Master's thesis topic is carefully selected and supported in the second semester through the Selective stages of the "Research process" course, which covers current rehabilitation issues, research questions, and topic proposal development. Following the study course, a topic proposal report is evaluated by a commission of professors and external specialists in the field. Some students receive DoR Council approval for their Master's thesis subjects in the second semester, while others wait until the third semester. Master's thesis development includes intermediate reports and pre-defense, providing systematic monitoring and advisory support from rehabilitation professionals. After defending their Master's thesis, students are encouraged to publish their research at professional association conferences, local and international industry conferences, and scientific publications based on the analysis and recommendations of the defense commission.

2.2.3. The studies are conducted both in-person and remotely, employing a diverse range of teaching methods including lectures, practical classes, seminars, discussions, independent student work (such as group projects, individual projects, and individual research projects), and presentations of prepared projects. RSU has established and is consistently enhancing the e-learning platform inside the study program. Academic master study programme "Rehabilitation" students are medical professionals with prior education and experience in rehabilitation and health care. . Academic master study programme "Rehabilitation" attracts students because the work experience sparks an interest in rehabilitation or encourages them to study. Study programme "Rehabilitation" focuses on study process organization and approaches to increase student responsibility and self-directed learning. At the start of study courses, the purpose, content, plan, final evaluation, assignments, interim and final report schedules, and assessment criteria are supplied. E-studies have all the information. Student groups can arrange their collaboration individually during learning tasks, and students can choose themes of interest (e.g., a clinical problem or a rehabilitation issue). Students and faculty discuss issues that arise during independent work and agree on changes to assignments and the study course plan (such as the interim or final report date) (SAR p. 250).

There are relatively few lectures in AMSP Rehabilitation, while the practical classes are mostly seminars, where students report, discuss and reflect on the results of their independent work and receive the necessary advisory support from the teaching staff. This approach to the implementation of the study process as a whole is aimed at integrating the principles of student centered teaching and learning into the study process. For AMSP Rehabilitation courses with semester-long assignments, lecturers, such as the StP Director, teaching staff, or specialists, are invited to submit interim or final reports. In these reports/seminars, teaching staff and students must directly discuss strengths and weaknesses of a part of the assignment or the entire assignment to adjust the next steps and get the necessary support for students' independent work. Because student groups are diverse, course heads or teaching staff normally make sure everyone is heard in these conversations.

2.2.4. Not applicable.

2.2.5. Not applicable.

2.2.6. The topic and supervisor of the final paper is chosen in collaboration between the student and the potential supervisor and the StP director or head of the Department of Rehabilitation (DoR). Students have opportunities for participation in ongoing projects, and the freedom to choose a research topic of interest. Analysis of defended Master's theses themes reveals the following thematic blocks: translation and validation of specific functioning assessment tools into Latvian (surveys on occupational rehabilitation issues; fluent, automated word naming and variable stimuli test, etc.); comparison of the content and psychometric properties of functional status assessment tools in the context of different clinical problems (brain tumors, swallowing disorders, etc.). The

Master's theses generated and defended since 2017 align with the Department of Rehabilitation (DoR) and RRL's key research topics. DoR research directions include daily functioning of people of different ages, the impact of the environment on functional abilities, quality of life and functioning in children with disabilities, using assistive technologies in rehabilitation, transient and chronic work incapacity, etc. The RRL's research directions (since November 2022, the Laboratory no longer exists as a separate structural unit and its functions and resources have been fully taken over by the DoR) are human functioning and limitations, socio-economic and organizational issues in rehabilitation, and current clinical issues. Students can also participate in ongoing research projects (including doctoral dissertation research) at the DoR and RSU (for example, using the RSU Research Platform, which is available in Latvian and English) or independently choose a research topic of interest, such as current developments in the student's field of professional activity.

After defending their Master's thesis, students are encouraged to publish their research at professional association conferences, local and international industry conferences, and scientific publications based on the commission's assessment and recommendations. Some of the topics were: "Game "Rehabilitation laboratory" as a didactic material for acceleration of study results in rehabilitation field bachelor study programmes"; "Health professionals' digital competencies and experiences with use of digital technology in rehabilitation sector", etc. (SAR p. 251 - 252; 22_Anx_Masters_thesis_topic_titles_Rehabilitation)

The topics of students' final theses are relevant to the field and correspond to the study programme. The criteria is well met.

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

The content of the study courses is derived from the aims and learning outcomes of the study course, which in turn are derived from the aim and the learning outcomes of the study programme. The link is evident in the mapping of the study programme. Each learning outcome of the programme (1-8) corresponds to several study courses. The mapping of the level of learning is based on the required knowledge, competences and skills at qualification level 7, Master's degree of health sciences and further qualification for doctoral studies. The studies are conducted both in-person and remotely, employing a diverse range of teaching methods including lectures, practical classes, seminars, discussions, independent student work (such as group projects, individual projects, and individual research projects), and presentations of prepared projects. The topic and supervisor of the final paper is chosen in collaboration between the student and the potential supervisor and the Director of the study programme or head of the Department of Rehabilitation (DoR). The topics of students' final theses are relevant to the field and correspond to the study programme. The criteria is well met.

Strengths:

1. Study process and the methods used promote student responsibility and a self-directed study process.

Weaknesses:

1. The study course descriptions, and reading lists published in study course descriptions, the study course content and descriptions regular update is necessary.
2. Some topics of the relevant industry and rapid science and technology development in the field of profession should be included in the study courses.
3. Possibilities of involvement of students in scientific work show positive trends that should continue in the future.
4. Number of placements does not offer as many possibilities as it could, throughout the Latvia EU,

using ERASMUS+ programme.

5. Possibilities of involvement of students in interdisciplinarity and work with various professions to solve complex problems of profession, obtained during the study programme. show positive trends that should continue in the future.

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

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

20_Anx_Study_course_description_Rehabilitation.pdf

22_Anx_Masters_thesis_topic_titles_Rehabilitation.pdf

6.4_Anx_Ac_staff_publications_IF factor_Facult_Rehabilitation.pdf

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1. According to the Self-Assessment Report (SAR, Part II, Study Programme Rehabilitation, Paragraph 3.3.1) the provision of the study programme includes classrooms, library resources, e-learning environment and its tools. The University provides a sufficient base for integrating the latest scientific findings in health care, multidisciplinary collaboration and research support, this includes visits to Medical Education Technology Centre, Institute of Occupational Safety and Environmental Health, Psychology Laboratory, etc.

The financial base of the study programme allows to attract visiting lecturers, support study visits and research (e.g. the purchase of paid publications, the selection and purchase of specific data from various databases, equipment for studies and research, etc.).

In the expert's view, the provided information is deficient for drawing conclusions on the informative provision of the study programme. For example, no specific examples on the available databases of scientific information are provided. The other aspects of the study provision are described on a rather superficial level which complicates the analysis. There is a positive emphasis on multidisciplinary collaboration and support for research activities (examples would include regular visits to the Medical Education Technology Centre, Institute of Occupational Safety and Environmental Health etc.)

2.3.2. Not applicable.

2.3.3. Based on SAR p.253, it is planned to finance the study programme with Latvian as language of instruction and examination from the state budget and the funds of private and legal persons by setting the tuition fee in accordance with the state budget funding without social security in the amount of EUR 7335 per study year. The number of students planned to reach in the two years of studies of the study programme is 31 students, with 16 students admitted in the first year of studies, and the number of students remaining unchanged during the second year of studies. Such a number of students is optimal to ensure a high quality study process and so that the study programme can cover implementation and development costs. However, for the study programme with English as language of instruction and examination, costs of study programme implementation and development will be met if 22 students are reached in two years of studies, fee of tuition being

EUR 7500 per study year.

Based on SAR p.254, cost of the study programme differs based on the English and Latvian flows. Based on the Table 2 - Cost of the Study Programme in Latvian, average cost per student is significantly lower than average revenue, which is a good indicator. Based on Table 3 - Cost of the Study Programme in English, the conclusion is the same average cost per student is significantly lower than average revenue.

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

Both the Latvian and English flows of the study programme demonstrate positive financial indicators, indicating careful planning and effective management. The ability to cover costs while maintaining programme quality is a key strength of these programmes.

Strengths:

None.

Weaknesses:

None.

Assessment of the requirement [6]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The study programme ensures the necessary resource provision and fulfills the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and ensures the achievement of learning outcomes.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1. The qualification of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the Academic master study programme "Rehabilitation" complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements set forth in the regulatory enactments, and it enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses. There is a staff complement of 26 lecturers, of whom 17 are elected to academic positions in RSU. Of the 17 elected academic staff, 5 are associate professors as in Annex 24.7.1 (Cert_compliance_AMSP_Rehabilitation_Akad_staff_AL_55.1.3) 15 lecturers possess a doctoral degree from different branches of science: medical and health sciences, social sciences (psychology, economics and education), thereby meeting the conditions for the implementation of the programme. Some of the lecturers involved in the implementation of the study programme are doctoral students or doctoral degree candidates. This ensures an interdisciplinary approach in the study process and the high-level integration of specific knowledge from different branches of science in the study process. There are several visiting lecturers for some study course topics. During the period from 1 January 2017 to 1 October 2022, 22 lecturers of the study programme "Rehabilitation" participated in continuing education activities of the Centre for

Educational Growth (PIC) attending more than 130 training activities of different content. In total, teaching staff spent 2,678 academic hours on continuing education activities.

2.4.2. The Faculty of Rehabilitation takes adequate measures so that changes in the composition of the teaching staff do not negatively affect the quality of the implementation of the study programme and the compliance of the study programme with the requirements specified in regulatory enactments. Indeed, according to SAR (p. 256) and on-site visit interviews, the changes in the composition of teaching staff are mainly due to attracting new teaching staff, namely graduates of the programme, doctoral students and doctoral degree candidates, rehabilitation experts from outside RSU.

2.4.3. Not applicable.

2.4.4. Over the past six years, the academic members of staff have published in peer-reviewed editions, including international editions as shown in Annex 6.4_Anx_Ac_staff_publications_IF factor_Facult_Rehabilitation.pdf or have five years of relevant experience in accordance with the Law on Higher Education Institutions as shown in Annexes 24.7_Anx_Analysis_Composition_Academic_Staff_Rehabilitation_16-10-2023.pdf and 6.2_Anx_Biographies_teaching_staff_AMSP_Rehabilitation_EN_145pages.pdf

2.4.5. There is a mechanism for mutual cooperation of the teaching staff in the implementation of the Academic master study programme "Rehabilitation" which therefore ensures the achievement of the aims of the study programme and the interconnection of study courses within the study programme. There is continuous cooperation between study programme directors, the lecturers of the Department of Rehabilitation, management, students, employers, graduates, and other departments, as well as with the Latvian National Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine. In addition, there is communication with heads of the study courses during the planning and implementation phases annually. The reviews assist the programme director to plan for the next academic year. Subsequently, heads of study courses whose study courses require changes are contacted and discussions ensue for implementation of improvements. Also, before each semester, the content, outcomes and interconnection of the study course with other study courses are discussed. These discussions with lecturers are important to fine-tune study programmes.

According to SAR (p. 257), to ensure improvement of the quality of studies, the content of the courses is reviewed, based on both developments in the sector and information in questionnaires answered by students regarding courses. There is also regular communication with employers to find out the current skills required in graduates of the study programme.

The ratio of the number of students and teaching staff in the study programme is: 39 students and 26 lecturers. The ratio of the number of students and teaching staff is 1:5.

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

The qualification of the teaching staff involved in the study programme matches the requirements for its implementation and the regulatory enactments, enabling the study programme's aims and learning outcomes and the relevant study courses to be met. The RSU takes steps to ensure that changes in the teaching staff do not impair the quality of the study programme or its compliance with regulatory requirements. In the last six years, all academic staff members have written in peer-reviewed journals, including international editions or five years of relevant experience per the Higher Education Institutions Law. A framework for teaching staff cooperation in implementing the study

programme promotes its success and the interconnectedness of study courses.

Strengths:

1. The qualification of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the Academic master study programme "Rehabilitation" complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme.
2. There is ample cooperation amongst key stakeholders that enable successful running, improvement and maintenance of study programme.

Weaknesses:

None.

Assessment of the requirement [7]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The academic members of staff, visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting docents, visiting lecturers and visiting assistants are duly qualified in line with the conditions required for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements set out in the respective regulatory enactments.

It is proved by SAR (p. 254-258) and on-site interviews with various stakeholders involved in the Academic master study programme "Rehabilitation".

24.7_Analysis_of_the_Composition_of_the_Academic_Staff_Rehabilitation.pdf

6.2_Anx_Biographies_teaching_staff_AMSP_Rehabilitation_EN_145pages.pdf

6.4_Anx_Ac_staff_publications_IF factor_Facult_Rehabilitation.pdf

8.1_Anx_Data_on_international_lecturers_Faculty_of_Rehabilitation.pdf

2.5. Assessment of the Compliance

Requirements

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Annex - 17.1_pielik_AMSP_Rehabil_atbilstība valsts izglītības standartam_ENG.pdf confirms that the study programme complies with State Education Standard corresponding to Cabinet Regulations No 240 of 13 May 2014 "Regulations on the National Standard for Academic Education" <https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=266187>

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 3 3 - The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in all languages in which the study programme is implemented, and they comply with the requirements set forth in Section 561 , Paragraph two and Section 562 , Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

The study course descriptions are prepared in English and Latvian that can be accessed under annexes - 20_Anx_Study_course_description_Rehabilit.pdf and 20_pielik-St_kursu_apraksti_Rehabilitacija.pdf. Descriptions comply with regulations set forth in Law on Higher Education Institutions. The study materials can be accessed and are prepared in both implementation languages. However, the study course descriptions and reading lists published in study course descriptions are not fully revised since the last reaccreditation period. Updating the study course content and descriptions is necessary

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The provided Diploma sample - 24.1_Diploma_and_Supplement_AMSP_Rehabilitation.pdf complies with the procedure by which state-recognised documents of higher education are issued according to Cabinet Regulation No. 202 "Kārtība, kādā izsniedz valsts atzītus augstāko izglītību apliecinošus dokumentus".

- 5 5 - The academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements set forth in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

In accordance with the annex -

24.7.1_Annex_Cert_compliance_AMSP_Rehabilitation_Akad_staff_AL_55.1.3.pdf, Riga Stradiņš University confirms that the academic staff involved in the implementation of the academic Master's (second cycle) study programme "Rehabilitation" meets the requirements set out in the third Clause of the first Paragraph of Section 55 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions

- 6 6 - Academic study programmes provided for less than 250 full-time students may be implemented and less than five professors and associated professors of the higher education institution may be involved in the implementation of the mandatory and limited elective part of these study programmes provided that the relevant opinion of the Council for Higher Education has been received in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 7 7 - At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of an academic doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field of science. At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a professional doctoral study programme in arts (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 8 8 - The teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme are proficient in the official language in accordance with the regulations on the level of the official language knowledge and the procedures for testing official language proficiency for performing professional duties and office duties.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Based on the acquired information onsite as well as relevant annexes:

24.4_AnxCertification_Regarding_Latvian_Language_of_the_Academic_Staff.pdf and 6.2_AnxCV_ENG_visas_programmas.7z, it can be evaluated that the language proficiency of teaching staff is compliant with Cabinet Regulation. Nr. 733 "Regulations Regarding the Extent of the Knowledge of the Official Language, the Procedures for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language and the State Fee for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language".

- 9 9 - The teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language, if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

As one of the implementing languages of this programme is English, it is required for the teaching staff to have at least B2 level English. The attached documents:

6.2_AnxCV_ENG_visas_programmas.7z and

24.5_AnxCertification_Regarding_the_English_Language_Knowledge.pdf confirm the English language skills of the teaching staff members. Their skills were also assessed during onsite visits and the expert group confirms that they are at least on B2 level.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Sample of attached study agreement 24.8_AnxCStudy contract sample_Health Care study direction.pdf complies with Cabinet Regulation. Nr. 70 "Studiju līgumā obligāti ietveramie noteikumi".

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

RSU has provided confirmation that students will be provided with opportunities to continue their education in the same higher education institution if the implementation of the study programme is terminated. The agreements are specified in the annexes under "24.2_pielik_Apliecinajumi_par_parnemsanu_eng.7z". It is specified that in case of discontinuation of this study programme, students can continue their studies at RSU Academic Master's study programme "Public Health".

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

RSU has provided confirmation that students are guaranteed compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the study programme's license is revoked. It is ensured based on the Section 55(8) of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education and Cabinet of Ministers No 795 of 11 December 2018 "Regulations on Licensing of study programmes", Paragraph 13.4. The relevant document can be found under Annexes -

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Assessment of the requirement [8]

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Study programme partially complies with regulatory enactments. The study course descriptions and reading lists published in study course descriptions have not been fully revised since the last reaccreditation period. Updating the study course content and descriptions is necessary.

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

The Academic master study programme "Rehabilitation" is compliant with the study field "Health Care". The title, code, degree to be obtained, study programme, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation, as well as the implementation languages, are reasonable and justified. Economic and social justification of the study programme, dynamics of the number of students and employment indicators of the graduates of the study programme are justified as there is demand on the job market. The content of the study courses is derived from the aims and learning outcomes of the study course, which in turn are derived from the aim and the learning outcomes of the study programme. The link is evident in the mapping of the study programme. Each learning outcome of the programme corresponds to several study courses. The mapping of the level of learning is based on the required knowledge, competences and skills at qualification level 7, Master's degree of health sciences and further qualification for doctoral studies. The studies are conducted both in-person and remotely, employing a diverse range of teaching methods including lectures, practical classes, seminars, discussions, independent student work (such as group projects, individual projects, and individual research projects), and presentations of prepared projects. The topic and supervisor of the final paper is chosen in collaboration between the student and the potential supervisor and the Director of the study programme or head of the Department of Rehabilitation (DoR). The topics of students' final theses are relevant to the field and correspond to the study programme. The qualification of the teaching staff involved in the study programme matches the requirements for its implementation and the regulatory enactments, enabling the study programme's aims and learning outcomes and the relevant study courses to be met. The RSU takes steps to ensure that changes in the teaching staff do not impair the quality of the study programme or its compliance with regulatory requirements. A framework for teaching staff cooperation in implementing the study programme promotes its success and the interconnectedness of study courses. Both the Latvian and English flows of the study programme demonstrate positive financial indicators, indicating careful planning and effective management. The ability to cover costs while maintaining programme quality is a key strength of these programmes.

Strengths:

1. There is compliance of the Academic master study programme "Rehabilitation" with the study field. Study content is in line with the academic and professional requirements for the various disciplines, namely physiotherapists, occupational therapists, audio speech therapists, technical orthopaedists, nutritionists and art therapists.
2. There is a demand for these professionals to become specialists requiring a Master level qualification and therefore there is a market for these professions ensuring study programme viability in terms of employability.
3. Study process and the methods used promote student responsibility and a self-directed study process.
4. The qualification of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme.
5. There is ample cooperation amongst key stakeholders that enable successful running, improvement and maintenance of study programme.

Weaknesses:

1. The study course descriptions, and reading lists published in study course descriptions, the study course content and descriptions regular update is necessary.
2. Some study topics relevant for industry and science trends, rapid science and technology development in the field of profession are not part of the study courses.
3. Possibilities of involvement of students in scientific work show positive trends that should continue in the future.
4. Number of placements does not offer as many possibilities as it could, throughout the Latvia EU, using ERASMUS+ programme.
5. Possibilities of involvement of students in interdisciplinarity and work with various professions to solve complex problems of profession, obtained during the study programme. show positive trends that should continue in the future.

Evaluation of the study programme "Rehabilitation"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Rehabilitation"

Short-term recommendations

Fully revise study course descriptions and reading lists, recognizing that they have not been comprehensively updated since the last reaccreditation period, and implement necessary updates to the study course content and descriptions within the next assessment period.

Long-term recommendations

Align study courses and their content with the evolving needs of the relevant industry, labor market, and current science and technology trends within the profession, ensuring responsiveness to rapid developments in the field, and implementing necessary adjustments within the next assessment period.

Build upon the positive trends in student involvement in scientific work by developing and implementing a strategic plan, ensuring sustained and enhanced opportunities for students to engage in meaningful research experiences, and foster an ongoing positive trajectory within the next assessment period.

Maximize placement opportunities by expanding collaborations throughout Latvia and the EU, utilizing the ERASMUS+ programme to its full potential, with the goal of providing students with a broader array of valuable experiences, and implement this plan within

Cultivate and expand the positive trends in student involvement in interdisciplinary work and collaboration with various professions to address complex professional challenges obtained during the study program by developing and implementing a strategic plan, with the goal of fostering sustained and enhanced opportunities for students, and ensure continued positive trends within the next assessment period.

II - "Nutrition Studies" ASSESSMENT

II - "Nutrition Studies" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1. The Joint academic Master's study programme "Nutrition Studies" (45722) is fulfilling requirements laid down for the joint study programme (Law on Higher Education Institutions, Section 55.1). The programme is implemented on the basis of the inter-university contract concluded on 1 September 2022 between Riga Stradins University (RSU), the University of Latvia (LU) and Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies (LTBU). The programme consists of parts of the same level of education - Master's study programmes of three institutions of higher education. The programme has uniform requirements for its implementation: there is a uniform tripartite study contract in the programme, regulations for the development of Master's theses, and requirements for examinations of study courses are agreed. The programme is implemented in modules with a coordinated content of study courses and a study schedule. Joint examination boards are created in the programme, examination records are harmonised in content. In order to award a master's degree, students have to: 1) obtain 80 CP/120 ECTS; 2) complete the full-time programme in four semesters; 3) defend the Master's thesis of 20 CP/30 ECTS successfully, which together form a uniform and sequential joint study programme. Upon completion of the study programme, a diploma is awarded for obtaining an academic Master's degree of health sciences in nutrition science with the signatures of the rectors of three institutions of higher education corresponding to the 7th level of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (LQF) and the 7th level of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). Each student who has successfully completed the joint programme will receive the diploma and the diploma supplement attached to the diploma. The diploma and its supplement have uniform requirements corresponding to the procedure for issuing state-recognised documents certifying higher education. Compared to the last certification document, the study programme characteristics have not significantly changed, however clarifications from the previous assessment have been included. During working groups with the joint programme council, study programme and course descriptions were clarified, harmonised with the CP, analysed for mutual compliance, and updated with industry requirements. Changes to the joint master's program "Nutrition Studies" during accreditation include clarifying study purpose, tasks, and results, reducing Master's Degree results to 9, changes to admission requirements, and planned improvements to enhance programme recognition. Clarifications were made in collaboration with LU and LBTU, as certified by the AIKA e-

platform. In 2022 the cooperation agreement was updated and signed by all partner universities. (SAR p. 613; 15_Anx_Compliance_to_Joint_StP_Regulations_Nutrition_Science.pdf; <https://eplatforma.aika.lv/index.php?r=site%2Fprogram%2Fview&id=1947> https://eplatforma.aika.lv/index.php?r=site%2Fprogram%2Fview&id=1900;24.1_AnxDiploma_and_Diploma_Supplement_Nutrition_Science.pdf).

The Joint academic Master's study programme "Nutrition Studies" is in compliance with the requirements laid down for the joint study programme (Law on Higher Education Institutions, Section 55.1)

2.1.2. The Joint academic master study programme "Nutrition Studies" has been offered at Rīga Stradiņš University since 2003/2004. The study programme's 80 credit points (120 ECTS) are sufficient for learning the programme's deliverables. The programme includes 60 CP (90 ECTS) of theoretical study courses and 20 CP (30 ECTS) for Master's thesis writing. The full-time "Nutrition Studies" curriculum spans two years or four semesters. Graduates of the programme receive a Master's Degree in Health Sciences in Nutrition (main subject of study: nutrition studies). The Master's programme "Nutrition Studies" has been accredited many times over a six-year period, most recently in 2017 as part of the health care study field. In recent years, the programme was evaluated and passed by the University of Latvia (accreditation deadline: 02.02.2029) and the Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies (accreditation deadline: 05.10.2028). Higher education institutions have consistently made high-quality decisions and collaborated to complete key objectives. The content of the courses included in the study programme is up-to-date and meets the needs of the field, the labour market and scientific trends. The university teaching staff, whose scientific research and academic work is relevant to the course subject matter, and professionals in the field, who deal with issues related to the course subject matter on a daily basis, continuously update the course content (SAR p. 614).

The study aims to train qualified nutritionists with advanced theoretical and methodological knowledge, research skills, and the ability to conduct independent research in nutrition, food, biochemistry, food chemistry, and toxicology. They will be able to analyse, critically assess, and generate new ideas and approaches to nutrition studies to promote public health and prevent nutrition-related diseases. Nutrition studies are interdisciplinary, thus admission criteria apply to a wider range of applicants than merely alumni of the professional Bachelor's programme in Nutrition. To enrol in the study programme, students must have a first-cycle professional degree in medicine, dentistry, food technology, veterinary medicine, natural sciences, health sciences, pharmacy, food chemistry, food science, sports pedagogy, health education, or related fields (SAR p.615).

Applicants must complete a rigorous interview exam. The weighted average grade of the prior schooling diploma is considered, along with certificates, scientific publications, and work experience in nutrition science if there are equal grades. Admission requirements match nutrition's interdisciplinary nature. Since 2005, the study programme has demonstrated that students with the initial knowledge required for entrance can effectively integrate into the process. The "Nutrition Studies" Master's programme is the only academic one in Latvia, offering continuing education for specialists in medicine, dentistry, biology, chemistry, environmental sciences, health sciences, nursing, public health, health care, physiotherapy, and other fields. The study programme trains competitive specialists for public health advancement. These specialists are proficient in nutrition studies theory and can apply it to research and practical solutions aligned with the European Union (EU) and World Health Organization (WHO). They can independently formulate and critically analyse nutrition science problems. The objective of the study programme "Nutrition Studies" is to support the development and sustainability of the nutrition science business in Latvia. Nutrition policy and science are closely related to health care and health care studies. Examining the interrelationship between study programme objectives, tasks, results, and entrance requirements reveals their clear and interwoven nature (SAR p. 616).

The programme name (Nutrition Studies), code (45722), and degree (Master of Health Sciences in Nutrition; no professional qualification) align with the study's expected outcomes. Despite legal changes, the programme has maintained the degree nomenclature that aligns with its essence. The degree is based on the "Health Care" study field in Cabinet Regulations No. 322, with the programme group "Medical services" renamed "Health Care Services" in Annex 4, and the educational programme classified as "Nutrition Studies". As it aligns with programme outcomes, this degree title is the most suitable in the academic programme.

2.1.3. Since the previous accreditation sheet for the study field was issued, no significant changes have been made to the parameters of the study programme, but clarifications have been made. When organising working groups with the joint programme council, the study results in the study programme and study course descriptions have been clarified, harmonizing them with the scope of the CP, an analysis (mapping) of the mutual compliance of the results of the study programme and the study courses included in it has been carried out, as well as the content of the courses has been supplemented with the latest industry events. At the start of the new academic year in each study course, the lecturers update the list of literature sources and review the content of the entire study course, according to the current events of the field of nutrition science and accordingly make the necessary additions to the materials of lectures and classes, placing them also in the e-study environment of the relevant partner university. During the accreditation period, the following changes have been made to the parameters of the joint master's study programme "Nutrition Studies": the wording of the study purpose, tasks and results has been clarified, the results of the Master's Degree have been reduced to 9, changes have been made to the admission requirements, and several planned changes have been made to improve the recognition of the study programme. Clarifications were made in coordination with LU and LBTU, which is confirmed by the information published on the AIKA e-platform:

<https://eplatforma.aika.lv/index.php?r=site%2Fprogram%2Fview&id=1947>

<https://eplatforma.aika.lv/index.php?r=site%2Fprogram%2Fview&id=1900>

As an important clarification, it should also be mentioned that in 2022 the cooperation agreement was updated and signed by all partner universities (SAR p. 613-614).

2.1.4. Between 2004 and 2006, three universities' faculty and field experts developed the study programme: Latvia's experience of the 1950s-1960s in addressing nutrition and health issues was absorbed and the current situation was explored; the experience of foreign universities and the material, technical and intellectual capacities of Latvian universities were evaluated, resulting in the development of an interdisciplinary study programme, which includes study courses for the development of public health that provide the opportunity to train competitive specialists who are familiar with the theory of nutrition science and are able to apply it in scientific research and practical solutions to nutrition issues in accordance with the main strategic trends of the EU, WHO and Latvia, which state that one of the cornerstones of the country's development is a healthy and functional human being, that good public health is an essential condition for building a stable and safe society, that it is necessary to reduce morbidity and mortality from non-communicable diseases, reducing the negative effects of risk factors on human health, that good health should be promoted and disease prevention should be ensured (SAR p. 620).

The first 30 students of the study programme started their studies in the first semester of the academic year 2006/2007 in form of full-time regular studies at all three partner universities, and a total of 346 Masters have graduated from the programme. In the academic year 2022/2023, RSU has a total of 41 students in the first and second years of studies. According to Paragraph 4.1 of the Inter-University Cooperation Agreement, the cooperation universities (RSU, LU, LBTU) each enrol 10 students by concluding a study agreement. Student enrolment takes place in accordance with the enrolment regulations. The number of enrolled students has remained similar every year (SAR p.

619).

From the data from the Student and Graduate Register, established as part of the development of the State Education Information System (VIIS), it is evident that employment of graduates ranges from 94 - 98%, which is a really high rate and demonstrates high demand for this profile of specialists on the job market. This is a strong indicator for the justification of the study programme and moreover implicates recommendation for more state funded places, than only 10. Since the demand and number of requests compared to the number of available places is 3 -4 times higher, it is recommended to negotiate for more of the state funded places (10_Anx_Graduate_Emplyment_Rehabilitation_and_Nutrition_Science.pdf).

The study programmes contribution and assessment were assessed by alumni survey questionnaires, with 40 alumni participating (50 questionnaires given out) in the 2014/2015 academic year. They were asked about their nutrition science work following graduation. Responses were: 22 respondents (51%) address food and nutrition daily, whereas 22 (51%) raise public awareness, four produce laws, and six engage in education. Post-graduation, masters praised the study programme's substance (35), teaching staff professionalism (38), and technical resources, wishing it future success. Alumni expressed the need for updated nutrition science educational resources and knowledge updates. In response to alumni feedback, the joint Master's study programme organised international conferences named Nutrition and Health in 2016 and 2020, featuring lectures by nutrition experts and leading European researchers. Professional organisations like the Latvian Association of Diet and Nutrition Specialists organise educational seminars. The 2015/2016 academic year had 19 alumni from various years complete a survey assessing the study process and programme. Alumni reported that their education aided in job advancement and professional fulfilment. Students praised the programme's distinctiveness, research-based learning process, and field-expert personnel (SAR p. 617 ; 4.1_Anx_StP_Development_plan_Nutrition_Science.pdf).

In expert opinion, the study programme "Nutrition Studies" has strong economic and social justification based on its development process, student dynamics, employment outcomes, and alumni feedback. Its interdisciplinary approach, responsiveness to societal needs, and demonstrated impact on graduates' careers, position it as a valuable asset in addressing public health challenges and contributing to societal well-being. Continued investment in the programme is warranted to sustain its success and further enhance its impact in the future. The criteria is well met.

2.1.5. The development of the Joint academic master's study programme "Nutrition Nutrition Studies" is planned on the basis of several sources of information, including the basic principles of the RSU study process strategy, basic principles of the study process strategy of cooperating higher education institutions University of Latvia and the Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies, as well as the recommendations of employers and graduates of the programme. The development plan provides for the continuous development of the study process, care for academic and scientific growth of academic staff, digitalisation of processes, development of international communication, integration of science into the study process. All cooperating higher education institutions have developed certain procedures and criteria for evaluation, further improvement and development of the quality and efficiency of the study process, which are also applicable to the Joint academic master's study programme "Nutrition Studies". In cooperation with lecturers of study courses, as well as summarising feedback from students (students are urged to complete course assessment questionnaires after each course), improvement of the study planning will continue to ensure the mastering of maximum logical, sequential and knowledge-based study courses within the framework of the study programme. In cooperation with heads of study courses, explaining, maintaining and monitoring compliance with the defined requirements of academic integrity in the mastering of study courses will continue, for example, the definition and interpretation of course assessment criteria (principles for the formation of a final grade) for students, use of the Respondus

Monitor system for taking examinations in a remote format (4.1_Anx_StP_Development_plan_Nutrition_Science.pdf).

It should be noted that each of the cooperating higher education institutions has its own strengths or specialisation orientations, that is, the Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies has study courses directly related to food production, food quality evaluation, food marketing, evaluation of organic agricultural products, etc. The University of Latvia offers courses in health care and chemistry, including food chemistry and nutritional value evaluation. The study courses of Riga Stradiņš University focus on health care, covering nutritional therapy, nutrition at various life stages, physical activity, and disease prevention. Given the foregoing, the cooperation of the three partner universities is crucial for achieving the study outcomes for the "Nutrition Studies" programme (SAR p. 620).

Cooperation with the Nutrition Council of the Ministry of Health will continue, allowing for active follow-up of the most up-to-date policies in the field of nutrition and food legislation (10_Anx_Graduate_Employment_Rehabilitation_and_Nutrition_Science.pdf; 11_Anx_Previous_Exp_Recom_Nutrition_Science.pdf; 4.1_Anx_StP_Development_plan_Nutrition_Science.pdf)

The development and implementation of the joint study programme is justified and ensures a quality study process.

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

The Joint academic master's study programme "Nutrition Studies" is in compliance with the requirements laid down for the joint study programme (Law on Higher Education Institutions, Section 55.1). The study aims to train qualified nutritionists with advanced theoretical and methodological knowledge, research skills, and the ability to conduct independent research in nutrition, food, biochemistry, food chemistry, and toxicology. Graduates will be able to analyse, critically assess, and generate new ideas and approaches to nutrition studies to promote public health and prevent nutrition-related diseases. Nutrition studies are interdisciplinary, thus admission criteria apply to a wider range of applicants than merely alumni of the professional Bachelor's programme in Nutrition. The employment of graduates ranges from 94 - 98%, which is a really high rate and demonstrates high demand for this profile of specialists on the job market. This is a strong indicator for the justification of the study programme and moreover implicates recommendation for more state funded places. The development and implementation of the joint study programme is justified and ensures a quality study process.

Strengths:

1. Study programme "Nutrition Studies" is a unique and the only Joint academic master's study programme in Nutrition studies in Latvia, which provides continuing education opportunities in the Master's study programme in Nutrition studies for specialists with higher professional education in medicine or dentistry.
2. Teaching staff are proficient in nutrition studies theory and can apply it to research and practical solutions aligned with EU, WHO, and Latvian strategic trends.
3. The Joint academic master's study programme organised international conferences named Nutrition and Health in 2016 and 2020, featuring lectures by nutrition experts and leading European researchers.
4. Cooperation with institutions implementing nutrition policies, the Ministry of Health (MH), the Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (CDPC).
5. Employability rate of graduates is between 94 - 98%,
6. High demand for professionals on the job market.

Weaknesses:

1. Good employability of the Master study programme students and low number of state funded places, only 10, gives low response to a job market needs.

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1. The Joint academic master study programme “Nutrition Studies” (45722) is a full-time study programme, which is implemented over two years of studies or four semesters. The goals and objectives of the programme correspond to learning outcomes of the programme. The study courses are logically combined in the study programme. The programme aims to provide practical skills that allow graduates to be competitive in the labour market. The content of specialty study courses is constantly updated in accordance with developments in the relevant field of Health Care. During the studies, students acquire in-depth theoretical and methodological knowledge, research skills and, at the end of the studies, are able to independently carry out scientific research work in the field of nutrition science, food and health, are able to analyse, critically evaluate and generate new ideas and alternative approaches in nutrition science for public health promotion and prevention of nutrition-related diseases in order to realise the goals of the World Health Organization, the European Union and Latvia's nutrition policy.

The study plan of the programme is in line with the scientific trends, it reflects the most relevant research areas in the field of Nutriciology. The content of the Master's study programme ensures the achievement of learning outcomes that include the acquisition of in-depth theoretical knowledge and the development of research skills and abilities in the chosen field of science.

The mapping results (Annex 8.2 Mapping StP to Professional Standard Nutrition) demonstrate the evident links between the learning outcomes of the study programme and the study courses. The content of the study courses is derived from the aims and learning outcomes of the study course, which in turn are derived from the purpose and outcomes of the programme. The plan for full time studies in the programme “Nutrition Studies” (SAR, Part II, Annex 19) is constructed in a logical way. The relevance of contact hours has been additionally checked during the mapping process, as the mapping tool includes an automatic calculation of contact hours for each course and for the programme as a whole, summarised as a percentage. The mapping showed that at least 30% of the Master's study programme consists of contact hours. The programme ensures the achievement of learning outcomes in accordance with the knowledge, skills and competences specified at level 7 of the European Qualification Framework (EQF) as defined in the Latvian Qualifications Framework, which is further confirmed by the mapping of the learning outcomes of the programme against the level 7 of the EQF (Annex 18.1).

The programme includes mandatory A courses (which provide basic knowledge in nutrition science, food science, health science and theoretical and methodological knowledge in scientific research work), elective specialty B courses (SAR, Part II, Annex 19). Study course descriptions are clear, however, the hours distribution for the students' independent work is not reflected in the descriptions, only contact hours are described. The programme has uniform requirements for its implementation: there is a uniform tripartite study contract in the programme, regulations for the development of Master's theses, and requirements for examinations of study courses are agreed.

The programme is implemented in modules with a coordinated content of study courses and a study schedule. Joint examination boards are created in the programme, examination records are harmonised in content. In order to award a master's degree, students have to: 1) obtain 80 CP/120 ECTS; 2) complete the full-time programme in four semesters; 3) defend the 2 Requirements Specified by law Programme indicators Master's thesis of 20 CP/30 ECTS successfully, which together form a uniform and sequential joint study programme.

RSU cooperates with universities of a similar study and research direction in the EU and other

countries, whose field and direction correspond to this study field "Nutrition". In 2023, a productive collaboration with the University of Iceland of the project "Staff mobility between Rīga Stradiņš University and University of Iceland to establish scientific collaboration in the nutrition field" was launched.

Very important point is provision of regular surveys of students, graduates and employers that allow constant monitoring of programme quality and compliance with modern trends in medicine.

2.2.2. The objective and goal the study programme to train nutrition science specialists who have acquired in depth theoretical and methodological knowledge, research skills and are able to independently carry out scientific research in the field of nutrition science, contribute to the creation of new knowledge, engage in the development and implementation of health education programmes, participate in the development and implementation of national food, nutrition and health policy, contributing to the Latvian society and economy. To ensure research-based and innovative studies that contribute to the development of public health and well-being, students and university teaching staff involved in the study process participate in different local and international scientific conferences.

The academic staff implement collaborative research projects for the universities (RSU, LU, LBTU) involved in the programme implementation. They collaborate with scientists of Latvian research institutes and scientists practising in clinics. The teaching staff organises international conferences (in 2012, 2016, 2020 – international conference Nutrition and Health), prepares publications to be included in, Web of Science, SCOPUS database, etc.

The research fields of the academic staff involved in the implementation of the study programme are related to the topics of the courses they teach. The academic staff involved in the study programme participates in the basic and applied research projects of the Latvian Council of Science (LCS), projects co-financed by the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES), the European Social Fund (ESF), European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), European Economic Area (EEA) and Norwegian Financial Mechanism research programmes, National Research Programme projects, projects under contracts with entrepreneurs, Framework Programme 7 (FP7) projects, Erasmus+ projects and university (RSU, LU, LBTU) research projects, etc. In the last reporting period, academic staff participated in 93 projects, prepared 230 publications and 370 conference presentations on their research.

All these activities prove that the award of an academic degree is based on achievements and findings in the field of nutriciology.

2.2.3. The learning methods used in the programme contribute to the achievement of the learning outcomes of the individual courses and curriculum at all. The teaching methods are student-centered. According to SAR (part II, paragraph 3.2.3, page 624) and RSU regulations (Annex 18.1), the study plan of the joint academic master study programme "Nutrition Studies" and the study course descriptions updated in order to promote a student-centred studying with high-quality teaching, which includes modern teaching methods, well-equipped study environment. The study implementation methods contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study courses and the study programme. Student-centred learning and teaching principles are considered. There are two types of teaching innovations: methodological innovations, i.e., in the work environment, research projects, problem situations; and technological innovations – H5P, Miro, turnitin QuickMark, 3D printers, augmented and virtual reality. The updated study programme includes new modern significant methods of study and pedagogy and interactive ways of distance studies, for example, Zoom, MST, facing and teaching like broadcasts, YouTube broadcasts and recordings, online broadcasts of research conferences and the use of clip recordings for studies. To achieve the learning outcomes, the study programme offers many different teaching methods like lectures, seminars, independent work (studying and analysing scientific literature), presentations of

scientific literature analyses, reports, student discussions during seminars, exchange of experience and discussions between students.

The principles specified in the Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia of 13 May 2014 No 240 Regulations on the State Standard of Academic Education: the principle of openness, the principle of revision of assessment, the principle of mandatory assessment, the principle of variety in the type of examination and the principle of relevance are observed in the assessment of study results. The development, defence and evaluation of course papers and Master's thesis provided for in the study plan of the Nutrition Studies programme are carried out in accordance with the basic criteria of the document of Rīga Stradiņš University Regulations on Development and Defence of Qualification Thesis, Student Research Paper, Bachelor's Thesis and Master's Thesis (see RSU Senate Meeting Minutes No. 2-S-1/2/2022 of 22 February 2022), which have been agreed with the partner universities LBTU and LU.

Simulation training technologies, such as simulation of manipulations, modelling of clinical processes, simulation processes are widely implemented into the educational process. This has been proven by observations at the Medical Education Technology Center (MITC), where several rooms are equipped specifically for simulation training purposes within the study programme.

The study method work in small groups develops students' skills of communication, cooperation, establishing dialogue, defining and expressing an opinion, as well as the ability to compromise, it complies with the learning outcome: upon completion of the study programme the graduates are able to demonstrate understanding of the most important concepts and regularities of the relevant science sector or professional field, to express and analytically describe information, problems and solutions in their own field of science or profession using the theoretical bases and skills acquired, to explain them and discuss them reasonably with both specialists and non-specialists, to demonstrate understanding of professional ethics. They can communicate and discuss with colleagues, representatives of other professions and different groups of society, in accordance with the professional ethical standards. Independent learning of students, as well as undertaking responsibility and control over their own study process is promoted through students' independent work.

Lecturers cooperate in the programme on a regular basis. Meetings initiated by the head of the study programme take place before the beginning of each semester, as well as the communication of lecturers in thematic groups, where lecturers have similar issues (e.g. the implementation of a joint study course or group of thematically related courses) and the need to work in a particularly coordinated manner are promoted.

There are two types of examination in the study courses: interim examinations (test work, practical work, preparation and presentation of reports, etc., according to the course specifics) with a total assessment of not less than 50% of the total assessment; the final examination of the course – an exam with an assessment of not less than 10% of the total assessment is carried out either in writing or orally.

And finally, an important element of study process quality is hearing out the student's opinion both during meetings, consulting Master's students, and cooperating during the writing of course papers of Master's thesis. Students' opinions on the study programme and on specific lecturers are obtained through regular questionnaires, as well as by analysing the results obtained and discussing them with Master's students and getting their thoughts on lecturers. The opinions of experts, employers and study programme alumni are also analysed in assessment of the study process. Quality assurance in the study programme is also guaranteed in regular meetings and discussions of academic staff in the Quality Council of study programme "Nutrition Studies".

2.2.4. Not applicable.

2.2.5. Not applicable.

2.2.6. The programme has uniform requirements for its implementation: regulations for the development of Master's theses. In order to award a master's degree, students have to: 1) obtain 80 CP/120 ECTS; 2) complete the full-time programme in four semesters; and 3) defend the Master's thesis of 20 CP/30 ECTS successfully, which together form a uniform and sequential joint study programme (Annex 15). The thematic areas of the students' Master's thesis (SAR, page 626) comply with the wide issues in nutrition science.

During the reporting period from 2017 to 2022, 157 dissertations were developed and defended (SAR, page 626, Annex 22). The topics of students' final theses are relevant to the field and correspond to the study programme and complies with the aim of the study programme: 48 thesis (31%) dedicated to the problems, for example, "Nutrition as a Risk Factor for Chronic and Acute Diseases", "Nutritional Therapy"; 28 (18%) dedicated to the topic "Ensuring a Nutritious Diet for the Population", "Nutrition and Eating Habits"; 22 theses (14%) are dedicated to the topic of "Evaluation of Nutritional Value and Bioactive Compounds in Food and Its Raw Materials"; 19 theses (12%) are on "Nutrition and Exercise", "Nutrition of Athletes"; 16 theses (10%) are on "Novel and Functional Foods", "Food Development for Specific Consumer Groups" ; 11 theses (9%) are on "Public Health and Nutrition Policy"; 7 theses (4.5%) are devoted to the topic of "Dietary Supplements"; 6 theses (4%) are on "Contamination of Food and Its Raw Materials".

Master's theses prove that the study programme's training courses provide an opportunity to prepare qualified specialists in the field of dietetics, whose knowledge, skills and competencies meet the requirements of level 7th of the Latvian Qualifications Framework.

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

The content of the study courses of the Joint academic master study programme "Nutrition Studies" (45722) is interconnected and complementary, corresponds to the objectives of the programme and ensures the achievement of learning outcomes. The programmes are aimed at developing practical skills that allow graduates to be competitive in the labour market. The content of specialty study courses is constantly updated in accordance with developments in the relevant field of Health Care. During the studies, students acquire in-depth theoretical and methodological knowledge, research skills.

The structure of the joint management programme and Council decisions have been clearly defined by a cooperation agreement between universities.

The study plan of the programme is in line with the scientific trends, it reflects the most relevant research areas in the field of Nutriciology. The content of the Master's study programme ensures the achievement of learning outcomes that include the acquisition of in-depth theoretical knowledge and the development of research skills and abilities in the chosen field of science.

The awarding of a degree is based on the achievements and findings of the relevant field of science. The study plan of the joint academic master study programme "Nutrition Studies" and the study course descriptions updated in order to promote a student-centred studying with high-quality teaching, which includes modern teaching methods, well-equipped study environment. The study implementation methods contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study courses and the study programme. Student-centred learning and teaching principles are considered.

Simulation training technologies, such as simulation of manipulations, modelling of clinical processes, simulation processes are widely implemented into the educational process.

The topics of students' final theses are relevant to the field and correspond to the study programme.

Strengths:

1. Student-centred studying with high-quality teaching.
2. The content of specialty study courses is constantly updated.

Weaknesses:

None

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

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

22_Anx_Titles of students' Master thesis_AMSP Nurs_Stud.pdf

6.4_Anx_Ac_staff_publications_IF factor_Facult_Publ_Health_Soc_Welf.pdf

6.2_Anx_Biographies_teaching_staff_AMSP_Nursing_Studies_EN_163pages.pdf

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1. Study programme "Nutrition Studies" is implemented in all cooperation universities (RSU, LU, LTBU), using the material and technical resources of the universities involved in the programme (auditoriums and laboratories with existing equipment) in accordance with the study plan and the Cooperation Agreement of the joint study programme.

The RSU library is an accredited library of national importance and is one of the core RSU structural units that provides study and research activities with the necessary information resources, as well as a wide range of services. The information resources needed for studies are updated every year. The purchase of internationally recognised teaching materials in English is significantly increased. The improvement of the range of e-books, which makes it possible for everyone to partially replace paper books, plays an important role. Interlibrary subscription (including international) services are available to students. Availability of RSU e-resources is the same in all structural units of the library, while most of the latest books in the field of rehabilitation are available at the MITC branch of the library, where most of the study programme courses are delivered. Over the past five years, the RSU library has acquired 338 books on nutrition and diet therapy. PEN: Practice-based Evidence in Nutrition database is subscribed to annually.

A search on the topic of Nutrition in the subscribed multidisciplinary databases indicates 730 e-books (Ebook Central (ProQuest)) and 2,122 e-books (EBSCO eBook Academic Collection). Primo unified search engine lists around 100 e-journal titles under Nutrition and Dietetics.

In 2022, the library reviewed the bibliography and literature provision of the Study programme "Nutrition Studies" courses and concluded that it was generally very good.

RSU common resources are described in the description of the field, so this section focuses on the material and technical base of the cooperation universities.

Corresponding material and technical resources of LU and LBTU also provided to students of the StP. The infrastructure, informative provision (library resources), material and technical fully comply, financial provision partly comply with requirements of the Joint Academic master study programme

“Nutrition Studies” (45722) and demonstrate achievements of programme learning outcomes.

2.3.2. Not applicable.

2.3.3. Based on SAR p.630, it is planned to finance the study programme from the state budget and the funds of private and legal persons by setting the tuition fee in accordance with the state budget funding without social security in the amount of EUR 7335 of study year.

The number of students planned to reach in the two years of study programme is 57 students, with 29 students admitted in the first year of studies, and 1 student predicted to drop out in the following year. After high inflation and rapid increase in energy prices, the result of the study programme with such tuition fee per year is negative due to the lack of funding from the state budget in accordance with the Cabinet Regulations No. 994 – the basic costs of studies no longer cover infrastructure maintenance costs. However, based on the information provided in the SAR p.630, there is a planned additional funding allocated for the performance funding, approved in the budget of the Ministry of Education and Science. Taking into account the current situation that is described before, it is clear that the study programme with the current amount of students is not cost-effective, even though, based on the Table 3 - “Cost of the Study Programme” provided in the SAR p.631, the average cost of the study programme is 464 EUR higher than the average revenue. It does not manage to cover the necessary infrastructure costs as mentioned before, which has to be taken into account. The good thing is, that there is a plan on how to fix the situation in the future and extra funding has been requested and tried to be found.

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

The infrastructure, including informative resources such as library materials, technical resources, wholly align with the demands of the study programme, showcasing tangible accomplishments in meeting programme learning objectives. Unfortunately, the average cost of the study programme is higher than the average revenue, which is a substantial difference. However, there is a planned additional funding allocated for the performance funding, approved in the budget of the Ministry of Education and Science. In case the study programme does not get the additionally requested funding, it might have to think of alternative solutions on how to stabilise the financial side of the study programme to even out the cost and revenue gap.

Strengths:

1. Advanced material and technical base for student training; plenty of high-quality library resources.

Weaknesses:

1, Cost-effectiveness of the study programme is negative (there is a planned additional funding allocated for the performance funding, approved in the budget of the Ministry of Education and Science)

Assessment of the requirement [6]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Advanced material and technical base for student training; plenty of high-quality library resources.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1. The implementation of the compulsory and restricted elective part of the academic Master's study programme "Nutrition Studies" is carried out by 11 lectures, 8 of whom have been elected to the academic positions at RSU (Annex 24.7): one is a professor and two are associate professors, three lecturers, one assistant, one leading researcher. The LU part of the study programme is implemented by five professors and four associate professors, the LBTU part of the study programme is implemented by three professors and three associate professors. In total, the joint programme of RSU, LU, and LBTU is implemented by 9 professors and 9 associate professors. The total number of academic staff elected to implement the study programmes includes professors and associate professors in line with the legal requirements.

It is worth noting that the Joint Academic master study programme "Nutrition Studies" is carried out by teaching staff of three universities – RSU, LU, LBTU. All members of the teaching staff conduct scientific activities in a scientific field related to the educational programme. Teaching staff serve in elected academic positions at their universities and are selected in accordance with their university regulations. This is evidenced by interviews with the representatives of the joint programme of RSU, the University of Latvia and Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies.

Each higher education institution provides its teaching staff with opportunities for growth and professional development in accordance with the Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia No. 662 of 11 September 2018 on the education and professional qualification required for teachers (SAR, part II, paragraph 3.4.1, page 632). All Universities are regularly concerned about improving the qualifications and professional skills of their teaching staff. For this purpose, RSU regularly offers courses organised by the Center for Educational Development (PIC) (evidenced by interviews with the representatives of the Centre for Educational Growth). From 1 January 2017 9 lecturers of the educational programme "Nutrition Studies" participated in activities of the PIC (SAR, part II, paragraph 3.4.1, page 632).

The parts of the study programmes together form a coherent and consecutive joint study programme, and the list of lecturers in the study programme consists of lecturers from the three partner universities, including academic staff (Clause 32 of the first Paragraph of Section 55 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions, Sub-clause 3 of Paragraph 2 of Section "Joint Study Programme" of the same Law).

Both elected and invited lecturers have been active in research, health care and science for many years. 50% of the elected lecturers have the status of an expert of the Latvian Council of Science. Evaluating the business trips of the teaching staff, it was concluded that 4 elected lecturers have gone on business trips abroad supported by RSU, while 3 of them have gone on domestic business trips.

5 teaching staff (from 11 lecturers) have an English proficiency level between B2 and C1. 1 lecturer has acquired the English language by taking language courses. The RSU Language Centre organises the language proficiency tests, compares diplomas and validates other documents following the approved internal decrees and generally accepted international standards.

The qualification of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the Joint Academic master study programme "Nutrition Studies" (45722) fully complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements in the regulatory documents. It enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses.

2.4.2. The higher education institution purposefully takes measures so that changes in the composition of the teaching staff do not negatively affect the quality of the implementation of the study programme and the compliance of the study programme with the requirements specified in regulatory enactments. It should be noted that graduates of the programme successfully participate in the implementation of the study programme (SAR, part II, paragraph 3.4.2, page 633). There is a constant updating of teaching staff. New teaching staff, being involved in the implementation of the educational programme, ensure continuity in student learning through the experience of their graduates. It is important to emphasise that the teaching staff improves their qualifications and is elected to higher positions in the University. Updating of teaching staff takes place within the framework of the programme.

2.4.3. Not applicable

2.4.4. Each member of Academic staff has publications in peer-reviewed national and international journals during the last six years (ANNEX 6.1; 6.4.2). All lecturers have more than 7 years of experience in academic work in health care.

The selection and recruitment of the Academic staff comply with the existing university regulations and in accordance with the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

6 lecturers, or 75% of all elected lecturers involved in the implementation of the Joint Academic master study programme “Nutrition Studies” (45722) have been employed at least once in RSU research projects since 2017. Whereas, since 2017, 1 or 50% of all acting lecturers involved in the implementation of the Programme have been employed in RSU research projects at least once. 50% of the elected lecturers involved in the implementation of the Programme has the status of an expert of the Latvian Council of Science (LCS) (Annex 24.7).

2.4.5. Mutual cooperation of the teaching staff in the implementation of the study programme has been established, this was proven by the interview with the teaching staff and Programme Director. RSU organises meetings of programme directors, where any issues related to the implementation of the programme and the organisation of training (theoretical and practical classes) are discussed in detail. A very important fact is that during these meetings there is an exchange of views and an exchange of best practices.

Implementation of the Joint academic master’s study programme is carried out by direct cooperation in the direct study process of the teaching staff involved in the programme through joint implementation of courses or parts of courses included in one module (SAR, part II, paragraph 3.4.5, page 634).

Good example of collaboration is scientific research through joint research projects; for example, alumni and academic staff of the study programme “Nutrition Studies” participated in the implementation of a project co-funded by the ERDF programme Entrepreneurship and Innovations.

Teaching staff together organise international conferences such as Nutrition and Health (2012, 2016, 2020), ensure that the Nutritional Studies programme corresponds to the knowledge, skills and competences of Level 7 of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (LQF). During the academic year 2017/2018, after the second international conference Nutrition and Health (5–7 October 2016), the teaching staff of the universities (LU, LBTU, RSU) prepared 35 scientific articles, which were published in the Proceedings of the Latvian Academy of Sciences, Part B, based on 52 reports and 47 poster presentations presented at the conference, in which 352 scientists’ studies were presented.

Researchers’ Nights are organised jointly. At the EU Researchers’ Night 2019 Science for the Future, Master’s students collaborated with representatives of SIA On plate (alumni of the programme and specialists of the field) and attendees had the opportunity to receive science-based explanations on nutrition and metabolic assessment, the importance of a balanced diet and physical activity for a

healthy life, and research in nutrition and sports science carried out by Latvian specialists of nutrition and sports science (SAR, part II, paragraph 3.4.5, page 635).

The entire described process proves the achievement of the goals of the educational programme and the interrelation of training courses within the educational programme.

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

The qualification of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the Joint Academic master study programme "Nutrition Studies" (45722) fully complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements in the regulatory documents. It enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses. A higher education institution takes measures to ensure that changes in the composition of the teaching staff do not have a negative impact on the quality of the educational programme and the compliance of the educational programme with the requirements established by regulations. A mechanism for mutual cooperation of the teaching staff in the implementation of the study programme has been established, it ensures the achievement of the aims of the study programme and the interconnection of study courses within the study programme.

Strengths:

1. Constant updating of teaching staff.
2. Qualified teaching staff in the field of nutrition.
3. High level of involvement of researchers in research activities.
4. Recruiting alumni as teachers.

Weaknesses:

None

Assessment of the requirement [7]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

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

6.4_Anx_Ac_staff_publications_IF factor_Facult_Publ_Health_Soc_Welf.pdf

8.1_Anx_Data international lecturers and students_Faculty_Publ_Health_Soc_Welf.pdf

6.2. pielikums

Annex 6.2.

Mācībspēku biogrāfijas (Curriculum Vitae Europass formātā)

Biographies of the teaching staff members (in Europass Curriculum Vitae format)

Akadēmiskā maģistra studiju programma "Uzturzinātne"

Academic Master's study programme "Nutrition Science"

2.5. Assessment of the Compliance

Requirements

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Annex -17.1_pielik_KAMSP_Uzturzin_atbilst_valsts_izgl_standartam_ENG.pdf confirms that the study programme complies with State Education Standard corresponding to Cabinet Regulations No 240 of 13 May 2014 "Regulations on the National Standard for Academic Education"
<https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=266187>

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 3 - The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in all languages in which the study programme is implemented, and they comply with the requirements set forth in Section 561 , Paragraph two and Section 562 , Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The study course descriptions are prepared in English and Latvian that can be accessed under annexes -20_Anx_Study_course_description_Nutrition_Science.pdf and 20_pielik_Kursu_apr_Uzturzinatne.pdf. Descriptions comply with regulations set forth in Law on Higher Education Institutions. The study materials can be accessed. The implementation language of the programme is Latvian.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The provided Diploma sample - 24.1_Anx_Diploma_and_Diploma_Supplement_Nutrition_Science.pdf complies with the procedure by which state-recognised documents of higher education are issued according to Cabinet Regulation No. 202 "Kārtība, kādā izsniedz valsts atzītus augstāko izglītību apliecinošus dokumentus".

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

According to Annex 24.7_Anx_Analysis_Composition_Academic_Staff_Nutrition_Science.pdf, the study programme complies with Clause 32 of the first Paragraph of Section 55 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (Latvian only), as well as Sub-clause 3 of Paragraph 2 of Section "Joint Study Programme" of the same Law, where it is stated that the parts of the study programmes together form a coherent and consecutive joint study programme, and the list of lecturers in the study programme consists of lecturers from the three partner universities, including academic staff.

- 6 6 - Academic study programmes provided for less than 250 full-time students may be implemented and less than five professors and associated professors of the higher education institution may be involved in the implementation of the mandatory and limited elective part of these study programmes provided that the relevant opinion of the Council for Higher Education has been received in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 7 7 - At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of an academic doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field of science. At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a professional doctoral study programme in arts (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 8 8 - The teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme are proficient in the official language in accordance with the regulations on the level of the official language knowledge and the procedures for testing official language proficiency for performing professional duties and office duties.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Based on the acquired information onsite as well as relevant annexes:

24.4_AnxCertification_Regarding_Latvian_Language_of_the_Academic_Staff.pdf and 6.2_AnxCV_ENG_visas_programmas.7z, it can be evaluated that the language proficiency of teaching staff is compliant with Cabinet Regulation. Nr. 733 "Regulations Regarding the Extent of the Knowledge of the Official Language, the Procedures for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language and the State Fee for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language".

- 9 9 - The teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language, if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Sample of attached study agreement 24.8_AnxCStudy contract sample_Health Care study direction.pdf complies with Cabinet Regulation. Nr. 70 "Studiju līgumā obligāti ietveramie noteikumi".

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

RSU has provided confirmation that students will be provided with opportunities to continue their education in another higher education institution if the implementation of the study programme is terminated. The agreements are specified in the annexes under "24.2_pielik_Apliecinājumi_par_parnemsanu_eng.7z". It is specified that in case of discontinuation of this study programme, students can continue their studies at RSU Academic

Master's study programme "Public Health".

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

RSU has provided confirmation that students are guaranteed compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the study programme's license is revoked. It is ensured based on the Section 55(8) of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education and Cabinet of Ministers No 795 of 11 December 2018 "Regulations on Licensing of study programmes", Paragraph 13.4. The relevant document can be found under Annexes - 24.3_Anx_Certification_of_Compensation_of_Losses_to_Students.pdf.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

In accordance with the Annex

15_Anx_Compliance_to_Joint_StP_Regulations_Nutrition_Science.pdf, the joint study programme complies with Law on Higher Education Institutions Section 55.1

<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/37967-augstskolu-likums>

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Assessment of the requirement [8]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Study programme fully complies with regulatory enactments.

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

The Joint academic master study programme "Nutrition Studies" is in compliance with the requirements laid down for the joint study programme (Law on Higher Education Institutions, Section 55.1). The study aims to train qualified nutritionists with advanced theoretical and methodological knowledge, research skills, and the ability to conduct independent research in nutrition, food, biochemistry, food chemistry, and toxicology. The employment of graduates ranges from 94 - 98%, which is a really high rate and demonstrates high demand for this profile of specialists on the job market. This is a strong indicator for the justification of the study programme and moreover implicates recommendation for more state funded places. The goals and objectives of the Academic master study programme "Nutrition Studies" (45722) correspond to learning outcomes of the programmes. The study courses are logically combined in the educational programme. The programme is aimed at developing practical skills that allow graduates to be competitive in the labour market. The content of specialty study courses is constantly updated in accordance with

developments in the relevant field of health Care. During the studies, students acquire in-depth theoretical and methodological knowledge, research skills. The structure of the joint management programme and Council decisions have been clearly defined by a cooperation agreement between universities. The awarding of a degree is based on the achievements and findings of the relevant field of science. The study plan of the joint academic study programme “Nutrition Studies” and the study course descriptions updated in order to promote a student-centred studying with high-quality teaching, which includes modern teaching methods, well-equipped study environment. The study implementation methods contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study courses and the study programme. Student-centred learning and teaching principles are considered. Simulation training technologies, such as simulation of manipulations, modelling of clinical processes, simulation processes are widely implemented into the educational process. The topics of students' final theses are relevant to the field and correspond to the study programme. The infrastructure, including informative resources such as library materials, technical resources, wholly align with the demands of the Study programme, showcasing tangible accomplishments in meeting programme learning objectives.

Unfortunately, the average cost of the study programme is higher than the average revenue, which is a substantial difference. However, there is a planned additional funding allocated for the performance funding, approved in the budget of the Ministry of Education and Science.

The qualification of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the Joint Academic master study programme “Nutrition Studies” (45722) fully complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements in the regulatory documents. It enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses. A mechanism for mutual cooperation of the teaching staff in the implementation of the study programme has been established, it ensures the achievement of the aims of the study programme and the interconnection of study courses within the study programme.

Strengths:

1. Study programme “Nutrition Studies” is a unique and the only academic master’s study programme in nutrition studies in Latvia, which provides continuing education opportunities in the master’s study programme in nutrition studies for specialists with higher professional education in medicine or dentistry,
2. The teaching staff is proficient in nutrition studies theory and can apply it to research and practical solutions aligned with EU, WHO, and Latvian strategic trends.
3. The Joint master's study programme organised international conferences named Nutrition and Health in 2016 and 2020, featuring lectures by nutrition experts and leading European researchers.
4. Cooperation with institutions implementing nutrition policies, the Ministry of Health , the Centre for Disease Prevention and Control..
5. Employability rate of graduates is between 94 - 98%,
6. High demand for professionals on the job market.
7. Student-centred studying with high-quality teaching.
8. The content of specialty study courses is constantly updated.
9. Advanced material and technical base for student training; plenty of high-quality library resources.
10. Constant updating of teaching staff.
11. Qualified teaching staff in the field of nutrition.
12. High level of involvement of researchers in research activities.
13. Recruiting alumni as teachers.

Weaknesses:

1. Good employability of the Master study programmes students and low number of state funded

places, only 10, gives low response to a job market needs.

2. Cost-effectiveness of the study programme is negative (there is a planned additional funding allocated for the performance funding, approved in the budget of the Ministry of Education and Science)

Evaluation of the study programme "Nutrition Studies"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Excellent

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Nutrition Studies"

Short-term recommendations

None.

Long-term recommendations

Implement a strategic plan to address the low response to job market needs, given the good employability of Master's StP students and the limited number of state-funded places (only 10). Advocate for an increase in the number of state-funded places within the next assessment period to align with the demands of the job market and ensure that a greater number of students can benefit from the programme's strong employability outcomes.

Develop a comprehensive financial plan to address the negative cost-effectiveness of the study program, considering the planned additional funding allocated for performance funding as approved in the Ministry of Education and Science budget. Implement necessary adjustments, including a long-term revision of tuition fees, within the next assessment period to align costs with income, ensuring the sustainable financial viability of the study programme.

II - "Nursing Studies" ASSESSMENT

II - "Nursing Studies" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1. The aim of the academic master study programme "Nursing studies" (45723) (AMSP Nursing Studies) is to develop the professional competence of nurses, the skills in organisation and management of work in healthcare institutions, research and analytical skills as well as pedagogical and communication skills, and the leadership of a medical practitioner (SAR, p. 665). The AMSP "Nursing Studies" complies with the aim of the study field "Health Care" to provide excellent, research-based and inclusive education of health care professionals to promote sustainable development of public health and well-being, realising everyone's potential throughout life (SAR, p. 22). The inclusion of the AMSP "Nursing Studies" in the study field "Health Care" is justified and follows from the aim of the given study programme, the learning outcomes to be achieved, the content of the programme and the degree to be awarded.

2.1.2. The AMSP "Nursing Studies" is a full-time study programme with the implementation duration of 2 years and the amount of 80 Latvian credits (CP)/120 ECTS. The languages of instruction – Latvian and English. The degree to be acquired – Master of Health Sciences in Health Care. The

admission requirements (full time studies in Latvian – professional bachelor's degree in Health Care, academic bachelor's degree in Health Sciences or second-level professional higher education in Health Care (or equivalent higher education). A bachelor's degree in another subject area or branch of science, provided that the person has previously obtained a professional qualification of a nurse or a midwife. Entrance examination. Full time studies in English – professional bachelor's degree in Health Care, academic bachelor's degree in Health Sciences or second-level professional higher education in Health Care (or equivalent higher education). A bachelor's degree in another subject area or branch of science, provided that the person has previously obtained a professional qualification of a nurse or a midwife. Entrance examination, and English language proficiency at least at B2 level) (SAR, p. 667). The admission requirements correspond to the aim and objectives of the study programme.

The code of the study programme according to the classification of Latvian education – 45723, where the first part of the code – 45 – indicates that the type of the AMSP “Nursing Studies” is an academic master programme and the digits of the second part of the code 723 indicate that the thematic area of education is Health Care, but the group of educational programmes is Nursing. The learning outcomes of the master's study programme correspond to Level 7 of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (LQF), which is described in the Cabinet of Ministers' Regulations No. 322 “Regulations on the Classification of Education in Latvia” (June 13, 2017).

The name, aims, objectives of the study programme, learning outcomes, as well degree to be obtained after completing the study programme comply with the requirements of the Cabinet of Ministers' Regulations No. 322 “Regulations on the Classification of Education in Latvia” (June 13, 2017), Cabinet Regulations No 240 “Regulations on the State Standard for Academic Education” (13 May, 2014). The name of the study programme, degree to be obtained, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and admission requirements are interrelated.

2.1.3. Since the previous accreditation of the AMSP “Nursing Studies” changes made in the parameters relate to the study programme's objectives and learning outcomes which have been clarified to ensure that they are mutually aligned with the results of the study courses, and the knowledge, skills and competences achieved in the courses. The aim of the study programme has been updated coordinating it with the outcomes of study courses and the study programme as follows: “to develop the professional competence of nurses, the skills in organisation and management of work in healthcare institutions, research and analytical skills as well as pedagogical and communication skills, and the leadership of a medical practitioner”. The learning outcomes have been supplemented and corrected by mapping study courses, to have better interaction between the competences, knowledge to be learned in individual courses and the relevance of outcomes of the study programme to its aims and objectives. Implementation of the study programme in Daugavpils has been finished. (SAR, 665-670). These corrections are analysed, justified and would be supported.

2.1.4. The economic and social justification of the AMSP “Nursing Studies” is well justified based on the need of master's level professionals in high quality social and health care services and education by employers' arguments as well by international scientific research findings. In the labour market, there is a need for master's educated nurses and midwives with a Master's degree in health sciences, who can undertake management functions in medical institutions, as well as work as lecturers and placement supervisors. Potential employers contact the study programme director to meet with Master students, to discuss challenges and job opportunities in the field, emphasising that graduates of the Academic Masters study programme of Nursing Studies are able to drive change in the health care sector, ensuring the transfer of clinical evidence-based knowledge into daily practices, promoting interdisciplinary cooperation, and coordinating health care services. (SAR, p. 673-674) Graduate employment is 100% in the years 2018 and 2019. (SAR, p. 673-676, Annex 10).

The expert group was told by the employers of the need for the recruitment of master-educated nurses and midwives. Similarly, the graduates informed the expert group that they had benefited from their master's education and were employed in positions in healthcare corresponding to their master's education.

The number of enrolled students has varied between 10 (2016/2017) and 27 (2017/2018), being 16 in the academic year 2021/2022. The number of drop-out students has been low, varying among first year students from 1 (2016/2017) to 7 (2019/2020) being 3 in the academic year 2021/2022. The drop-out rate among second-year students has varied from 0 (zero, 2018/2019) to 2 in the academic year 2021/2022. (Annex 16, SAR, p. 676-677)

The number of students, the full employment of the graduates, and the labour market demand show that the study programme is economically and socially justified.

2.1.5. Not applicable.

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

The inclusion of the AMSP "Nursing Studies" in the study field "Health Care" is justified and follows from the aim of the given study programme, the learning outcomes to be achieved, the content of the programme and the degree awarded. The name of the AMSP "Nursing Studies", degree to be obtained, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and admission requirements are interrelated.

Since previous accreditation the corrections in the parameters are analysed, justified and would be supported. The number of students, the full employment of the graduates and the labour market demand shows that the study programme is economically and socially justified.

Strengths:

1. There is a significant need for AMSP "Nursing Studies" educated graduates in health care services in Latvian society.

Weaknesses:

None.

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1. AMSP "Nursing Studies" has been created to implement a full educational study cycle where graduates are entitled to continue doctoral studies and to constantly improve their knowledge and skills to adapt to professional activity in changeable health services (SAR, p. 678). The curriculum has been gradually developed in line with the trends in the industry, labour markets, and health care services, as well as findings in the fields of nursing sciences and multidisciplinary sciences. (SAR, p. 678)

The study programme consists of compulsory (A part, 48 CP/72 ECTS), compulsory elective (B part, 12 CP /18 ECTS) and elective (C part, 6 CP/ 9 ECTS) courses.

The learning outcomes of the study programme ensure that students will be able to demonstrate in-depth or extended knowledge and understanding of the field or professional area such as "Clinical Trials", "Clinical Pharmacology and Management of Pharmacologically Assisted Care", "Civil and Environmental Protection, First Aid", "Public Law and Record-Keeping". The students will master the skill to explain with arguments and discuss difficult aspects in courses like "Introduction to Evidence-

Based Care”, “Communication and Management of Therapeutic Relationship”, “Leadership and Effective Change Management in Health Care”. (SAR, p. 678-681) These courses are relevant and important for master-educated health care professionals and show the topical contents of the study programme.

The credits for Master Theses are 20 CP/ 30 ECTS. Preparing the Master’s Theses is supported by studies related to statistics and research methods, for example. In addition, the further activities include plans “to promote the involvement of students in scientific research activities, including projects of the Faculty of Public Health and Social Welfare and the Department of Nursing and Obstetric Care”. (SAR, p. 680, Annex 18.1)

The study course description shows that in some courses the references could be updated, for example, in the course Evidence Based Care, many of the references are 10 or more years old. Based on the Table of Contents of Study Course Descriptions (Annex 20.1) can be observed that no special course related to research ethics exists, although that topic is important in studies regarding the scientific research process. The study programme should update the literature with new references where appropriate, and a course related to research ethics is recommended.

2.2.2. Nursing science is the fundamental discipline for AMSP “Nursing Studies”, and a course titled “Nursing science theories” could be considered to be developed when updating the curriculum. The multidisciplinary approach in master's- level studies is necessary for students, in particular in the demanding work life positions after graduation, and students are provided with these kinds of courses. (SAR, p. 681-682)

2.2.3. AMSP “Nursing Studies” applies student-centred teaching and learning methods to improve students’ critical thinking and problem solving skills. Thus, the teaching and learning methods contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the programme. The study process is flexible to support the combination of studies, work and family life of students. The study programme emphasises remote implementation methods such as videos and e-learning environments to make it possible for students to study in flexible times. Different forms and methods are used during contact hours in the auditorium: lectures and seminars, class group or individual work, discussions, situational tasks, study research, development, and defence of projects. The purpose of teaching methods is to improve the ability of Master students to describe and critically analyse situations and problems, using theoretical knowledge, practical skills, and attitudes, to logically assess development of a situation and take decisions to deal with problems, to develop mutual communication skills, to develop the ability to work individually and in groups in cooperation with other healthcare professionals, to develop the skills to discuss and substantiate personal opinions on public, to improve written communication skills. The teaching and learning methods are versatile and based on the student-centred principles.

In the SAR (p. 683-684) it is described that teachers of the study programme participate in international mobility and international projects such as Erasmus+ mobility programmes. Lecturers of the Department of Nursing and Obstetric Care visited Estonian and Finnish universities in 2021 and 2022, as well as worked on the development joint scientific projects – one of the projects received Erasmus funding in 2022; work on other projects is still ongoing.and share their experiences of international co-operation with students who also participate in these activities. No detailed information was given how many of the teachers of the AMSP “Nursing Studies” have participated. (SAR, p. 683-684, Annex 7)

2.2.4. Not applicable.

2.2.5. Not applicable.

2.2.6. The thematic direction of the topics of AMSP “Nursing Studies” students’ master’s Theses follow under the following areas: analyses of health care organisation, workplaces of nurses and midwives, promotion of health care and improvement of the healthcare organisation and working environment; analyses of education and technology; and quality indicators of professional life of nurses and their relation to the work experience, research of the health ecosystem. The topics of the Master’s Theses are topical and relevant to the field of nursing science. These include topics such as “Stressors and their management in the professional practice of the operating room nurse “ and “Quality of working life of inpatient nurses and potential staff turnover”. (SAR, p. 687, Annex 22)

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

The content of the AMSP “Nursing Studies” is relevant and topical. The study courses are logically interconnected in the curriculum. The courses are relevant to the Academic Master’s study programme of “Nursing Studies”.

In the future it can be considered to include a course titled “Nursing science theories” in the curriculum to make more visible the relevant field of science.

The teaching and learning methods used in the study programme are based on student-centered principal and various methods and modern simulation learning environments are in use as well as remote methods. Teachers and students participate in international mobility programmes and projects. The topics of the Master’s Theses are topical.

Strengths:

1. Very well organised and implemented study programme.
2. AMSP “Nursing Studies” graduates are 100% employed.

Weaknesses:

- 1, The descriptions of the courses show that in some courses many of the references are more than 10 years old, for example in the Evidence Based Care, and needs to be updated.

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The content of the AMSP “Nursing Studies” is relevant and topical. The topics of the Master’s Theses are topical.

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1. The common RSU infrastructure and also the study base formed for the study field is used for providing the study programme – library resources, study rooms, technical supplies, computers, cameras, internet connection, etc. Specific learning resources are almost entirely provided in e-studies, including descriptions of study courses, information on the development of independent works, tasks and tests, if any, as well as required readings. Educational literature is mostly provided through e-books, e-journals or internet sources – with a view to provide students with the possibility to read on e-devices (however, in some cases teachers specifically ask students to work in the library) (SAR, p. 688).

The library provides lecturers and students with access to Latvian and international electronic resources, including in the health care sector. It should be noted that the Statistical Unit, by promoting the scientific activities of RSU students and lecturers, offers consultations on research methodologies, data input, the use of data processing programmes, methods of statistical processing of data, analysis, interpretation and graphic presentation of results (SAR, page 688).

At the beginning of the implementation of each study course, the lecturer re-organises the e-studies website, updating tasks and lists of readings. The lecturer continues to work on the website during the implementation of the study course, using it also for communication with students, notices and answers to questions. In addition, several other tools related to providing the study process remotely are available in the RSU e-studies system toolbox making it possible to perform different activities. Different RSU departments and structural units (Centre for Educational Growth (CEG), Doctoral School, Information Technology Department) offer different continuing education improvement opportunities on different topics, for example, mastering of digital tools, mastering of interactive methods, preparation of scientific articles, information in different databases, platforms for use of references, opportunities provided by different platforms, etc. Taking care of mental and physical health of employees, RSU offers to attend the gym, as well as organised sports classes for lecturers at the Faculty of Continuing Education. Covid-19 affected the possibilities to attend sports classes, but the welfare of RSU employees is still a priority. During the Covid-19 pandemic, in cooperation with the Department of Psychosomatic Medicine and Psychotherapy employees and students were offered to receive consultations for the preservation and improvement of mental and physical health (SAR, p. 689).

The experts panel considers that the financial resources are reasonable, and other resources are at a very good level to implement the Academic master study programme "Nursing studies" (45723), create prerequisites for the achievement of the learning outcomes and indicate the possibility to ensure a high-quality study process.

2.3.2. Not applicable.

2.3.3. Students can study on state budget funded places and for funds of natural or legal persons. Until now, all the state budget funded places in the study programme have been filled. The study programme is planned to be financed from state budget funds and the funds of individuals and legal entities setting the tuition fee in the Latvian flow in accordance with the state budget funding without social security of EUR 7335, in the English flow – EUR 8000 per year of studies. The tuition fee can be subject to discounts in accordance with internal norms and regulations. The number of students planned to be achieved in the Latvian flow in two years of studies is 29 students, enrolling 15 students in the first year, planning a drop-out of 1 student in the second year. Such a number of students is optimal to ensure a high-quality study process and to make the study programme cover its implementation, as well as development costs. Meanwhile, the study programme in the English flow, which lasts two years, will be able to cover implementation and development costs, if a total of 29 students are enrolled, who pay a tuition fee of EUR 8000 per year. (SAR, page 690).

The average income per student is EUR 7067/year in the Latvian flow, and average cost per student is 4154 euro. Funding is distributed as follows: Academic staff, % - 41, Department resources, % - 2, Other direct expenditure, % - 7, Scholarship costs, % - 9, Fixed costs, % - 4, Overheads, % - 37 (SAR, page 690-691).

The average income per student is EUR 7407/year in the English flow, and average cost per student is EUR 4506. Funding is distributed as follows: Academic staff, % - 48, Department resources % - 2, Fixed costs, % - 3, Overheads, % - 47 (SAR, page 691).

It is evident that the programme has sufficient students to generate sufficient income. However, it should be taken into account that the study programme is implemented only in Latvian. Only two students from abroad (in 2020/2021 and 2021/2022) were enrolled in the study programme,

considering statistics on full-time students (outside exchange programmes) (SAR, Annex 16). Student drop-out rates have a good dynamic (For example, in the academic years 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 it was 8 in total, but in 2021/2022 it was 5 in total). The main reason for 2021/2022 is Academic failure for both – first and second year of study students (SAR, Annex 16).

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

The infrastructure, including informative resources such as library materials, financial support, and technical resources, wholly align with the demands of the study programme, showcasing tangible accomplishments in meeting programme learning objectives. The allocated funding for the study programme is effectively utilised to guarantee the comprehensive execution of the educational process.

Strengths:

1. Advanced material and technical base for students training at RSU and different continuing education improvement opportunities.
2. The study programme provides students with extensive RSU Library resources and databases, student portal MyRSU, e-studies.

Weaknesses:

1. Till now, no students were enrolled in the English stream of the study programme.

Assessment of the requirement [6]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

After analysing the documents and meeting with the Academic master study programme “Nursing studies” managers, academic staff, students, graduates, and employers, the experts have confirmed that the study programme at RSU is well materially provided, dynamic, student centered and ensures that students receive a high quality education.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1 The implementation of the Academic master study programme “Nursing studies” (45723) is carried out by 25 teachers. They are RSU lecturers and practitioners. 16 of lecturers involved in the implementation of the study programme have been elected to RSU academic positions, including 3 professors, 3 associate professors, 1 lecturer, 1 researcher. Some staff members are involved in both mandatory and elective study course implementation, including 4 acting lecturers, 1 acting research assistant, and 1 acting assistant. 3 guest lecturers, including 2 instructors and 1 senior instructor, are participating in the programme's implementation (see Appendix 24.7; 24.2). The composition of teaching staff in the study programme is stable. Lecturers have both academic and practical work experience in the field of Nursing. In the reporting period, changes in academic staff have occurred among both permanent lecturers and invited teachers. To promote the achievement of the aim of the study programme and learning outcomes, lecturers with extensive academic and

professional experience are involved in teaching of study courses.

The procedure for the application and selection of academic staff at RSU is governed by the "Regulations of Rīga Stradiņš University on academic positions", "Process of Rīga Stradiņš University "Elections of Academic Staff"" and the general requirements as knowledge of the official language in accordance with the requirements of regulations of the Republic of Latvia; knowledge of foreign languages at a level sufficient to occupy an academic position; continuous improvement of their academic, scientific and pedagogical qualifications.

All members of the teaching staff conduct scientific activities in a scientific field related to the study programme.

Visiting lecturers from abroad are also involved in the implementation of the study programme. In the last 10 years, the visiting lecturer has demonstrated her experience in 150 clinical trials and their supervision in the field of cardiovascular, oncology, diabetes, surgery, emergency aid, renal, respiratory, public health, primary care and other areas (SAR, part II, paragraph 3.4.1, page 693).

RSU provides its teaching staff with opportunities for growth and professional development in accordance with the Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia No. 662 of 11 September 2018 on the education and professional qualification required for teachers (SAR, page 694). The University is regularly concerned about improving the qualifications and professional skills of its teaching staff. For this purpose, RSU regularly offers courses organised by the Center for Educational Development (PIC) (evidenced by interviews with the representatives of the Centre for Educational Growth). From 2017 22 lecturers of the Master's study programme "Nursing Studies" participated in continuing education activities of the Centre for Educational Growth attending more than 150 training activities of different content.

The site visit interviews showed the capacity and capability of the staff of achieving the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme across the various systems and public health specialisations required for the successful running of the relevant study courses. There is a transparent mechanism for academic promotions. Academic staff regularly participate in research work at the local and international scientific conferences.

The qualification of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the Academic master study programme "Nursing studies" (45723) fully complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements in the regulatory documents. It enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses. Most lecturers engaged in the implementation of the programme, are employees of the RSU Department of Nursing and Obstetric Care.

2.4.2. A higher education institution takes measures to ensure that changes in the composition of the teaching staff do not have a negative impact on the quality of the educational programme and the compliance of the educational programme with the requirements established by regulations. The composition of the teaching staff in the educational programme is stable. Faculty have both academic and practical experience in the health sectors, including public health. (SAR, page 695).

It is important to emphasise that the teaching staff improves their qualifications and is elected to higher positions in the University. Updating of teaching staff takes place within the framework of the programme. The academic and scientific potential of the teaching staff is also strengthened. Several lecturers of the study programme completed doctoral studies and were involved in the implementation of study courses after obtaining a doctoral degree. In the reporting period of the Department of Nursing and Obstetric Care, one lecturer was elected (re-elected for the next term), two lecturers were newly elected and three lecturers were re-elected (for the next term) (SAR, part II, paragraph 3.4.2, page 695).

Highly qualified lecturers who are experts in the field and specialise in the respective study course topics are involved in the implementation of the study programme. The composition of permanent lecturers is also stable and the number of permanent lecturers has increased.

2.4.3. Not applicable.

2.4.4. Each member of Academic staff has publications in peer-reviewed national and international journals during the last six years (Annex 6.1; 6.4.2).

All lecturers have experience in academic work in health care. Several lecturers are authors or co-authors of scientific publications, including on research methodology, scientific writing and dissemination of research results, as well as several collective monographs developed. Some lecturers prepare peer-reviewed international publications and review scientific articles.

Projects carried out by the academic staff contribute to the development of scientific capacity and competitiveness, which could be also characterised by the increase in the number of scientific articles in the Web of Science databases and Scopus journals, which strengthens the authority and recognisability of RSU as a centre of study and science. For example, the following projects were implemented in the reporting period – OnBoard-Med, Harmonization of on Board Medical Treatment, Occupational Safety and Emergency Skills in Baltic Sea Shipping, 01.09.2016–30.06.2019; an ETHCO project; the networking project CCA-EUnurse “Cultural Competence’s assessment at the Nursing Degree within the European Higher Education Area”.

2.4.5. Mutual cooperation of the teaching staff in the implementation of the study programme has been established, this was proven by the interview with the teaching staff and Programme Director. RSU organises meetings of programme directors, where any issues related to the implementation of the programme and the organisation of training (theoretical and practical classes) are discussed in detail. A very important fact is that during these meetings there is an exchange of views and an exchange of best practices. Cooperation between the lecturers of different study courses is promoted in the Study Programme to create optimal and logically sequential content of study courses and the planning of the course by study semesters, thereby ensuring that the knowledge from previously mastered courses serves as the basis for successful mastering of the next courses, as well as to adapt the content of the courses to be studied to the specificity of the Nursing (SAR, part II, paragraph 3.4.5, page 696).

Documentation by means of self-assessment report and the various annexes on staff, as well interviews with management and leadership, academic members, graduates and students shows that the heads of departments and teaching staff cooperate for coordination and implementation of study content and are actively involved in the implementation of study programmes. This is organised on several levels. Regular meetings are held discussing details of content so as to prevent repetition between different study courses. Students are also invited to give feedback to faculty by means of questionnaires or verbally/ directly, to draw attention to similar content in different study courses. The entire described process proves the achievement of the goals of the educational programme and the interrelation of training courses within the educational programme.

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

The qualification of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the Academic Master study programme “Nursing Studies” fully complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements in the regulatory documents. It enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses. A higher education institution takes measures to ensure that changes in the composition of the teaching staff do not have a negative impact on the quality of the educational programme and the compliance of

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

Strengths:

1. Active participation in international projects.
2. Constant updating of teaching staff.
3. Qualified teaching staff.
4. Constant participation in the training courses for development teaching and personal skills.

Weaknesses:

None.

Assessment of the requirement [7]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The qualification of the teaching staff is high; academic staff actively participate in international scientific projects and conferences

2.5. Assessment of the Compliance

Requirements

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The RSU has provided the document in Annex (17.1_Anx_Compl with_Nat_Ed_Standard_AMSP Nurs_Stud) providing the evidence that the AMSP Nursing Studies complies with Cabinet Regulations No 240 "Regulations of the National Standard for Academic Education" (approved on 13.05.2014)

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 3 3 - The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in all languages in which the study programme is implemented, and they comply with the requirements set forth in Section 561 , Paragraph two and Section 562 , Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The RSU has provided the study course descriptions for the AMSP Nursing studies both in Latvian and English (20_Anx_Study_course_description_AMSP_Nursing).

The descriptions of the study courses are compliant with regulations set forth in Law on Higher

Education Institutions. The descriptions of the study courses: define the requirements for the commencement of the acquisition of the study course; determine the aims for the implementation of the study course and the planned learning outcomes; outline the content of the study course necessary for the achievement of learning outcomes, contain the study course topic layout, mandatory and supplementary literature, indicate other sources of information; describe the organization and tasks for students' independent work; determine the assessment criteria of learning outcomes.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The sample of the diploma and its supplement (Annex 24.1_Anx_diploma and supplement_AMSP Nurs_Stud) are issued for completing the study programme in accordance with the Cabinet of Ministers' Regulation No. 202 of 16.04.2013 "Procedures for Issuing State-Recognized Higher Education Certificates".

- 5 5 - The academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements set forth in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

In accordance with the Annex

(24.7.1_Annex_Cert_compliance_AMSP_Nursing_Akad_staff_AL_55.1.3), RSU confirms that the academic staff involved in the implementation of the academic Master's (second cycle) study programme "Nursing Studies" meets the requirements set out in Clause 3 of Paragraph 1 of Section 55 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

- 6 6 - Academic study programmes provided for less than 250 full-time students may be implemented and less than five professors and associated professors of the higher education institution may be involved in the implementation of the mandatory and limited elective part of these study programmes provided that the relevant opinion of the Council for Higher Education has been received in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 7 7 - At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of an academic doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field of science. At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a professional doctoral study programme in arts (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 8 8 - The teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme are proficient in the official language in accordance with the regulations on the level of the official language knowledge and the procedures for testing official language proficiency for performing professional duties and office duties.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The RSU has provided annexes

(24.4_Anx_Certification_Regarding_Latvian_Language_of_the_Academic_Staff.pdf and 6.2_Anx_Biographies_teaching_staff_AMSP_Nursing_Studies_EN_163pages) confirming that the

language proficiency of teaching staff is compliant with Cabinet Regulations No. 733 “Regulations Regarding the Extent of the Knowledge of the Official Language, the Procedures for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language and the State Fee for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language”.

- 9 9 - The teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language, if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The RSU has provided the annexes (24.5_AnxCertification_Regarding_the_English_Language_Knowledge.pdf and 6.2_AnxBiographies_teaching_staff_AMSP_Nursing_Studies_EN_163pages) confirming that the members of the teaching staff to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level proficiency in the English language.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The sample of the study agreement is fully compliant with the Law on Higher Education Institutions Section 46, Paragraph 2, and the Cabinet Regulations No 70 of 23.01.2007 “The Mandatory Provisions to be included in the study agreement” (24.8_AnxCStudy contract sample_Health Care study direction.pdf).

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

In Annex 24.2_pielik_Apliecinajumi_par_parnemsanu_eng.7z It is indicated that students of the AMSP Nursing Studies will be provided with the opportunity to continue their education in the RSU AMSP Public Health or the University of Latvia AMSP Nursing Studies.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

RSU has provided the confirmation that students are guaranteed compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the study programme’s license is revoked. It is ensured based on Section 55(8) of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education and Cabinet of Ministers’ regulations No 795 of 11 December 2018 “Regulations on Licensing of study programmes”, Paragraph 13.4. The relevant document can be found under Annex 24.3_AnxCertification_of_Compensation_of_Losses_to_Students.pdf.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Assessment of the requirement [8]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Study programme fully complies with regulatory enactments.

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

The inclusion of the AMSP “Nursing Studies” in the study field “Health Care” is justified and follows from the aim of the given study programme, the learning outcomes to be achieved, the content of the programme and the degree and qualification to be awarded.

The name, aims, objectives of the study programme, learning outcomes, as well as the qualification to be obtained after completing the study programme comply with the requirements of the Cabinet of Ministers’ Regulations No. 322 “Regulations on the Classification of Education in Latvia, Cabinet Regulations No 240 “Regulations on the State Standard for Academic Education”. The name of the study programme, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and admission requirements are interrelated.

Since the previous accreditation of the AMSP “Nursing Studies” changes made in the parameters relate to the study programme’s objectives and learning outcomes which have been clarified to ensure that they are mutually aligned with the results of the study courses, and the knowledge, skills and competences achieved in the courses. These corrections are analysed, justified and would be supported.

The economic and social justification of the AMSP “Nursing Studies” is well justified based on the need of master’s level professionals in high quality social and health care services and education by employers’ arguments as well by international scientific research findings. The number of students, the full employment of the graduates and the labour market demand shows that the study programme is economically and socially justified.

AMSP “Nursing Studies” has been created to implement a full educational study cycle, where graduates are entitled to continue doctoral studies and to constantly improve their knowledge and skill to adapt to professional activity in changeable health services. The curriculum has been gradually developed in line with the trends in the industry, labour markets and health care services as well as findings in the field of nursing sciences and multidisciplinary field of sciences.

The study courses description shows that in some courses the references could be updated, for example in the course Evidence Based Care, many of the references are 10 or more years old. Based on the Table of Contents of Study Course Descriptions (Annex 20.1) can be observed that no special course related to research ethics exists, although that topic is important in studying the scientific research process.

The infrastructure, including informative resources such as library materials, financial support, and technical resources, wholly align with the demands of the study programme, showcasing tangible

accomplishments in meeting programme learning objectives.

The allocated funding for the study programme is effectively utilised to guarantee the comprehensive execution of the educational process.

The qualification of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the Academic Master study programme "Nursing Studies" fully complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements in the regulatory documents. It enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses. A higher education institution takes measures to ensure that changes in the composition of the teaching staff do not have a negative impact on the quality of the educational programme and the compliance of the educational programme with the requirements established by regulations. A mechanism for mutual cooperation of the teaching staff in the implementation of the study programme has been established, it ensures the achievement of the aims of the study programme and the interconnection of study courses within the study programme.

Strengths:

1. Graduates of the programme are 100% employed.
2. Advanced material and technical base for students training at RSU and different continuing education improvement opportunities.
3. The study programme provides students with extensive RSU Library resources and databases, student portal MyRSU, e-studies.
4. Active participation in international projects.
5. Constant updating of teaching staff.
6. Qualified teaching staff.
7. Constant participation in the training courses for development teaching and personal skills.

Weaknesses:

1. The descriptions of the courses show that in some courses many of the references are more than 10 years old, for example in the Evidence Based Care, and needs to be updated.
2. Till now, no students were enrolled in the English stream of the study program.

Evaluation of the study programme "Nursing Studies"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Nursing Studies"

Short-term recommendations

To update the descriptions of the courses.

To update references in some courses.

Long-term recommendations

Based on the data, no students were enrolled in the English stream of the study program. It is recommended to promote the English flow programme and attract more students.

II - "Public Health" ASSESSMENT

II - "Public Health" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1. The aim of the academic master study programme "Public Health" (45726) (AMSP Public Health) is to train highly qualified specialists for independent practical and scientific research work in the fields of public health: epidemiology, environmental health, health promotion, organisation of health care; the acquired fundamental theoretical knowledge of public health fields and research methodology will enable to plan and implement scientific research, identify and interpret topical problems and propose evidence-based solutions for the improvement of both sectoral policy and practice (SAR, p. 465). The AMSP "Public Health" complies with the aim of the study field "Health Care" to provide excellent, research-based and inclusive education of health care professionals to promote sustainable development of public health and well-being, realising everyone's potential throughout life (SAR, p. 22). The inclusion of the AMSP "Public Health" in the study field "Health Care" is justified and follows from the aim of the given study programme, the learning outcomes to be achieved, the content of the programme and the degree and qualification to be awarded.

duration of 2 years and the amount of 80 Latvian credits (CP) / 120 ECTS. The languages of instruction – Latvian and English. The degree to be acquired – Master of Health Sciences in Public Health. The admission requirements (full time studies, Latvian – higher professional bachelor's degree or an equivalent degree, or professional higher education with a qualification in the following educational thematic fields: Health Care, Social and Human Sciences, Life Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics; and Entrance examination; full time studies, English – higher professional bachelor's degree or an equivalent degree, or professional higher education with a qualification in the following educational thematic fields: Health Care, Social and Human Sciences, Life Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics; Entrance examination, and English language proficiency at least at B2 level) (SAR, p. 467). The admission requirements correspond to the aim and objectives of the study programme (SAR, p. 465).

The code of the study programme according to the classification of Latvian education – 45726, where the first part of the code – 45 – indicates that the type of the AMSP "Public Health" is an academic master programme and the digits of the second part of the code 726 indicate that the thematic area of education is Health Care, but the group of educational programmes is Public Health. The learning outcomes of the master's study programme correspond to Level 7 of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (LQF), which is described in the Cabinet of Ministers' Regulations No. 322 "Regulations on the Classification of Education in Latvia" (June 13, 2017).

The name, aims, objectives of the study programme, learning outcomes, as well as the degree to be obtained after completing the study programme comply with the requirements of the Cabinet of Ministers' Regulations No. 322 "Regulations on the Classification of Education in Latvia" (June 13, 2017), Cabinet Regulations No 240 "Regulations on the State Standard for Academic Education" (13 May, 2014). The name of the study programme, qualification to be obtained, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and admission requirements are interrelated.

2.1.3. The description and analysis of changes in the parameters of the study programme made since the issuance of the previous accreditation relate to shortening the wording of the aim of the study programme. The tasks of study programme have been updated by consolidating from 10 to 6 tasks as follows: 1) to provide students with opportunities to acquire in-depth theoretical knowledge in public health and research methodology; 2) to ensure the development of abilities and skills in the collection, processing and analysis of data necessary for research; 3) to develop the skill to interconnect the theoretical knowledge and research results with health management practice

(interaction of theory and practice); 4) to promote the use of theoretical and research knowledge in evidence-based actions in public health practice; 5) to ensure acquisition of additional knowledge in elective study courses to form a multidisciplinary approach for solving specific public health problems; 6) to promote student participation in research (projects, conferences, publications) and prepare for further doctoral studies. The learning outcomes have been clarified in accordance with study programme tasks by combining the knowledge, skills and competences to be obtained in the learning outcome. The study programme's parameters are analysed, justified and would be supported. (SAR, 468-470)

2.1.4. The priorities of AMSP "Public Health" are health, promoting health at the level of the population, including improving physical, mental and social well-being by identifying risk factors for both the environment and population and specific population groups through the development and implementation of evidence-based interventions. The need for public health professionals, such as Master's in Public Health, with analytical skills, especially in the processing, analysis and forecasting of epidemiological data, are needed in Latvia and internationally. Thus the study programme is economically and socially justified. (SAR, 473-474)

The number of students in the academic year 2022/2023 is 18, of which 13 are first year students and 5 second year students. The number of enrolled students is rather low, 11 in the academic years 2019/2020, 2020/2021 and 2021/2022. The number of drop-out students has varied from 2 (2020/2021) to 6 (2021/2022). The number of graduates out of those who stay in the programme is good per academic year, for instance, 10 students in the academic year 2021/2022. (Annex 16)

The most popular public health areas of employment for graduates are health promotion, health care management, policy and health economics; public health research; protection of working environment and safety at work; environmental health; food safety monitoring; control of infectious diseases. The best graduates also make their professional careers in the academic environment, working both at RSU and at the University of Latvia and other educational and research institutions in Latvia and Europe. Employers are satisfied with graduates' theoretical knowledge and practical skills, motivation, ability to solve problems independently and responsibility. Their satisfaction with innovative thinking is average. (SAR, p. 473-477) Overall, during the visit the expert group was reported by the employers that they appreciated the level of competencies the graduates have after completing the AMSP "Public Health" study programme.

2.1.5. Not applicable.

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

The inclusion of the Academic master study programme "Public Health" (45726) in the study field "Health Care" is justified and follows from the aim of the given study programme, the learning outcomes to be achieved, the content of the programme and the degree to be awarded. The name of the AMSP "Public Health", degree to be obtained, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and admission requirements are interrelated.

The study programme's parameters are analysed, justified and would be supported. The need for master's level public health professionals, with analytical skills, especially in the processing, analysis and forecasting of epidemiological data, are needed in Latvia and internationally. Thus the study programme is economically and socially justified.

The number of enrolled students is low, the number of drop-out students is rather high. The number of graduates within students who stay in the study programme is good.

Strengths:

1. Graduates from AMSP “Public Health” are needed in the society and they are valued by the employers.

Weaknesses:

1. Low number of enrolled students.
2. Rather high number of drop-out students.

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1. The content of an academic master study programme “Public Health” (45726) is implemented as full-time studies of two years of studies (four semesters) and the total volume is 80 CP (120 ECTS). In accordance with the RSU study description No. 35 “Organisation of Study Process”, a form D-1 “Curriculum of the Study Programme for the Academic Year” was developed and the study work is planned in compliance with it (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.1.).

The content of the study programme is topical, it closely related with the strategic aim of the study programme. Category A (compulsory) study courses aim at providing theoretical and practical knowledge for research in public health sphere, it reflects the strategic aim of the study programme, which is to provide the students with theoretical knowledge on public health sciences, as well as skills in specific theoretical and methodological issues of research in the sector to promote evidence-based decision-making and finding solutions in practice. Consequently, the learning outcomes are achieved which conform to the knowledge, skills and competence defined in level 7 of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) specified in the Latvian Education Classification. The content of teaching is also related with the learning outcomes of the academic master study programme “Public Health”, for example, second year of the studies include the category B (compulsory elective) study courses aimed at providing in-depth knowledge in various topical public health areas: Law in Medicine, Environment, Occupational Health and Occupational Medicine; Communication and Public Relations; Management of Epidemiological Emergencies; Project Management; Register-based Research, and it is related closely with the learning outcome, such as Knows multi-faceted research of public health problems and develops appropriate multisectoral solutions (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.1., Annex 18.1. Mapping of the study courses for the achievement of learning outcomes of the study programme). The study plan is logical, the study courses are interconnected and complementary, it is illustrated by the distribution of the study modules across the study years, for example, in the first study year the study courses are providing the broad theoretical and practical knowledge for research in public health sphere: Theory of Public Health; Epidemiology (II); Research Methodology; Qualitative Research Methods; Mathematical Statistics (II); Global Problems in Public Health; Health Care Economics. On the second year of the study courses aimed at providing in-depth knowledge in various topical public health areas: Law in Medicine, Environment, Occupational Health and Occupational Medicine; Communication and Public Relations; Management of Epidemiological Emergencies; Project Management; Register-based Research (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.1., Annex 19. Planning of the study programme; Annex 20. Description of study courses). Their content is developed by heads of study courses approved at the meeting of the Department of Public Health and Epidemiology. The content is discussed at meetings of the Public Health Quality Council, which also includes employers, industry experts and students. At the beginning of each new year of studies (semester), the head of the study course updates the content of the course, supplements it with the latest and most up-to-date information, which conforms to both current developments in the sector, labour market needs and trends in public health science (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.1.). The content of the Academic master study programme is compliant with the needs of the industry, labour market and scientific trends, because several new study courses have been created and

offered since previous accreditation study programme: “Development and Adaptation of Questionnaires in Scientific Research Work”, “Civil and Environmental Protection, First Aid” Health System Design” and Vertical Integration Project “Ergonomic Workplaces in a Healthy Environment”. They were created in cooperation with other Master’s study programmes of the Faculty of Public Health and Welfare, thus emphasising the need for interprofessional cooperation and teamwork in research and practice.

The content of an academic master study programme “Public Health” is compliant with the State Education Standard (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.1., Annex 17.1. Compliance of the academic Master’s study programme “Public Health” with the State Education Standard). The requirements of the standard were fully covered by the indicators of the programme. For example, the standard’s requirement for the aim of the study programme: the main aim of the Master’s study programme is to provide a set of knowledge, skills and competence in accordance with the knowledge, skills and competences specified at level 7 of the Latvian Qualifications Framework, it is reflected in the aim of the study programme, which is to train highly qualified specialists for independent practical and scientific research work in the fields of public health: epidemiology, environmental health, health promotion, organisation of health care. This requires that the acquired fundamental theoretical knowledge of public health fields and research methodology will enable to plan and implement scientific research, identify and interpret topical problems and propose evidence-based solutions for the improvement of both sectoral policy and practice. It can therefore be concluded that it fully complies with the knowledge, skills and competence at level 7 specified in both the European Qualifications Framework and the Latvian Qualifications Framework.

It was confirmed by the administration of the Faculty of Public Health and Social Welfare, that the content of the academic Master’s study programme “Public Health” is based on the Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region (ASPHER) guidelines. Students were highly satisfied with the statistics study course, provision of SPSS statistical analysis package and help provided by the statistics laboratory, and the sufficiency of working places in the statistics laboratory. The graduates confirmed that the content of the studies was absolutely useful in the work environment, except some very specific topics, which were relevant in the workplace.

2.2.2. Upon completion of the Academic Master’s study programme “Public Health” the graduate is awarded the degree of a Master of Health Sciences in Health Care. To obtain the degree, the master student should independently write and defend a Master’s thesis (20 CP / 30 ECTS). Writing a Master’s thesis illustrates how the students are involved in research work during the studies, and how the supervisors use their research experience while supervising the preparation of the Master’s thesis. The themes of Master’s theses should correspond to the thematic areas approved at the Council of the Faculty of Public Health and Social Welfare: risk factors for individual diseases (health events) in the population, preventive activity in society, health-related lifestyle habits and their determinants in different population groups, health policy and system functioning, risks to the environment, including working environment (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.2.). Thematic priorities are in line with the priorities set out in the Public Health Guidelines 2021-2027: healthy and active lifestyles, reducing disease spreading, access to services, and public engagement. Thematic priorities comply with the task, such as facilitating student participation in research (projects, conferences, publications) and to prepare them for further doctoral studies and the learning outcome of the study programme the graduate is prepared for independent research in both local and international research projects and for doctoral studies. Use evidence-based public health perspectives in their research and practical activities. Able to offer new knowledge in public health as a result of their research activity.

2.2.3. The study implementation methods, such as interactive lectures (including discussions), classes, seminars (including case analyses), and a small group work (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.3.),

they are aimed at involving students in active learning, participation in identification of the topical public health issues, analysing them and offering a solution, discuss the research opportunities in public health area, understand in depth the role of evidence-based decisions in public health policy and practice, also, they are used to improve the communication and dialogue making skills, to define an opinion and express it clearly when analysing various problem situations and cases, to master and strengthen skills of working on a team, cooperate. These skills obtained are reflected in the learning outcomes of the study programme: the graduate is aware of the multifactorial origins of public health problems, is oriented towards the multifaceted study of public health problems and is able to develop multi-sectoral solutions appropriate to these problems, working in interdisciplinary teams, if necessary, and integrating knowledge of various fields. Student-centred learning and teaching principles are implemented by using student's independent work as the teaching method, which takes up to 70% of the total study volume. Form, organisation and test of student's independent work forms are determined and monitored by study course supervisor and the involved lecturers. Types of independent work: reasoned essay on a public health issue; a detailed development of conceptual research model; gathering and analysing scientific literature; analysing scientific publications; solving epidemiological and statistical tasks; evaluating health promotion intervention; analysing and comparing public health policy in accordance with recommendations of European, World Health Organization and other international organisations; writing and preparing a report, etc. Students' independent work develops students' control and over their own study process proves that student-centred learning and teaching principles are considered.

The expert panel agrees with the opinion of the graduates that the study process could be more interactive, because the students are different, more group work, and some other interactive work is needed.

2.2.4. Not applicable.

2.2.5. Not applicable.

2.2.6. Topics of Master's theses reflect the breadth of the field of public health. Problems related to health have been studied in different age groups of the population (adolescents, adult residents of Latvia, elderly), also in specific populations, (problem drug users, HIV/AIDS patients, cancer patients, pregnant women, etc.). All sorts of problems have been covered, such as medication compliance, risky behaviour, response to vaccination and screening and factors affecting it, health-related habits (nutrition, physical activity, smoking, drinking alcohol), health self-assessment, mental health (depression, stress, psychoemotional disorders, suicidal behaviour), inequalities in receiving health services, survival rate in case of different forms of cancer, and other current public health problems have also been explored. All the problems covered in the students' final theses are compliant with the aim of the study programme, which is to train highly qualified specialists for independent practical and scientific research work in the fields of public health: epidemiology, environmental health, health promotion, organisation of health care. The acquired fundamental theoretical knowledge of public health fields and research methodology will enable to plan and implement scientific research, identify and interpret topical problems and propose evidence-based solutions for the improvement of both sectoral policy and practice, and also with the learning outcomes, such as the graduate is prepared for independent research in both local and international research projects and for doctoral studies. Use evidence-based public health perspectives in their research and practical activities. Able to offer new knowledge in public health as a result of their research activity (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.6., Annex 22. Topics and assessments of students' graduation papers).

The expert panel agrees that the topics of the students' final thesis are covering the wide range of public health problems, they are compliant with the aim and learning outcomes of the study programme.

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

The content of the academic master study programme "Public Health" is topical, it's content complies with the State Education Standard, it is developed in accordance with the Guidelines on Public Health Education developed by the Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region (ASPHER1), and corresponds to the tasks of the study programme. The main aim of the academic master study programme "Public Health" is to train highly qualified specialists for independent practical and scientific research work in the fields of public health: epidemiology, environmental health, health promotion, organisation of health care, and it complies with the requirement of the Master's study programme is to provide a set of knowledge, skills and competence in accordance with the knowledge, skills and competences specified at level 7 of the Latvian Qualifications Framework.

The content of the study programme corresponds to the scientific trends. The study courses are planned in a complementary manner. Study process could be more interactive, according to the graduates, more group work, and some other interactive work. Interprofessional training could be beneficial, working with the simulation technique.

The study implementation methods, such as classes and seminars, work in small groups and independent work of the students contribute greatly to the achievement of the learning outcomes. Independent work of the students is considered as the principle ensuring student-centred learning and teaching approach. The main areas of the topics of the students' final theses reflect the main work areas of the graduates of Public health and fully comply with the learning outcomes.

Strengths:

1. The content of the Academic master's study programme "Public Health" complies with the guidelines on Public Health Education developed by the Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region.
2. The topic areas of the students' Master's theses reflect the main work areas of the graduates of Public health and fully comply with the learning outcomes.

Weaknesses:

1. Lack of interactive study methods and group work.
2. Insufficient interprofessional training and lack of using simulation techniques.

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The content of the Academic master study programme "Public Health" is topical, it's content complies with the State Education Standard, it is developed in accordance with the Guidelines on Public Health Education developed by the Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region (ASPHER1), and corresponds to the tasks of the study programme.

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

The study process for master students mainly takes place at the Department of Public Health and Epidemiology, premises in other locations are used for the implementation of individual courses.

Study premises are modern, equipped with computers and an interactive board. Free internet, as well as publicly available computers with internet connection, are available in premises of the higher education institution. Recreation areas are available. Students can download the main software for free of charge on their personal computers for study work. Resources of the RSU Library are available for study needs on site and remotely. For independent studies, various learning resources are placed in e-studies, including study course descriptions, presentations, thematic summaries, tasks, tests, if any, as well as mandatory readings. Educational literature is mostly provided through e-books and e-journals or by scanning key pieces of text and by placing in e-studies, as well as addresses of e-resources used for studies, thus providing students with extensive access to recommended readings. The RSU Library provides lecturers and students with access to Latvian and international electronic resources. Premises of the RSU Library is also the World Health Organisation (WHO) Depository Library in Latvia. The Depository Library contains both printed and electronic materials – policy documents, recommendations, guidelines, expert reports on the assessment of the situation prepared by WHO on current public health problems around the world. Resources that are very important for students in public health areas are available. Funding for purchasing scientific literature is allocated in the annual budget of the Department of Public Health and Epidemiology (DPHE) every year. The computers installed in the library can be used only for statistical processing of data of research papers in the SPSS software. To foster scientific activities of RSU students and lecturers, the Statistical Unit offers consultations on research methodologies, data input, the use of data processing programmes, methods of statistical processing of data, analysis, interpretation and graphic presentation of results (SAR, page 487-488).

The infrastructure, informative provision (library resources), financial provision, technical fully comply, material mostly comply with requirements of the academic master study programme “Public Health” (45726) and demonstrate achievements of programme learning outcomes.

During the interviews, students highlighted that a significant portion of the educational material is exclusively accessible in English. While many students independently manage English resources, some encounter challenges in efficiently engaging with these materials, resulting in additional time investments.

2.3.2. Not applicable.

However, the number of enrolled students is low, the number of drop-out students is rather high, which could have an impact on the financial situation in the future. 2.3.3. The study programme is planned to be financed from state budget funds and the funds of individuals and legal entities setting the tuition fee in the Latvian flow in accordance with the state budget funding without social security of EUR 7335, in the English flow – EUR 7800 per year of studies. The tuition fee can be subject to discounts in accordance with internal norms and regulations. The number of students planned to be achieved in the Latvian flow in two years of studies is 23 students, enrolling 12 students in the first year, planning a drop-out of 1 student in the second year. Such a number of students is optimal to ensure a high-quality study process and to make the study programme cover its implementation, as well as development costs. Meanwhile, the study programme in the English flow, which lasts two years, will be able to cover implementation and development costs, if a total of 23 students are enrolled, who pay a tuition fee of EUR 7800 per year (SAR, p. 489-490).

The average income per student is EUR 7420/year in the Latvian flow, and average cost per student is 5515 euro. Funding is distributed as follows: Academic staff, % - 48, Department resources, % - 3, Other direct expenditure, % - 3, Scholarship costs, % - 5, Fixed costs, % - 4, Overheads, % - 37 (SAR, p. 490).

The average income per student is EUR 7800/year in the English flow, and average cost per student is 5755 euro. Funding is distributed as follows: Academic staff, % - 56, Department resources % - 3, Fixed costs, % - 4, Overheads, % - 37 (SAR, p. 490-491).

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

The infrastructure, including informative resources such as library materials, financial support, and technical resources, wholly align with the demands of the StP, showcasing tangible accomplishments in meeting programme learning objectives. The allocated funding for the study programme is effectively utilised to guarantee the comprehensive execution of the educational process. Educational materials include actual and new information using corresponding sources, but part of them in English (homework material for self-study), some students feel insufficiency of materials on Latvian.

Strengths:

1. Advanced material and technical base for student training; plenty of high-quality library resources.

Weaknesses:

1. Part of the main educational material for self-study in English (some students feel insufficiency of materials in Latvian).
2. The number of enrolled students is low, the number of drop-out students is rather high, which could have an impact on the financial situation in the future.

Assessment of the requirement [6]

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Advanced material and technical base for student training; plenty of high-quality library resources. Educational materials mostly in English (some students feel insufficiency of materials in Latvian).

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1. The implementation of the Academic master study programme “Public Health” (45726) is carried out by 25 teachers. They are RSU lecturers and industry professionals (from the Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, the Emergency Medical Assistance Service), leading researchers from the Institute of public Health, the Institute of Occupational Safety and Environmental Health. 13 of lecturers involved in the implementation of the study programme have been elected to RSU academic positions, including 4 professors, 1 associate professor, 6 assistant professors and 2 lecturers (see Appendix 24.7; 24.2). The composition of teaching staff in the study programme is stable. Lecturers have both academic and practical work experience in the field of public health. In the reporting period, changes in academic staff have occurred among both permanent lecturers and invited teachers. To promote the achievement of the aim of the study programme and learning outcomes, lecturers with extensive academic and professional experience are involved in teaching of study courses.

The procedure for the application and selection of academic staff at RSU is governed by the “Regulations of Rīga Stradiņš University on academic positions”, “Process of Rīga Stradiņš University “Elections of Academic Staff”” and the general requirements as knowledge of the official language in accordance with the requirements of regulations of the Republic of Latvia; knowledge of foreign

languages at a level sufficient to occupy an academic position; continuous improvement of their academic, scientific and pedagogical qualifications.

All members of the teaching staff conduct scientific activities in a scientific field related to the educational programme.

RSU provides its teaching staff with opportunities for growth and professional development in accordance with the Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia No. 662 of 11 September 2018 on the education and professional qualification required for teachers (SAR, part II, paragraph 3.4.1, page 493). The University is regularly concerned about improving the qualifications and professional skills of its teaching staff. For this purpose, RSU regularly offers courses organised by the Center for Educational Development (PIC) (evidenced by interviews with the representatives of the Centre for Educational Growth).

Every year, lecturers attend about 25 different qualification improvement events organised by the Centre for Educational Growth and obtain a certificate.

Visiting lecturers from abroad are also involved in the implementation of the study programme

The site visit interviews showed the capacity and capability of the staff of achieving the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme across the various systems and public health specialisations required for the successful running of the relevant study courses. There is a transparent mechanism for academic promotions. Academic staff regularly participate in research work at the local and international scientific conferences.

The qualification of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the Academic master study programme "Public Health" (45726) fully complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements in the regulatory documents. It enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses.

2.4.2. A higher education institution takes measures to ensure that changes in the composition of the teaching staff do not have a negative impact on the quality of the educational programme and the compliance of the educational programme with the requirements established by regulations. The composition of the teaching staff in the educational programme is stable. Faculty have both academic and practical experience in the health sectors, including public health. (SAR, part II, paragraph 3.4.2., page 496).

It is important to emphasise that the teaching staff improves their qualifications and is elected to higher positions in the University. Updating of teaching staff takes place within the framework of the programme.

Highly qualified lecturers who are experts in the field and specialise in the respective study course topics are involved in the implementation of the study programme. For example, the Department of Public Health and Epidemiology has long-term cooperation with most of the invited adjunct lecturers ((SAR, part II, paragraph 3.4.2, page 497). The composition of permanent lecturers is also stable and the number of permanent lecturers has increased. The number of lecturers with a doctoral degree has increased: 5 the Assistant Professors defended her doctoral dissertation and received an academic degree during the period 2018-2021.

The graduates of the programme working in the field of public health are involved as adjunct lecturers to the extent possible.

2.4.3. Not applicable.

2.4.4. Each member of Academic staff has publications in peer-reviewed national and international journals during the last six years (Annex 6.1; 6.4.2).

Several lecturers are authors or co-authors of scientific publications, including on research methodology, scientific writing and dissemination of research results, as well as several collective

monographs developed. Some lecturers prepare peer-reviewed international publications and review scientific articles.

2.4.5. Mutual cooperation of the teaching staff in the implementation of the study programme has been established, this was proven by the interview with the teaching staff and Programme Director. RSU organises meetings of programme directors, where any issues related to the implementation of the programme and the organisation of training (theoretical and practical classes) are discussed in detail. A very important fact is that during these meetings there is an exchange of views and an exchange of best practices. Cooperation between the lecturers of different study courses is promoted in the Study Programme to create optimal and logically sequential content of study courses and the planning of the course by study semesters, thereby ensuring that the knowledge from previously mastered courses serves as the basis for successful mastering of the next courses, as well as to adapt the content of the courses to be studied to the specificity of the Public Health. Documentation by means of self-assessment report and the various annexes on staff, as well interviews with management, academic members, graduates and students shows that the heads of departments and teaching staff cooperate for coordination and implementation of study content and are actively involved in the implementation of study programmes. This is organised on several levels. Regular meetings are held discussing details of content so as to prevent repetition between different study courses. Students are also invited to give feedback to faculty by means of questionnaires or verbally/ directly, to draw attention to similar content in different study courses. The entire described process proves the achievement of the goals of the educational programme and the interrelation of training courses within the educational programme.

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

The implementation of the study programme involves highly qualified lecturers – both permanent RSU lecturers and teachers with experience in other universities, who are experts in the field and specialise in the respective study course topics. A mechanism for mutual cooperation of the teaching staff in the implementation of the study programme has been established, it ensures the achievement of the aims of the study programme and the interconnection of study courses within the study programme.

Strengths:

1. Constant updating of teaching staff.
2. High level of involvement of researchers in research activities.
3. Participation in the training courses for development teaching and personal skills.

Weaknesses:

None.

Assessment of the requirement [7]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The qualification of the teaching staff involved in the Academic Master study programme “Public Health” is high. Academic staff is stable. The impact on the quality of studies is evaluated not only based on achievements of lecturers, scientific activity and professionalism, but also based on the content of the course and its coherence with general learning outcomes and students’ assessments.

2.5. Assessment of the Compliance

Requirements

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The RSU has provided the document in Annex (17.1_Anx_Compl_with_Nat_Ed_Standard_AMSP_Publ_Health) providing the evidence that the AMSP Public Health complies with Cabinet Regulations No 240 “Regulations of the State Standard for Academic Education” (approved on 13.05.2014)

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 3 - The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in all languages in which the study programme is implemented, and they comply with the requirements set forth in Section 561 , Paragraph two and Section 562 , Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The RSU has provided the study course descriptions for the AMSP “Public Health” both in Latvian and English (20_Anx_Study_course_description_AMSP_Pub_Health).

The descriptions of the study courses are compliant with regulations set forth in Law on Higher Education Institutions. The descriptions of the study courses: define the requirements for the commencement of the acquisition of the study course; determine the aims for the implementation of the study course and the planned learning outcomes; outline the content of the study course necessary for the achievement of learning outcomes, contain the study course topic layout, mandatory and supplementary literature, indicate other sources of information; describe the organisation and tasks for students’ independent work; determine the assessment criteria of learning outcomes.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The sample of the diploma and its supplement (Annex 24.1_Anx_Diploma and supplement_AMSP_Publ_Health) are issued for completing the study programme in accordance with the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 202 of 16.04.2013 “Procedures for Issuing State-Recognized Higher Education Certificates”

- 5 5 - The academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements set forth in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

In accordance with the Annex

(24.7.1_Annex_Cert_compliance_AMSP_Pub_Health_Akad_staff_AL_55.1.3.pdf), RSU confirms that the academic staff involved in the implementation of the academic Master's (second cycle) study programme "Public Health" meets the requirements set out in Clause 3 of Paragraph 1 of Section 55 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

- 6 6 - Academic study programmes provided for less than 250 full-time students may be implemented and less than five professors and associated professors of the higher education institution may be involved in the implementation of the mandatory and limited elective part of these study programmes provided that the relevant opinion of the Council for Higher Education has been received in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 7 7 - At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of an academic doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field of science. At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a professional doctoral study programme in arts (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 8 8 - The teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme are proficient in the official language in accordance with the regulations on the level of the official language knowledge and the procedures for testing official language proficiency for performing professional duties and office duties.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The RSU has provided annexes

(24.4_AnxCertification_Regarding_Latvian_Language_of_the_Academic_Staff.pdf and

6.2_AnxBiographies_teaching_staff_AMSP_Public_Health_EN_142pages) confirming that the

language proficiency of teaching staff is compliant with Cabinet Regulations No. 733

"Regulations Regarding the Extent of the Knowledge of the Official Language, the Procedures for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language and the State Fee for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language".

- 9 9 - The teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language, if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The RSU has provided the annexes

(24.5_AnxCertification_Regarding_the_English_Language_Knowledge.pdf and

6.2_AnxBiographies_teaching_staff_AMSP_Public_Health_EN_142pages) confirming that the

members of the teaching staff to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level proficiency in the English language.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The sample of the study agreement is fully compliant with the Law on Higher Education Institutions Section 46, paragraph 2, and the Cabinet Regulations No 70 of 23.01.2007 “The Mandatory Provisions to be included in the study agreement” (24.8_Anx_Study contract sample_Health Care study direction.pdf).

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

In Annex 24.2_pielik_Apliecinajumi_par_parnemsanu_eng.7z

It is indicated that students of the AMSP Public Health will be provided with the opportunity to continue their education in the following RSU academic master’s study programmes: Health Management, Health Communication, Nutrition, Rehabilitation, Biostatistics.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

RSU has provided the confirmation that students are guaranteed compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the study programme’s license is revoked. It is ensured based on Section 55(8) of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education and Cabinet of Ministers’ regulations No 795 of 11 December 2018 “Regulations on Licensing of study programmes”, Paragraph 13.4. The relevant document can be found under Annex 24.3_AnxCertification_of_Compensation_of_Losses_to_Students.pdf.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Assessment of the requirement [8]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Study programme fully complies with regulatory enactments.

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

The inclusion of the AMSP “Public Health” in the study field “Health Care” is justified and follows from the aim of the given study programme, the learning outcomes to be achieved, the content of

the programme and the degree to be awarded.

The main strength of the study programme is that the content of the Academic master's study programme "Public Health" complies with the guidelines on Public Health Education developed by the Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region. The topic areas of the students' Master's theses reflect the main work areas of the graduates of "Public health" and fully comply with the learning outcomes.

The qualification of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programme fully complies with the requirements in the regulatory documents. It enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses.

The strengths are based on the constant updating of teaching staff, high level of involvement of researchers in research activities, involvement of highly qualified foreign visiting professionals as teachers and constant participation in the training courses for development teaching and personal skills.

The main weaknesses are based on the lack of interactive study methods and group work and insufficient interprofessional training and lack of using simulation techniques, however the expert panel considers it as small shortcomings, that is why the evaluation of the study programme is good. There is also partial compliance with R6 criteria - Part of main educational material for self-study is in English (some students feel insufficiency of materials in Latvian).

The number of enrolled students is low, the number of drop-out students is rather high, which could have an impact on the financial situation in the future.

Evaluation of the study programme "Public Health"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Public Health"

Short-term recommendations

Study implementation methods should be supplemented by interactive methods, more group works should be introduced.

Interprofessional training and more tasks using the simulation technique could be helpful.

Long-term recommendations

It is recommended to provide (translate) actual (main) educational materials also on Latvian language. These translations should undergo careful review by the teaching staff to ensure accuracy and quality.

Recommendation to monitor more closely the number of enrolled students and the number of drop-out students of the programme.

II - "Supervision" ASSESSMENT

II - "Supervision" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1. The aim of the Professional master study programme “Supervision” (47142) (PMSP Supervision) is to provide theoretically justified and practically applicable professional studies in order to prepare highly qualified and competitive supervisors in the changing socioeconomic conditions and international labour market in accordance with the Standard of Professional Higher Education, ANSE (Association of National Organisations for Supervision in Europe) guidelines and the Standard of the Supervisor’s Profession. In the supervision healthcare environment, the focus is on expanding/improving the knowledge of a practising professional, helping to improve clinical skills, developing autonomy and self-assertion as a professional, thus promoting the compliance of professional activity with healthcare practice standards/guidelines and ensuring the provision of quality healthcare services (SAR, p. 928). The aim of the PMSP Supervision is focused on the field of healthcare. Many occupations and positions are involved in health care – medical personnel, medical support personnel, managers of medical institutions, which also determine diverse understanding and requirements for supervision (also so-called clinical supervision, supervision of managers). There are positions for which supervision is established as being mandatory in various regulatory acts; these are such positions as psychotherapists, art therapists, social workers, clinical and health psychologists. In several professions, supervision is a mandatory part of the study process (the so-called teaching supervision) (Cabinet Regulations No. 268 of March 24, 2009 “Regulations on the medical personnel and students who acquire the first or second level professional higher education programs for medical, therapeutic expertise and their theoretical and practical knowledge content”). Supervision is included in the occupational standard of nursing (general care nurse) as one of the opportunities for professional development (SAR, p. 932).

The PMSP “Supervision” partially complies with the aim of the study field “Health Care” to provide excellent, research-based and inclusive education of health care professionals to promote sustainable development of public health and well-being, realising everyone’s potential throughout life (SAR, p. 22). In the document Annex 24.2_pielik_Apliecinajumi_par_parnemsanu_eng.7z RSU also indicates that in case of termination of this study programme students of the PMSP “Supervision” will be provided with the opportunity to continue their education in the RSU PMSP “Social Work”, which is part of the study field “Social Welfare”.

The inclusion of the PMSP “Supervision” in the study field “Health Care” could be supported if the name of the programme more exactly specified its connection with the field of “Health Care” and corrections were made in the admission requirements, study programme objectives and learning outcomes, which would indicate the programme’s affiliation to the study field “Health Care”. For instance, the name of the study programme could be changed from “Supervision” to “Supervision in Health Care”. The admission requirements could be narrowed down and changed from “Bachelor’s degree or equivalent degree, or professional higher education with a qualification in the following thematic areas: Health Care, Healthcare Services, Social and Human Sciences, Social Welfare, Teacher Education and Education Sciences, Business and Administration, Humanities” to “Bachelor’s degree or equivalent degree, or professional higher education with a qualification in Health Care, Healthcare Services”.

2.1.2 The PMSP “Supervision” is a full-time study programme with the implementation duration of 2 years and the amount of 80 Latvian credits (CP) / 120 ECTS. The language of instruction – Latvian. The degree to be acquired – professional master’s degree in pedagogy, qualification to be obtained – supervisor. The admission requirements – bachelor’s degree or equivalent degree, or professional higher education with a qualification in the following thematic areas: Health Care, Healthcare Services, Social and Human Sciences, Social Welfare, Teacher Education and Education Sciences, Business and Administration, Humanities (SAR, p. 929).

The code of the study programme according to the classification of Latvian education – 47142,

where the first part of the code – 47 – indicates that the type of the PMSP Supervision is professional master study programme and the digits of the second part of the code 142 indicate that the thematic area of education is Teacher Education and Education Sciences, but the group of educational programmes is Education Sciences. The digits of the second part of the code of the PMSP “Supervision” do not comply with the thematic area Health Care.

The learning outcomes of the professional master’s study programme correspond to Level 7 of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (LQF), which is described in the Cabinet of Ministers’ Regulations No. 322 “Regulations on the Classification of Education in Latvia” (June 13, 2017).

The name, aims, objectives of the study programme, learning outcomes, as well as the qualification to be obtained after completing the study programme comply with the requirements of the Cabinet of Ministers’ Regulations No. 322 “Regulations on the Classification of Education in Latvia” (June 13, 2017), Cabinet of Ministers Regulations’ No. 305 “Regulations on the State Standard of the Second Level Professional Higher Education” (13 June, 2023). The name of the study programme, qualification to be obtained, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and admission requirements are interrelated, but they only partially correspond to the study field “Health Care”.

2.1.3. The changes made to the study programme “Supervision” affect the procedure of State degree examinations – a State qualification examination has been introduced, where students demonstrate their qualification in supervision (SAR, p. 931). The field of study at study programme was changed from "Education, pedagogy and sports" to the field of study "Health care". Supervision, as a modern form of support in professional activity, helps address dilemmas related to professional issues, promotes learning, raises issues related to wellness in the work environment, thus reducing burnout risks. Many professions and positions are involved in health care – medical personnel, medical support personnel, managers of medical institutions, which also determine diverse understanding and requirements for supervision (also so called clinical supervision, supervision of managers). (SAR, p 932) The correction made to the study programme’s parameters are analysed, justified and would be supported.

2.1.4. The need for a “Supervision” study programme is justified in the SAR (p. 937) as follows: “the specifics of the supervisor's work determine that the supervisor is an "external" specialist hired by the organisation or individual as needed. Graduates of the programme create various forms of business (self-employed, etc.) in order to realise their practice in accordance with the legislation established in Latvia. Graduates of the programme are involved in all the above-mentioned supervision service provision projects and also provide supervision services to individual professionals (e.g. art therapists, physiotherapists, nurses).”

The study programme was opened in 2014, the tuition fees are covered by private funding. The numbers of enrolled students vary from 7 (2017/2018) to 18 (2021/2022). The drop-out numbers of the students vary between 2 (2020/2021) to 6 (2021/2022), the latest drop-out number indicating one-third of drop-out students (Annex 16). The most common reasons are family circumstances, social conditions (difficulties combining studies with workload), and financial difficulties. Study programme was not opened in 2022 because the number of students set by the university was not reached (SAR, p. 937) The number of enrolled students is set to be 13 first year students to have the study programme economically justified (SAR, p 946). The expert group found, based on the indicators of enrolled and drop-out students, that the study programme has no strong economic or social justification.

2.1.5. Not applicable.

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

The inclusion of the PMSP “Supervision” in the study field “Health Care” could be supported if the name of the programme more exactly specified its connection with the field of “Health Care” and corrections were made in the admission requirements, study programme objectives and learning outcomes, which would indicate the programme’s affiliation to the study field “Health Care”.

The digits of the second part of the code of the PMSP “Supervision” do not comply with the thematic area Health Care (the code 142 indicates the thematic area of education), the degree to be acquired – professional master’s degree in pedagogy. The name of the PMSP “Supervision”, qualification to be obtained, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and admission requirements are interrelated, but they only partially correspond to the study field “Health Care”.

The number of drop-out students is around one-third. The most common reasons are family circumstances, social conditions (difficulties combining studies with workload), and financial difficulties. The number of enrolled students has been less than the planned 13 first year students, therefore, the study programme was not opened in 2022,

Strengths:

None

Weaknesses:

1. PMSP “Supervision” partially complies with the aim of the study field „Health Care“
2. The name of the PMSP “Supervision” does not reflect the field „Health Care“
3. Admission requirements are partially compliant with the field „Health Care“
4. PMSP “Supervision” objectives and learning outcomes are partially compliant with the field „Health Care“
5. The number of drop-out students is high (one-third).

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1. The content of the professional master study programme “Supervision” (47142) is topical, because the wide range of competences are being developed, including the application of the latest digital technologies to adult education and counselling and developing the business by providing a supervision service and engage in the activities of professional organisations (LAS Latvian Association of Supervisors) and ANSE (Association of National Organisations for Supervision in Europe)) (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.1.). The study courses are interconnected and compliant with the learning outcomes of the study programme “Supervision” (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.1., Annex 18.1. Mapping of the Study Courses for the Achievement of Learning Outcomes of the Study Programme). To illustrate the compliance of the study outcomes with the content of the study programme: one of the learning outcomes, provided in the parameters of the study programme is – students upon completion of the study programme are able to independently organise, administer, manage and evaluate supervision processes at individual, group, team and organisational levels, applying appropriate methods in supervision. This learning outcome, it’s achievement is ensured by the content of the, by the Part A courses in the curriculum, such courses as “Counselling and Problem-Solving Methods in Supervision”, “Individual Supervision”, “Supervision in Groups”, “Supervision of Teams and Organisations”, “Technology-enhanced Learning and Teaching in Adult Education” etc.

The study programme “Supervision” content meets the needs of the labour market, it can be illustrated by the information provided in the Annex 18.2. Compliance of the qualification to be

acquired upon completion of the study programme with the professional standard. It illustrates the compliance of the study programme with the profession standard “Supervisor” (approved by the Tripartite Cooperation Sub-Council of Vocational Education and Employment), meeting of 12 June 2019, minutes No 4 (available online at <https://registri.visc.gov.lv/profizglitiba/dokumenti/standarti/2017/PS-109.pdf>). Table 1 provided in the Annex shows a numerical summary of the mapping of the study programme against the standard, showing that each course of study fulfils one of the requirements, including to a significant extent. The information provided in the Annex 17.1. Compliance of the Study Programme With the State Educational Standard. (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.1.) demonstrates the study programme indicators compliance with State Educational Standard requirements. All the study programme indicators comply with the standard requirements. One of them – possibilities for continuation of, it can be ensured by the programme indicator saying that The graduate of the Master’s programme shall be awarded a professional Master’s degree in pedagogy and a supervisor’s qualification, which gives the right to continue education in a third cycle higher education study programme, fulfilling the admission requirements in the relevant study programme. The study courses in the study programme are interconnected (SAR, Part II, Annex 19. Planning of the study programme), they are arranged in a logical manner, for example, the study course the Supervisor’s Personal Qualities (Part A) is taught on the first semester as the basic course providing the possibilities to further analyse the work methods in the Supervision, such as Technology-enhanced Learning and Teaching in Adult Education (second semester), and subsequently, the internships, which ensure theoretical knowledge implementation in practical work, is planned on fourth semester. The study programme content reflects the scientific trends, it is illustrated by the aim of the Master’s thesis preparation, which is to provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate in practice the knowledge and practical skills acquired during their studies in research, as well as to update the topics relevant to the field of supervision, to research into them and to familiarise the public with research data or products/tools created (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.1). The Master’s thesis main task is to demonstrate students’ skills in planning, conducting and directing the newest research, including obtaining and processing data, analysing the results of the study, and their ability to interpret the findings and present them to the wider community. A very good example of the interprofessional collaboration between the “Supervision” and “Nursing” study programmes was provided during the on-site visit. It was witnessed that the “Supervision” study programme students are supervising the “Nursing” students during their placement. “Supervision” graduates were satisfied with the excellent skills of communication with the patients. The content of the PMSP “Supervision” does not indicate some weaknesses, however, further analysis, presented in the paragraphs 2.2.4. and 2.2.6. shows that the topics of the students’ final theses as well as the places of the internships, do not comply with the “Health Care” study field.

2.2.2. The degree in the study programme “Supervision” is being awarded in the field of pedagogy. Education is one of the basic parts of the Supervision, that is why it can be justified that the degree is being obtained in pedagogy. During the on-site visit there were discussions regarding this matter. In the opinion of an expert group, the Professional master study programme “Supervision” partially corresponds to the field of study “Health care”. It is more suitable for the study field “Management, Administration, and Management of Real Property” (supervision is implemented in other HEIs under other fields) and with wider Admission requirements, or study field Education, Pedagogy and also with wider Admission requirements (include for example engineering).

Keeping the “Supervision” study programme in the field of “Health Care” is possible in if (1) the name of the study programme will change from “Supervision” to “Supervision in health care”; (2) admission requirements will narrow down and will change from “Bachelor’s degree or equivalent degree, or professional higher education with a qualification in the following thematic areas: Health care, healthcare services, social and human sciences, social welfare, teacher education and

education sciences, business and administration, humanities” to “Bachelor's degree or equivalent degree, or professional higher education with a qualification in the Health care, healthcare services”. It is specified in the professional standard “Supervisor” (approved by the Tripartite Cooperation Sub-Council of Vocational Education and Employment), meeting of 12 June 2019, minutes No 4 (available online at <https://registri.visc.gov.lv/profizglitiba/dokumenti/standarti/2017/PS-109.pdf>) that “A supervisor is a specialist in a certain professional field who has additionally obtained the qualifications of the supervisor and who provides the supervision service ...”. The SAR (p. 932, 933) states that “Many professions and positions are involved in health care – medical personnel, medical support personnel, managers of medical institutions, which also determine diverse understanding and requirements for supervision (also so-called clinical supervision, supervision of managers) and Figure 1. shows effective supervision in a therapeutic setting. In the expert group’s opinion, if the implementers of the study programme want to keep the Supervision in the study field of “Health Care”, it is necessary to change the name of the study programme and admission requirements, as it is explained in this paragraph. The PMSP “Supervision” partially reflect the achievements and findings of the health sciences, because, as it is mentioned in the paragraph 2.2.6., only 17,24% of the topics are related with the supervision application in the health care sector.

2.2.3. The study implementation methods contribute to the aim and learning outcomes of the study programme Supervision. One of the main skills of the supervisor - ability to reflect and ability to cooperate, that is why a great emphasis is on the use of interactive methods (incl. the use of digital solutions) in the study process, active participation of students in discussions. Student-centred learning and teaching principles are employed by the students’ independent work, implemented individually and in teams. Additionally, the traditional study implementation methods are applied, such as lectures, classes, tutorials and placement. They all are compliant with the learning outcomes of the study programme, such as for example, upon the completion of the study programme, the graduates are able to independently formulate and critically analyse professional dilemmas, to explain and discuss supervision in a reasoned manner with both professionals and non-specialists, so the placement, and especially interprofessional collaboration with Nursing students, as it was discussed earlier in this joint report, plays a crucial role in the achievement of learning outcomes. Attending conferences by the students can also be considered as the study implementation method, which is highly compliant with the learning outcomes, as for example, upon the completion of the study programme, the graduates are able to independently direct the development of their competences and further professional development.

2.2.4. The internship of the Professional master study programme “Supervision” (47142) is described in the SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.4., Annex 9. Description of the Organisation of Student Placement. Placement represents compulsory (A) study courses of the professional Master’s study programme “Supervision”, which are implemented in accordance with Cabinet of Ministers Regulations’ No. 305 “Regulations on the State Standard of the Second Level Professional Higher Education” (13 June, 2023). There are 4 internships planned in the study programme, starting in the first and finishing in the third semester. Placement takes place in a company or organisation chosen by the student and upon agreement with the customer on individual supervisions. There are mainly social service and educational institutions (for example, Sigulda cities high school, Talsu district social service, Jelgava cities social service, Dobeles social service, Mills elementary school, Latvian evangelical Lutheran Church, Imprisonment place administration, Children's rights protection inspection, Ventspils technical school) where the students were having internships (the list of internship places in the year 2016-2022 in the Annex 9. Description of the Organisation of Student Placement). No examples of the internships in health care institutions are provided, it proves the partial compliance of the study programme “Supervision” with the study field “Health Care”. If a student has difficulty finding a suitable placement site, the director of the study programme helps to

organise it. If necessary, a tripartite placement agreement is concluded regarding cooperation within the scope of the student's placement. Placement is implemented based on the relevant study course programme. The total volume of placement in the professional Master's study programme "Supervision" is 28 CP. The internships are planned in a consecutive manner, for example, the first internship is an observational, during which the students are observing the supervisions, then logically, the second internship is based on the conducting the individual supervision, the third one – group supervision, the fourth – the most complex one, individual, group and team supervision. In the opinion of expert group, the organisation of the internships is logical, the organisation of the internships and their content is in line with the learning outcomes, such as upon the completion of the study programme the students are able to independently organise, administer, manage and evaluate supervision processes at individual, group, team and organisational levels, applying appropriate methods in supervision.

2.2.5. Not applicable.

2.2.6. The topics of students' final theses (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.6., Annex 22. Topics of students' final papers) are relevant for the supervisor's profession, examples are provided in the Annex 22. Some of the topics, for example, Perceptions of supervision practice in different professional contexts in Latvia, are relevant in the country context. The topics of the final theses, for example, Self-Assessment of the Importance and Attainability of Supervisors' Ethical Competence in Latvia or Social workers experience of supervision related to work with people with disabilities reflect the aim of the study programme, which are in line with the learning outcome of the study programme, upon the completion of the study programme, the graduate is able to plan and implement research relevant to the basic principles of research and to the current issues of the profession, and to summarise and present the results in a reasoned manner, thereby contributing to the development of the profession, as well as are able to practise ethical responsibility by understanding the potential impact of their own actions on individuals, groups and society as a whole. The analysis of the topics of the final theses (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.6., Annex 22. Topics of students' final papers) showed that about 17,24% of the topics are related with the supervision application in the health care sector (mainly nursing), the rest of the theses are focused on the church pastors, in prison staff, teachers, social workers, social pedagogues and soldiers, it mean, that the small part of the thesis is dedicated for the health care sector investigation.

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

The content of the professional master study programme "Supervision" (47142) is topical, because the wide range of competences are being developed, including the application of the latest digital technologies to adult education and counselling and developing the business by providing a supervision service and engage in the activities of professional organisations (LAS (Latvian Association of Supervisors) and ANSE (Association of National Organisations for Supervision in Europe)). The degree in the study programme Supervision is being awarded in the field of pedagogy. Education is one of the basic parts of the Supervision, that is why it can be justified that the degree is being obtained in pedagogy. One of the main skills of the supervisor - ability to reflect and ability to cooperate, that is why a great emphasis is on the use of interactive methods (incl. the use of digital solutions) in the study process, active participation of students in discussions. Student-centred learning and teaching principles are employed by the students' independent work, implemented individually and in teams. There are 4 internships planned in the study programme Supervision, starting in the first and finishing in the third semester. Placement takes place in a company or organisation chosen by the student and upon agreement with the customer on

individual supervisions. If a student has difficulty finding a suitable placement site, the director of the study programme helps to organise it. The analysis of the topics of the final theses (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.6., Annex 22. Topics of students' final papers) showed that about 17,24% of the topics are related with the supervision application in the health care sector (mainly nursing), the rest of the theses are focused on the church pastors, in prison staff, teachers, social workers, social pedagogues and soldiers, it mean, that the small part of the theses is dedicated for the health care sector investigation.

In the opinion of the expert group, the professional master study programme "Supervision" does not correspond to the field of study "Health care". It is more suitable for the study field "Management, Administration, and Management of Real Property" and with wider Admission requirements or study field Education, Pedagogy and Sports and also with wider Admission requirements (include for example engineering).

Keeping the Supervision study programme in the field of "Health Care" is possible in if (1) the name of the study programme will change from "Supervision" to Supervision in health care; (2) admission requirements will narrow down and will change from "Bachelor's degree or equivalent degree, or professional higher education with a qualification in the following thematic areas: Health care, healthcare services, social and human sciences, social welfare, teacher education and education sciences, business and administration, humanities" to "Bachelor's degree or equivalent degree, or professional higher education with a qualification in the Health care, healthcare services".

Strengths:

1) Supervision study programme students are supervising the Nursing students during their internship. Supervision graduates were satisfied with the excellent skills of communication with the patients.

Weaknesses:

1) The major part of the topics of the final theses are focused on different areas, and only the small part on health care. Only about 17,24% of the topics are related with the supervision application in the health care sector (mainly nursing), the rest of the theses are focused on the church pastors, in prison staff, teachers, social workers, social pedagogues and soldiers.

2) Lack of the topics of the final theses that are focused on health care.

3) The lack of internship places in the health care sector.

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Professional master study programme Supervision partially corresponds to the field of study Health care. Only about 17,24% of the topics are related with the supervision application in the health care sector (mainly nursing), the rest of the theses are focused on the church pastors, in prison staff, teachers, social workers, social pedagogues and soldiers, it mean, that the small part of the theses is dedicated for the health care sector investigation.

There is a lack of internship places in the health care sector. The majority of internship places are in the social service and educational sector.

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1 The infrastructure, informative provision (library resources), material and technical fully comply with requirements of the Professional master study programme "Supervision" (47142) and demonstrate achievements of programme learning outcomes. However, the demand for the study programme for the currently established study fee, which corresponds to the actual costs per student, is not sufficient to complete the minimum set size of student groups for admission, so students have not been admitted in recent years - 2022, 2023 (SAR, page 946). Only three students in the academic year 2022/2023 reported in SAR. The number of students enrolled in the study programme provided till 2021/2022 in SAR, a positive dynamic could be noticed before 2022/2023. For example, in the academic year 2017/2018 it was 7 students, the number gradually increased to 18 in 2021/2022 (SAR, Annex 16).

For the implementation of courses of study programme "Supervision", students are provided with a comprehensive study process, using well-equipped auditoriums, the RSU Library with a wide and modern provision of open access textbooks and scientific literature, extensive availability of computer hardware and the internet, including provision of RSU e-learning environment and student information system (SIS-3). Free internet is available in the premises of the university, as well as publicly available computers with internet connection. Students can download licensed MsOffice and SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) programs on their personal computers for free. Students have access also to the materials uploaded to the RSU Repository.

Every year, the range of textbooks and scientific literature is supplemented. Books for students are in open access at the RSU Library.

Various learning resources are available to students in e-studios – lecture materials, presentations, assignments, tests, video recordings of conferences and presentation materials, video recordings of professional discussions, links to useful online learning materials. Examples of counselling skills videos available.

The range of different methods required for counselling is purchased and supplemented annually.

In the provision of e-resources for the supervision study programme, five ebook databases and seven full-text databases of journals are available.

The e-books mentioned in the study programmes – both purchased and from the subscribed databases – are collected in the list of recommended study e-books on the library's website.

2.3.2. Not applicable.

2.3.3. It is planned to finance the study programme from the resources of private and legal persons, setting the tuition fee for the Latvian flow of EUR 2100, and increasing to EUR 2400 in the following years, when analysing demand restrictions. The demand for the study programme for the currently established study fee, which corresponds to the actual costs per student, is not sufficient to complete the minimum set size of student groups for admission, so students have not been admitted in recent years. State budget funding is not provided in this study programme. Enrolment in the study programme will be resumed only on the condition that the necessary funding is found for the additional study fee to cover the actual costs of the study programme.

The number of students planned to be achieved in two years of studies is 25 students, enrolling 13 students in the first year, with the number of students remaining unchanged in the second year. Following high inflation and under conditions of a rapid increase in prices of energy sources, the costs of the study programme exceeded income, but the situation stabilises in the long term when the tuition fee is revised. Remuneration of the academic staff in the first year of study programme is planned to be approximately 27 thousand EUR (SAR, page 946).

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

The infrastructure, including informative resources such as library materials and technical resources, wholly align with the demands of the StP, showcasing tangible accomplishments in meeting programme learning objectives. However, the demand for the study programme for the currently established study fee, which corresponds to the actual costs per student, is not sufficient to complete the minimum set size of student groups for admission, so students have not been admitted in recent years.

Strengths:

1. Advanced material and technical base for student training.
2. The study programme provides students with extensive RSU Library resources and databases, student portal MyRSU, e-studies.

Weaknesses:

1. Students have not been admitted in recent years (The demand for the study programme for the currently established study fee, which corresponds to the actual costs per student, is not sufficient to complete the minimum set size of student groups for admission).

Assessment of the requirement [6]

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Advanced material and technical base for student training; plenty of high-quality library resources. Unfortunately, demand is not sufficient to complete the minimum set size of student groups for admission.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1 The qualification of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the Professional master study programme "Supervision" (47142) fully complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements in the regulatory documents. It enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses.

The implementation of the study programme is carried out by 23 teachers: 11 of them have a doctoral degree, 3 are candidates for a scientific degree, the other 9 have a scientific Master's degree. 10 of the lecturers involved in the implementation of the programme are also certified supervisors (Latvian Association of Supervisors) and practise the profession on a daily basis (see Appendix 24.7; 24.2). Academic staff composition is 2 Professors (PhD in Psychology, PhD in Medicine), 3 associate professors (PhD in Psychology, PhD in Pedagogy, PhD in Medicine), 4 assistant professors (PhD in Law, PhD in Medicine, PhD in Chemistry, PhD in Medicine), 1 acting professor (PhD in Psychology). The composition of teaching staff in the study programme is stable (SAR, page 947-949). To promote the achievement of the aim of the study programme and learning outcomes, lecturers with extensive academic and professional experience are involved in teaching of study courses.

The procedure for the application and selection of academic staff at RSU is governed by the "Regulations of Rīga Stradiņš University on academic positions", "Process of Rīga Stradiņš University "Elections of Academic Staff"" and the general requirements as knowledge of the official language in

accordance with the requirements of regulations of the Republic of Latvia; knowledge of foreign languages at a level sufficient to occupy an academic position; continuous improvement of their academic, scientific and pedagogical qualifications.

Teaching staff have the following qualification requirements: at least a Master's degree, but preferably a scientific doctoral degree in a science related to the course, pedagogical work experience, digital skills, preferable scientific activity in the relevant field of science and practical work experience in supervision (according to the content of the course) (SAR, page 947). All members of the teaching staff conduct scientific activities in a scientific field related to the educational programme.

RSU provides its teaching staff with opportunities for growth and professional development in accordance with the Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia No. 662 of 11 September 2018 on the education and professional qualification required for teachers (SAR, page 949). The University is regularly concerned about improving the qualifications and professional skills of its teaching staff. For this purpose, RSU regularly offers courses organized by Center for Educational Development (PIC) (evidenced by interviews with the representatives of the Centre for Educational Growth). From 2017 15 lecturers of the study programme participated in continuing education activities of the Centre for Educational Growth attending more than 150 training activities of different content: Reference Management Tool EndNote; Remote Group Work of Students Using the Miro Tool; Creating Engaging and Interactive Classrooms through Active Learning Techniques; Collaboration and Partnership Towards Professional and Sectoral Development: Local, National, Transnational; Think Tank: Feedback as a Source of Cognition and Possibility for Self-Improvement; Interactive Presentations and Real-Time Feedback in the Mentimeter Tool; How to Create Effective Image and Text Compositions in Learning Materials; Research Methodology and Statistical Processing of Data; The Art of Speech in Pedagogical Work; Visualisation of Content in Presentations and many other.

The site visit interviews showed the capacity and capability of the staff of achieving the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme required for the successful running of the relevant study courses. There is a transparent mechanism for academic promotions. Academic staff regularly participate in research work at the local and international scientific conferences.

2.4.2. A higher education institution takes measures to ensure that changes in the composition of the teaching staff do not have a negative impact on the quality of the educational programme and the compliance of the educational programme with the requirements established by regulations. The composition of the teaching staff in the educational programme is stable. Faculty have both academic and practical experience.

It is important to emphasise that the teaching staff improves their qualifications and is elected to higher positions in the University. Updating of teaching staff takes place within the framework of the programme. The academic and scientific potential of the teaching staff is also strengthened. Several lecturers of the study programme completed doctoral studies and were involved in the implementation of study courses after obtaining a doctoral degree.

During interviews the head of the programme mentioned that there are also positive traits in replacement of lecturers – thus facilitating opportunities for students to experience different approaches and styles in supervision, to gain more versatile experiences through the experience stories of lecturers-practitioners.

Highly qualified lecturers who are experts in the field and specialise in the respective study course topics are involved in the implementation of the study programme. The composition of permanent lecturers is also stable and the number of permanent lecturers has increased. The number of lecturers with a doctoral degree has increased: 1 person defended her doctoral thesis, 1 person is a candidate for a scientific degree, 2 persons are applicants for a scientific degree.

The quality of studies/the content of study courses and the performance of lecturers are evaluated

at the end of each study course, as well as in general after the completion of the study programme. This process is organised by sending study course questionnaires. The obtained data are analysed in the meetings of the lecturers of StP and also in the meetings of the department of health psychology and pedagogy, that is evident from SAR (SAR, part II, paragraph 3,4,2, page 950). It should be mentioned that the Professional master study programme “Supervision” (47142) is not currently being implemented.

2.4.3. Not applicable.

2.4.4. Each member of Academic staff has publications in peer-reviewed national and international journals during the last six years (Annex 6.1; 6.4.2) or at least 5 years of practical experience in accordance with the law on Higher Education Institutions.

All lecturers have more than 7 years of experience in academic work in health care. Several lecturers are authors or co-authors of scientific publications, including on research methodology, scientific writing and dissemination of research results, as well as several collective monographs developed. Some lecturers prepare peer-reviewed international publications and review scientific articles.

Projects carried out by the academic staff contribute to the development of scientific capacity and competitiveness, which could be also characterised by the increase in the number of scientific articles in the Web of Science databases and Scopus journals, which strengthens the authority and recognisability of RSU as a centre of study and science.

The academic staff fully complies with the requirements of the Law on Higher Educational Institutions. 10 lecturers involved in the implementation of the programme are certified supervisors (Latvian Association of Supervisors) and practise the profession on a daily basis.

2.4.5. Mutual cooperation of the teaching staff in the implementation of the study programme has been established, this was proven by the interview with the teaching staff and Programme Director. RSU organises meetings of programme directors, where any issues related to the implementation of the programme and the organisation of training (theoretical and practical classes) are discussed in detail. A very important fact is that during these meetings there is an exchange of views and an exchange of best practices. Since most of study courses are implemented by lecturers of the Department of Health Psychology and Pedagogy, then the circulation of information is ensured at meetings/department meetings, during observation of teaching, in jointly implemented cooperation projects (presentations at conferences, cooperation in the development of students’ Master’s thesis projects, participation in annual Supervision Days events).

Documentation by means of self-assessment report and the various annexes on staff, as well interviews with management, academic members, graduates and students shows that the heads of departments and teaching staff cooperate for coordination and implementation of study content.

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

The qualification of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the Professional Master study programme “Supervision” fully complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements in the regulatory documents. It enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses. A higher education institution takes measures to ensure that changes in the composition of the teaching staff do not have a negative impact on the quality of the educational programme and the compliance of

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

Strengths:

1. Constant updating of teaching staff.
2. Qualified teaching staff with experience not only in academic work, but in the respective field (supervisors).
3. Constant participation in the training courses for development teaching and personal skills.

Weaknesses:

1. None.

Assessment of the requirement [7]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The qualification of the teaching staff is fully compliant with requirements of the institution and the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

2.5. Assessment of the Compliance

Requirements

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The PMSP "Supervision" complies with the State Professional Higher Education Standard - Cabinet of Ministers Regulations' No. 305 "Regulations on the State Standard of the Professional Higher Education" (13 June, 2023) (Annex 17.1_pielik_PMSP_Supervizija_atbilstiba_izglitiba_standartam_ENG).

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The RSU has provided the document in Annex (18.2_pielik_Prof_standarta_kartejums_Supervizija_ENG) providing the evidence that the PMSP Supervision complies with the occupational standard "Supervisor" (approved by the Tripartite Cooperation Sub-Council of Vocational Education and Employment), meeting of 12 June 2019, minutes No 4).

- 3 3 - The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in all languages in which the study programme is implemented, and they comply with the requirements set forth in Section 561, Paragraph two and Section 562, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The RSU has provided the study course descriptions for the PMSP "Supervision" both in Latvian and English (20_Anx_Study_course_description_Supervision).

The descriptions of the study courses are compliant with regulations set forth in Law on Higher Education Institutions. The descriptions of the study courses: define the requirements for the commencement of the acquisition of the study course; determine the aims for the implementation of the study course and the planned learning outcomes; outline the content of the study course necessary for the achievement of learning outcomes, contain the study course topic layout, mandatory and supplementary literature, indicate other sources of information; describe the organization and tasks for students' independent work; determine the assessment criteria of learning outcomes.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The sample of the diploma and its supplement (Annex 24.1._Diploms_Supervizija_eng) are issued for completing the study programme in accordance with the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 202 of 16.04.2013 "Procedures for Issuing State-Recognized Higher Education Certificates".

It should be noted that in the diploma in Latvian, point 3.1., the level of qualification is indicated as the second-level professional higher education diploma, which corresponds to Level 7 of the European/Latvian qualifications framework, while the sample diploma in English, in point 3.1., the level of qualification is indicated as First academic degree (of basic studies).

- 5 5 - The academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements set forth in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 6 6 - Academic study programmes provided for less than 250 full-time students may be implemented and less than five professors and associated professors of the higher education institution may be involved in the implementation of the mandatory and limited elective part of these study programmes provided that the relevant opinion of the Council for Higher Education has been received in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 7 7 - At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of an academic doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field of science. At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a professional doctoral study programme in arts (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 8 8 - The teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme are proficient in the official language in accordance with the regulations on the level of the official language knowledge and the procedures for testing official language proficiency for performing professional duties and office duties.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The RSU has provided annexes

(24.4_Anx_Certification_Regarding_Latvian_Language_of_the_Academic_Staff.pdf and 6.2_Anx_Biographies_teaching_staff_PMSP_Supervision_EN_126pages) confirming that the language proficiency of the teaching staff is compliant with Cabinet Regulations No. 733

“Regulations Regarding the Extent of the Knowledge of the Official Language, the Procedures for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language and the State Fee for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language”.

- 9 9 - The teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language, if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The sample of the study agreement fully complies with the Law on Higher Education Institutions Section 46, Paragraph 2, and the Cabinet Regulations No 70 of 23.01.2007 “The Mandatory Provisions to be included in the study agreement” (24.8_Anx_Study contract sample_Health Care study direction.pdf).

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

In Annex 24.2_pielik_Apliecinajumi_par_parnemsanu_eng.7z

It is indicated that students of the PMSP “Supervision” will be provided with the opportunity to continue their education in the RSU PMSP “Social Work”, which is part of the study field “Social Welfare”.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

RSU has provided the confirmation that students are guaranteed compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the study programme’s license is revoked. It is ensured based on Section 55(8) of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education and Cabinet of Ministers’ regulations No 795 of 11 December 2018 “Regulations on Licensing of study programmes”, Paragraph 13.4. The relevant document can be found under Annex 24.3_Anx_Certification_of_Compensation_of_Losses_to_Students.pdf.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Assessment of the requirement [8]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Study programme fully complies with regulatory enactments.

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

Regarding the indicators of the study programme, there were weaknesses, showing the partial compliance of the PMSP „Supervision“ with the study field „Health Care“: (1) PMSP “Supervision” partially complies with the aim of the study field „Health Care“; (2) The name of the PMSP “Supervision” does not reflect the field „Health Care“; (3) Admission requirements are partially compliant with the field „Health Care“; (4) PMSP “Supervision” objectives and learning outcomes are partially compliant with the field „Health Care“; (5) The digits of the second part of the code of the PMSP “Supervision” do not comply with the thematic area Health Care.

Regarding the content of studies and implementation thereof, there were weaknesses, showing the partial compliance of the study programme „Supervision“ with the study field „Health Care“: (1) The degree in the study programme “Supervision” is being awarded in the field of pedagogy; (2) Only 17,24% of the topics of final theses are related with the supervision application in the health care sector (mainly nursing), the rest of the theses are focused on the church pastors, in prison staff, teachers, social workers, social pedagogues and soldiers, it mean, that the small part of the thesis is dedicated for the health care sector investigation; (3) The internships are mainly taking places in social service and educational institutions, not in health care sector.

PMSP “Supervision” could correspond to the study field "Health care" if the programme's name would more precisely clarify its connection with the study field "Health care" and adjustments would be made to the admission requirements, study program goals, and study results would indicate the program's affiliation with the field of study "Health care" and all final theses of students will be related to the study field “Health care”.

The content of the study programme is topical, because the wide range of competences are being developed, including the application of the latest digital technologies to adult education and counselling and developing the business by providing a supervision service and engaging in the activities of professional organisations. The degree in the study programme is being awarded in the field of pedagogy. Education is one of the basic parts of the Supervision, that is why it can be justified that the degree is being obtained in pedagogy. One of the main skills of the supervisor - ability to reflect and ability to cooperate, that is why a great emphasis is on the use of interactive methods (incl. the use of digital solutions) in the study process, active participation of students in discussions. Student-centred learning and teaching principles are employed by the students' independent work, implemented individually and in teams. The analysis of the topics of the final theses showed that about 17,24% of the topics are related with the supervision application in the health care sector (mainly nursing), the rest of the theses are focused on the church pastors, in prison staff, teachers, social workers, social pedagogues and soldiers, it mean, that the small part of the theses is dedicated for the health care sector investigation.

In the opinion of an expert group, The professional master study programme “”Supervision” does not correspond to the field of study “Health care”. It is more suitable for the study field “Management, Administration, and Management of Real Property” and with wider admission requirements or study field “Education, Pedagogy and Sports” and also with wider admission

requirements.

The infrastructure, including informative resources such as library materials and technical resources, wholly align with the demands of the study programme, showcasing tangible accomplishments in meeting programme learning objectives.

However, the demand for the study programme for the currently established study fee, which corresponds to the actual costs per student, is not sufficient to complete the minimum set size of student groups for admission, so students have not been admitted in recent years.

The qualification of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programme fully complies with the requirements and the regulatory documents. It enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses. A higher education institution takes measures to ensure that changes in the composition of the teaching staff do not have a negative impact on the quality of the educational programme and the compliance of the educational programme with the requirements established by regulations. A mechanism for mutual cooperation of the teaching staff in the implementation of the study programme has been established, it ensures the achievement of the aims of the study programme and the interconnection of study courses within the study programme.

Study programme fully complies with regulatory enactments. Nevertheless, it should be noted that in the diploma in Latvian, point 3.1., the level of qualification is indicated as the second-level professional higher education diploma, which corresponds to Level 7 of the European/Latvian qualifications framework, while the sample diploma in English, in point 3.1., the level of qualification is indicated as First academic degree (of basic studies).

Evaluation of the study programme "Supervision"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Average

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Supervision"

Short-term recommendations

If RSU wants to keep the programme PMSP "Supervision" as it is currently presented, then it is more suitable for the study field "Management, Administration, and Management of Real Property" and with wider admission requirements or study field "Education and Pedagogy" and also with wider admission requirements. Otherwise: It is recommended to change the name of the study programme from "Supervision" to "Supervision in health care"; admission requirements could be narrowed down and changed from "Bachelor's degree or equivalent degree, or professional higher education with a qualification in the following thematic areas: Health care, healthcare services, social and human sciences, social welfare, teacher education and education sciences, business and administration, humanities" to "Bachelor's degree or equivalent degree, or professional higher education with a qualification in the Health care, healthcare services".

To increase the number of the topics of the final theses that are focused on health care.

To increase the number of internship places in the health care sector.

To revise PMSP "Supervision" objectives and learning outcomes and to ensure they are fully compliant with the field „Health Care“

To reduce the number of drop-out students.

Long-term recommendations

Based on the data, there is a comparably low demand of the programme. It is recommended to promote the programme and attract more students.

II - "Art Therapy" ASSESSMENT

II - "Art Therapy" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1. SAR (p.437-464) provides information about the Professional master study programme "Art Therapy" (47722), with Diploma Supplement as per Annex 24.1_Diploma_and_Supplement_Art_Therapy, which information was corroborated during interviews and Annexes 17.1_pielik_PMSP_Makslas_ter_atbilstiba_izglitibas_standartam_ENG and 18.2_Anx_Mapping_StP_to_Profession_Standard_Art_Therapy.

This information confirms that there is compliance of the study programme "Art Therapy" with the study field "Health Care".

2.1.2.

The Professional master's study programme "Art Therapy" at RSU has been implemented since 2006 (SAR, Annexes 17.2_pielik_Atobilstiba_nozares_specifikajam_regulejumam_Makslas_ter_ENG., 18.1_Anx_Study_Course_Mapping_Art_Therapy, 19_AnX_Study_Plan_Art_Therapy). The objective of the study programme is to provide the opportunity to obtain Professional Master's Degree in Health Care and acquire professional education in art therapy, according to the chosen specialization (visual and plastic arts therapy, dance and movement therapy, music therapy, and drama therapy - which are major and globally respected areas in art therapy) in accordance with the standard for professional higher education and the professional standard of art therapist, forming the basis for further professional activity in the field of health and social care and subsequent certification.

Programme code 47722 describes the professional master's programme in Health Care, where the first part of code "47" refers to second level professional higher education - professional master's degree, while the second part of code "722" - group of educational programmes: Health and social welfare and a set of educational programmes: Healthcare. Compliance is recognizable.

The study programme outcomes correspond to the knowledge, skills and competences described in the Latvian professional standard for art therapists. They are formulated in accordance with the learning outcomes for studies of Level 7 of the European Qualifications Framework, and in line with the recommendations and guidelines developed by the European Consortium for Arts Therapies Education (European Consortium for Arts Therapies Education) and professional organisations such as the European Music Therapy Confederation, the European Association of Dance Movement Therapy, the European Federation of Art Therapy and the European Federation of Drama Therapy. Duration of the study programme is full time studies - 2 years, 6 months - latvian. Amount 100 (CP)/ 150 (ECTS); Degree: Professional Master's Degree in Health Care; Qualification of an art therapist specialising in visual and plastic arts therapy or dance and movement therapy, or music therapy, or drama therapy.

In expert opinion, regarding the admission requirements, the preparation of the students who apply and don't have a background in psychology, should be improved. It is necessary to develop study material that provides a foundation of psychological knowledge for the profession, which is not available to applicants without prior training in psychology and counseling experience.

2.1.3. The corrections made to the study programme parameters within the assessment of the study

field are justified and supported by documentation (SAR, p.442) and in interviews during expert group site visit in November, 2023.

SAR p. 442, Table 1 shows that the admission rules have changed since the 2017/2018 academic accreditation exercise. These include:

- 1) "Bachelor's degree or second-level professional higher education in a state accredited study programme in the following subject areas: arts, humanities, social and human sciences, health care, social welfare, teacher education and educational sciences (or equivalent higher education). Applicants without a Bachelor's degree or a second level of professional higher education in health care must present a document confirming completion of RSU preparatory course for the Master's programme in Art Therapy";
- (2) Entrance examination and applicant's documented prior experience in art therapy and/or psychotherapy and/or arts therapy-related training (conference, seminar, masterclass).

2.1.4. There are three main groups of patients seen by art therapists: adults, young people and children with emotional and social problems.

As per SAR, (p. 447), art therapy is "a field of health care in which, under the guidance of an art therapist, interventions and reflection based on artistic expression are used in a therapeutic setting, individually or in a group, face-to-face or remotely, to address and prevent physical and/or mental health and/or social problems in patients or customers, as well as for personal growth, after assessment and agreement" (National Encyclopaedia. Arts Therapy. <https://enciklopedija.lv/skirklis/102328-m%C4%81kslu-terapija>)

Art therapist, according to Section 45.2 of the Medical Treatment Law (as per SAR, p. 447) Medical Treatment Law. 12.06.1997 Official Publisher of the Republic of Latvia, 167/168, 01.07.1997, <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/44108-arstniecibas-likums>), is a healthcare professional, a functional specialist who, in accordance with their competence in medical treatment, is familiar with the assessment of human functional limitations and the principles of rehabilitation, performs treatment using appropriate diagnostics, assessment and medical technologies, and gives opinions, as well as carries out professional education work.

There is economic and social justification for the Professional Master's Degree in Health care with a Qualification of an art therapist specializing in visual and plastic arts therapy or dance and movement therapy, or music therapy, or drama therapy as further explained here. The origins of art therapy in Latvia can be traced back to the time when the country regained its independence and, with the opening of the Iron Curtain, experts and knowledge in various fields, including art therapy, became available. There was a great deal of interest in the methods and techniques used in art therapy, especially among psychologists, social workers, educators and artists, and initially it was organized in the form of seminars and master classes. In 2003, it was decided to follow the path of art therapy as an autonomous profession in Latvia: a professional standard was created and soon after (in 2006) a study programme was established in RSU. In 2012, the profession joined the family of functional specialists.

As regards the dynamics of the number of students and employment indicators of the graduates of the study programme, since the beginning, almost 200 art therapists have graduated from it, mainly working in health care (medical rehabilitation teams in psychiatric and somatic clinics), social care and special education institutions. Feedback from students, alumni and employers is essential to ensure the achievement of the objectives of the study programme and to improve the quality of studies. It is obtained through surveys and the involvement of the study quality councils, placement and final thesis defense commissions.

2.1.5. Not applicable.

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

There is compliance of the Professional Master's study programme "Art Therapy" with the study field. Study content is in line with the academic and professional requirements for Art Therapists. There is economic and social justification for the Professional Master's study programme after graduation of which the Degree in Healthcare with a Qualification of an art therapist specializing in visual and plastic arts therapy or dance and movement therapy, or music therapy, or drama therapy is to be obtained.

Strengths:

1. There is compliance of the Professional Master's study programme "Art Therapy" with the study field.
2. There is a demand for these professionals and therefore there is a market for these professions ensuring study programme viability in terms of employability.

Weaknesses:

None.

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1. The study programme offers a Master's degree in health care and professional art therapy education in accordance with the chosen specialization and the professional standard of art therapist, preparing students for further professional activity in health and social care and certification (SAR p. 443; Annex 17.1; 18.2; 17.2; 18.1; 19; 20; 9).

The study programme's thematic plan outlines courses in the first semester to help students understand professional art therapy, including study courses as Professional Activity and Legal Base of Arts Therapies, Medical Rehabilitation and Teamwork, Music/Drama/Dance and Movement Therapy, Visually Plastic Art Therapy I, and art therapy history. Student placements allow them to witness and analyze the work of art therapists in health care, social care, and special education. Students study evidence-based practice and research as a cognitive process in delivering it (e.g., an information literacy unit in Research Methodology). The second semester sees a rise in field-specific courses, such as Music/Drama/Dance and Movement Therapy and Visually Plastic Art Therapy. Courses include patient/customer assessment, Principles and Process of Evaluation in Art Therapy, Basics of Psychiatry, Medical Rehabilitation and Teamwork, and Individual Counseling in Art Therapy and Psychodynamics, focusing on patient groups in psychiatry and somatic medicine. In Assessment Practice, students assess several patients of different ages using conversation and art-based assessment (in their specialization), documenting the results, setting goals for working with a patient, and developing a therapy plan. In parallel with the Research Methodology course, study work teaches students how to do independent research for their Master's thesis. A semester-end research project is created. The third and fourth semesters teach theoretical and practical skills for working with patients of different groups individually and in groups. There are two 10-week clinical placements in the second year of studies, one with individual patients/customers and one with groups. A weekly supervision group conducted by an experienced professor and supervisor helps students learn and reflect during their placement. The second year of studies involves developing the Master's thesis topic and technique, which the Faculty of Rehabilitation Council approves. Students complete their Master's thesis and practice their professional abilities through role-plays and simulations in the fifth semester (SAR p. 449).

Students choose their specialization during entrance exams, enrolling those with developed skills in their chosen field. For instance, music therapy students play an instrument and voice, while visually

plastic art therapy students work with various materials and composition. The programme's Part A-courses are substantively identical to all four specializations (for example, "Professional activities in art therapy and legal foundations", "Study methodology", "Psychosomatic medicine", etc.), while Part B or restrictive elective courses teach specialization-specific knowledge and skills, including integration with Part A courses. In semester 1, Music Therapy I covers the history, theoretical methodology, and philosophy of the profession, as well as detailed, therapeutically oriented music playing, improvisation, etc. In the second semester, students gain evaluative skills in music therapy. In third semesters and fourth, students work individually and in groups with patients and clients utilizing a simulation-based approach. Practice strengthens all theoretical knowledge in the specialization. Visually plastic art, drama, dance, and motion therapy are also taught by combining compulsory Part A and Part B courses (SAR p. 451).

The content of the study courses is derived from the aims and learning outcomes of the study course, whereas they are derived from the aim and learning outcomes of the programme. The linkages are evident in the mapping of the study programme. Each learning outcome of the study programme (1-8) corresponds to several study courses. The study courses of the programme provide the necessary knowledge, skills and competences to meet the requirements of the level 7 of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (LQF), obtain a Master's degree of health care and further qualified studies for doctoral studies. Future improvements should go in a direction of regular improvement of the study programme and the relevance of its courses to the trends of the national economy. Additionally, it is necessary to map the study course content of the study programme against the updated occupational standard of Art Therapist; as well as adjust the content of study courses where necessary. Before each academic year, the teaching staff of the study course should update the study course descriptions, learning outcomes, content of examinations in study courses with a test as part of the examination, the teaching staff of the study course and literature. In the light of changes from CP to ECTS credit points, it should be carefully taken into account to avoid any discrepancies in the process. The study course descriptions and reading lists published in study course descriptions are not fully revised since the last reaccreditation period. Updating the study course content and descriptions is necessary.

Additionally, the study programme should include some of the topics that are the result of the rapid science and technology development in the field of art therapy, that will in the future enhance both the practice and the overall experience for both therapists and clients. As digital platforms become integral to therapeutic practices, art therapists are incorporating digital media, virtual reality (VR), and augmented reality (AR) to enhance creative experiences. Teletherapy platforms, enabled by advanced communication technologies, facilitate remote sessions and asynchronous communication, broadening access to art therapy services. Biometric feedback and wearable technology introduce novel dimensions, allowing therapists to gauge emotional states and tailor interventions based on real-time data. Artificial intelligence (AI) contributes to personalized interventions by analyzing client preferences and creative patterns. Additionally, 3D printing and fabrication provide tangible representations of artistic expressions. The synthesis of these technological innovations reshapes traditional paradigms, offering new possibilities for therapeutic engagement, accessibility, and data-informed interventions in the evolving landscape of art therapy. The data are showing very positive trends in awareness on mental health, from individuals, companies, and communities, which give a very positive perspective for art therapists. As the programme has a very positive perspective, in the context of a modern era it is important to keep the focus on the well-being of humans, where science and technology are used as tools. In essence, art therapy in the modern age, spanning various forms, offers a versatile and accessible means for individuals to navigate the complexities of contemporary life, promoting mental well-being, fostering creativity, and connecting people across diverse cultures and backgrounds. Therefore art therapy, encompassing various forms such as dance, music, drama, and visual therapy, holds significant importance in the context of the modern age for several reasons: These modalities offer a tangible

and expressive outlet in a digital world, providing stress reduction and contributing to mental well-being. With their universal appeal, these art forms facilitate cultural and global connectivity. Technology integration enhances accessibility, while the holistic health approach of art therapy addresses emotional, psychological, and physical well-being. The creative processes foster problem-solving skills and innovation, and community-building occurs through social connections forged in group sessions. Art therapy, a structured platform for emotional regulation and self-exploration, proves invaluable in navigating the complexities of contemporary life, promoting mental wellness, fostering creativity, and connecting diverse individuals across the globe. Keep this in mind when improving the study programme.

The content of the study programme, the content of the study courses and modules are interconnected and complementary, which is relevant for the study programme “Art Therapy”. The content of the programme corresponds to the objectives of the programme and ensures the achievement of learning outcomes; and the majority of the content satisfies the requirements of the industry, the labor market, and scientific trends. The study programme is in accordance with national regulations. The study programme, on the other hand, needs to be updated in order to incorporate subjects that are the product of modern and quick developments in science and technology. Planning the study process for the transition from CP to ECTS should make an effort to avoid discrepancies regarding the associated credits to a course. This is important in light of the fact that the credit system will be changing in the near future to ECTS.

2.2.2. The study programme provides students with a set of theoretical and practical knowledge, developing students' research skills and promoting professional and personal growth in accordance with the knowledge, skills and competence specified at level 7 of the Latvian Qualifications Framework. The content of the programme is implemented in a format that ensures graduates' understanding of responsible and safe choice and use of information technologies in professional activities, research and lifelong learning (use of e-learning environment, use of RSU library databases, interactive methods in individual and group work). Upon the completion of the StP “Art Therapy”, students take a state (qualification) exam, defend their Master's thesis and, on the basis of these examinations, receive the professional Master's degree in health care and the qualification of art therapist in one of the four specializations. To award master's degrees, students of study programme "Art therapy" develop and defend their thesis based on current health sector expertise. Students must follow both the RSU Regulation on the Development and Defence of Qualifications Papers, Student Research Papers, Bachelor's thesis, and Master's thesis, as well as the research process developed by the Study programme Department of Health Psychology and Pedagogy for the Development of Master's thesis. The student and potential supervisor will choose the Final Paper subject and manager, however the Faculty of Rehabilitation Council will coordinate the topic following pre-defence (SAR p. 452).

The awarding of a degree is based on the achievements and findings of the relevant field of science, however there is a space for improvement. The thesis should include more of the topics that are the result of the rapid science and technology development in the field of art therapy, that will in the future enhance both the practice and the overall experience for both therapists and clients.

2.2.3. Professional master study programme “Art Therapy” is implemented in the form of full-time regular studies for 100 CP / 150 ECTS over five semesters. The first four semesters end with an examination period to test students' knowledge and skills, and the fifth semester concludes with a qualification exam and Master's thesis defense.

The most common study methods are lectures, classes, seminars, supervisions, consultations, independent work, simulation-based learning, placements, and developing artistic abilities in specialization. Interactive approaches, debates, role-plays, simulations, project development

(including videos and presentations), and educational research dominate studies, allowing information to be applied. RSU technology resources enable lecturers to utilize multimedia methods, including audio, video, and information transfer, and actively utilize the e-environment. Master's students learn to work individually and in teams, describe and critically analyze, and solve professional challenges using the chosen teaching techniques (SAR p. 453).

Assessment in the study programme is based on both the quantity (credit points) and quality of work. After each study course, the student obtains a pass or a mark on a 10-point scale if the final exam is an exam. Students can now be tested and give comments throughout the semester with cumulative assessments in study courses. The study course description (accessible to students) outlines assessment criteria, expected learning outcomes in skills and knowledge, and testing and assessment procedures. At the start of each study course, the lecturer informs students of the tasks and assessment criteria. Information is posted in e-studies and matches the study course description. Written and oral exams, tests, essays, reports, conversations, presentations, case studies, role-plays, and analysis evaluate knowledge, abilities, and competences. Assessment criteria are approved in department meetings. At the end of their studies, Master's students defend an independently conducted research – Master's thesis – as well as take a qualification exam, where they prepare a clinical case study and demonstrate practical skills, competences and readiness according to the competences required for the profession. The study programme has a successful cooperation with health care professionals, who assess the students' professional readiness by participating in state examination boards (SAR p. 453).

The study implementation methods contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study courses and the study programme. Student-centered learning and teaching principles are considered. When assessing the learning outcomes of education, the basic principles and procedure for the assessment of the completion of the study programme; comply with the requirements of the Cabinet Regulations No 305: 55. However, there is room for improvement when it comes to the methods of involving students in scientific research. The incorporation of research into the learning process gives students the opportunity to participate in scientific endeavors and develop their scientific skills. The presentation of the results of a master's thesis at a scientific conference can facilitate the integration of academic studies into the working environment. This provides graduates with the opportunity to show their findings to professionals and contribute to the development of the area. It is highly recommended to involve students in scientific work that will result in excellence. The programme emphasizes cooperation and communication through study modes (pair work, group work, student-to-student) but should promote more of the multidisciplinary collaboration with lecturers, employers, and association representatives, as well as other professionals in clinics to create an interdisciplinary approach in solving complex problems of the profession. It is highly recommended to involve students in multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary activities and projects.

2.2.4. Students gain professional skills through 26 CP / 39 ECTS placements, starting in the first year. They observe and analyze experienced colleagues' work during the observation placement and assess patients/clients of various ages during the assessment placement. Clinical placements in health, social care, and special education allow students to work with patients in rehabilitation and psychiatric settings individually and in groups in their second year. Students conduct placement research in their third year. Each placement institution has an RSU faculty mentor for help and monitoring. In the second year, during extensive clinical practice, students receive regular supervision to analyze their experience and get help with difficult situations (SAR p. 453).

Students and employers show general satisfaction with the placement opportunities. However, there is always space for improvement. The study curriculum relies on clinical placements. Therefore, one of the priorities for the study programme in the coming years should be the provision, development, and incorporation of new placements, which contribute to the competence and professional

development of young professionals and allow Latvian regions to involve young art therapy specialists, to address the problem of decentralization of human resources in health care in Latvia. It should also be considered to improve and implement more the student exchange within the clinical placement within Erasmus + mobility programme, and placement in the EU territory.

The placement during the study programme, the opportunities and provision of placement offered to students, as well as the organization of work are effective. The tasks of the placement are related to the learning outcomes achievable. The placement complies with the requirements of regulatory enactments. There is space for improvement.

2.2.5. Not applicable.

2.2.6. At the end of their studies, Master's students defend an independently conducted research –Master's thesis – as well as take a qualification exam, where they prepare a clinical case study and demonstrate practical skills, competences and readiness according to the competencies required for the profession. The study programme has a successful cooperation with health care professionals, who assess the students' professional readiness by participating in state examination boards.

Thematic directions of students' final papers are defined in accordance with development of the field and labor market and the research directions defined by the Department of Health Psychology and Pedagogy and the Department of Rehabilitation, which implement study programme study courses. While students identify and develop subjects with the Director of the study programme and scientific supervisors, final papers may also cover creative issues. In the reporting period, Master's theses focused on arts-based assessment tools, psychological help and support for different patient/customer groups (including designing and testing interventions), professional identity and development, professional performance and evaluation, and self-help and self-care as a resource in professional and personal life. Some of the topics are: "Specifics of the therapeutic framework of art therapy in the process of face to face and online work"; "The organization of the arts therapists practice with the children client/patient group in Latvia" etc. (SAR p. 456, Annex 22).

Methodological Instructions for Developing a Master's Thesis, which provides detailed guidelines for the development and presentation of the thesis, are available to students and is a good support for Master's thesis authors, supervisors and reviewers.

The topics of students' final theses are relevant to the field and correspond to the study programme. The criterion is well met.

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

The content of the study programme, the content of the study courses, and modules are interconnected and complementary, which is relevant for the study programme "Art Therapy". The content of the programme corresponds to the objectives of the programme and ensures the achievement of learning outcomes; and the majority of the content satisfies the requirements of the industry, the labor market, and scientific trends. The study programme is in accordance with national regulations. The study programme, on the other hand, needs to be updated in order to incorporate subjects that are the product of modern and quick developments in science and technology. Planning the study process for the transition from CP to ECTS should make an effort to avoid discrepancies regarding the associated credits to a course. This is important in light of the fact that the credit system will be changing in the near future to ECTS. The study implementation methods contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study courses and the study programme. Student-centered learning and teaching principles are considered. When assessing the learning outcomes of education, the basic principles and procedure for the

assessment of the completion of the study programme; comply with the requirements of the National legislation. However, there is room for improvement when it comes to the methods of involving students in scientific research. It is highly recommended to involve students in scientific work that will result in excellence. The programme emphasizes cooperation and communication through study modes (pair work, group work, student-to-student) but should promote more of the multidisciplinary collaboration with lecturers, employers, and association representatives, as well as other professionals in clinics to create an interdisciplinary approach in solving complex problems of the profession. The internship during the study programme, the opportunities and provision of internship offered to students, as well as the organization of work are effective. The tasks of the internship are related to the learning outcomes achievable. The internship complies with the requirements of regulatory enactments. The topics of students' final theses are relevant to the field and correspond to the study programme.

Strengths:

1. Bright future perspective of the professional field and demand in the job market.
2. Good collaboration with professional organisations and cooperation with placement institutions in Riga, Smiltene, Ludza, Krāslava, Daugavpils, Tukums, Sigulda, Krimulda, Strenči and elsewhere.

Weaknesses:

1. The preparation of the students who apply and don't have a background in psychology, should be improved. It is necessary to develop study material that provides a foundation of psychological knowledge for the profession, which is not available to applicants without prior training in psychology and counseling experience.
2. The study course descriptions and reading lists published in study course descriptions are not fully revised since the last reaccreditation period. Updating the study course content and descriptions is necessary.
3. Study courses and their content do not fully comply with the needs of the relevant industry, labor market, and science trends; they do not follow the rapid science and technology development in the field of profession.
4. Underused possibilities of involvement of students in scientific work.
5. Number of placements does not offer as many possibilities as it could, throughout Latvia and the EU, using ERASMUS+ programme.
6. Possibilities for lack of interdisciplinarity and work with various professions to solve complex problems of profession, obtained during the study programme is not seized enough.

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

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

22_Anx_Masters_thesis_topic_titles_Art_Therapy.pdf

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1. According to the Self-Assessment Report (SAR, Part II, Study Programme Art Therapy, Paragraph 3.3.1) the implementation of the study programme involves teaching staff from multiple departments, this way the students are given the opportunity to analyze issues from various perspectives.

Each involved department provides the resources for the study process, giving students the opportunity to practice in laboratories (statistics, biochemistry, biology and microbiology), acquire clinical skills and analyze drug therapy.

Within the frames of regulations the students have access to medical records that provide the real-world complexity of the problems to be solved. The most important challenge in this regard is maintaining a balance between patient data protection and information needed for the study process.

The informative provision includes subscribed databases Academic Collection (EBSCO), Ebook Central (Proquest), AccessMedicine, ClinicalKey and SAGE Research Methods.

Full texts of scientific articles are available at Sage Premier 2023, Health Research Premium Collection (ProQuest), MEDLINE Complete (EBSCO), Communication Source (EBSCO), Sociology Source Ultimate (EBSCO), Academic Search Complete (EBSCO), Wiley Online Journals, PsycARTICLES (APA), BMJ Journals, ClinicalKey journals (Elsevier) and Science Direct (Elsevier). Additionally evidence-based medicine databases include ClinicalKey Clinical Overviews (Elsevier), The Cochrane Library (Wiley), DynaMed (EBSCO) and UpToDate. The students are also provided with theses containing database ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global: The Sciences and Engineering Collection as well as news and reference databases like Encyclopedia Britannica Academic Edition, Letonika, LETA news archive, Nozare.lv and News.lv (Lursoft).

In order to ensure a high quality study process and cover both the implementation and development costs it is planned to increase the number of students to 52 within the next 2.5 year period. The financial indicators for the study programme on the basic level are positive with average revenue constituting EUR 4287 per student and average cost being EUR 3509 per student.

The expert group concludes that the study provision in terms of material, technical, informative and financial aspects is sufficient to facilitate a high quality study process.

2.3.2 .Not applicable.

2.3.3. Based on SAR p. 458, the study programme is financed from the state budget and the funds of private and legal persons by setting the tuition fee in accordance with the state budget funding without social security in the amount of EUR 7335 for a study year. The number of students planned to reach in the two and a half years of studies of the study programme is 52 students, with 17 students admitted in the first year of studies, and the number of students remaining unchanged during the study years. Such a number of students is optimal to ensure a high quality study process and so that the study programme can cover implementation and development costs. Based on the table provided calculating average cost and average revenues in the SAR p. 458, it is clear that the average revenue exceeds average cost, which is a good trend.

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

The study programme appears to be well-planned and financially sustainable. The combination of diverse funding sources, optimal enrollment plans, and a positive revenue-cost trend suggests effective financial management. This bodes well for the programme's ability to provide quality education while covering its operational and developmental expenses. Resources provided by each department facilitate practical learning experiences in laboratories and clinical settings, while access to medical records ensures exposure to real-world complexities. The informative provision encompasses a wide range of subscribed databases, full-text scientific articles, evidence-based

medicine databases, theses, and news/reference databases. Financial indicators demonstrate positive revenue and cost ratios, supporting plans to increase student enrollment.

Strengths:

1. The study programme is financially sustainable and the average revenue exceeds average costs per student.
2. The informative provision encompasses a wide range of subscribed databases, full-text scientific articles, evidence-based medicine databases, theses, and news/reference databases.

Weaknesses:

None.

Assessment of the requirement [6]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The study programme ensures the necessary resource provision and fulfills the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and ensures the achievement of learning outcomes.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1. SAR (p. 459) and the list provided on p.460 show that the qualification of the academic staff involved in the implementation of the study programme “Art Therapy” is in conformity with the conditions for implementation of the study programme and the requirements of regulatory enactments. The study programme, objectives of the relevant study courses and learning outcomes are successfully achieved.

The staff complement:

1. The Director of the professional Master’s study programme has the Mg.art., Mg.sc.sal., and is a candidate for a PhD degree. She continuously strives to improve her professional and academic qualifications;
2. The teaching staff involved in the study programme are: 35 lecturers, 15 of whom have been elected to academic positions at RSU; 2 are professors and 1 of them leading researchers, 1 acting professor, 1- associate professor, 4 - assistant professors, 1 senior lecturer, and 19 lecturers.
3. Foreign visiting lecturers from the UK, Germany, Netherlands, and USA have been recruited to improve the study programme content and introduce innovative methods in the study process.
4. 28 lecturers have graduated from RSU study programmes (from one to three), while four lecturers are currently (in the academic year 2022/2023) studying in one of the programmes.
5. “Art therapy” has 10 out of 35 teaching staff with a doctoral degree, albeit all have sufficient practical seniority corresponding to the study course to be taught, a period of at least five years, which is a criterion that is carefully followed and is also in line with the RSU guidelines.

2.4.2. Over the period of assessment, there have been no significant changes in the composition of teaching staff (SAR, p. 461), albeit having the composition of the teaching staff stabilized. Several lecturers have successfully completed their doctoral studies in RSU programmes: Medicine (2) and Psychology (4). New lecturers have been recruited who have started teaching after obtaining their

Master's degree or are pursuing doctoral studies, and are highly qualified professionals in their field. These are involved in the implementation of study course Clinical Placement I; and in study courses Introduction in Basics of Nutrition, Nutrition Policy and Food Legislation, and in study course Healthy Food Preparation. Furthermore, 4 representatives of the professional environment are involved as guest lecturers in the implementation of the study programme.

From 1 January 2017 to 1 October 2022, 25 lecturers of the Master's study programme "Art Therapy" participated in continuing education activities of the Centre for Educational Growth attending more than 90 training activities of different content. In total, teaching staff of the "Art Therapy" study programme spent 2186 academic hours on continuing education activities.

2.4.3. Not applicable.

2.4.4. The academic members of staff in the last six years have published in peer-reviewed journals or acquired artistic achievements/practical experience in accordance with the Law on Higher Education Institutions. This is shown in Annexes 24.7_Analysis_of_the_Composition_of_the_Academic_Staff_Art_Therapy; 6.2_AnxBiographies_teaching_staff_PMSP_Art_Therapy_EN_185pages; and 6.4_AnxAc_staff_publications_IF factor_Facult_Rehabilitation.

2.4.5. As per SAR (p. 462-463), and confirmed during expert group on-site visit interviews with key stakeholders of the study programme "Art Therapy", there is a mechanism for mutual cooperation of the teaching staff in the implementation of the study programme which therefore ensures the achievement of the aims of the study programme and the interconnection of study courses within the study programme. There is continuous cooperation between the Council of the Faculty of Rehabilitation, lecturers within the Department, the teaching staff of the Department of Health Psychology and Pedagogy, the Faculty of Rehabilitation, students, employers, graduates, and other departments. This is promoted in particular by the Director of the study programme, who captures internal evidence by analyzing the results of the study course assessment questionnaires, recommendations and comments of students. These results are discussed with the heads of study courses and the lecturers involved, so that consensus is built for changes to be made so as to improve the study process as necessary. In particular, before the beginning of each semester, the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study course, the study work organizer and the head of placement, together with the head of the study course, review the planning of the study course and topical issues related to its implementation. Therefore, there is communication with heads of the study courses during the planning and implementation phases annually. The reviews assist the programme director to plan for the next academic year. Subsequently, heads of study courses whose study courses require changes are contacted and discussions ensue for implementation of improvements. Also, before each semester, the content, outcomes and interconnection of the study course with other study courses are discussed. These discussions with lecturers are important to fine-tune study programmes to not only promote improvement and continuity but also to avoid the overlapping of study content.

Since the profession of art therapist is still new in Latvia, and that the RSU programme concentrates research and conceptualisation as well as on the development potential of the profession, teaching staff regularly discuss and describe topics relevant to the development of the profession.

Organization of the annual conference Health and Personality Development: An Interdisciplinary Approach organized by the RSU Department of Health Psychology and Pedagogy, Faculty of Public Health and Social Welfare, which took place for the 8th time in 2022, helps students and practitioners from the field of psychological support to meet, listen to presentations, discuss topics of common interest (e.g. assessment and research, helping different patient/customer groups, health behavior, self-help, etc.), and gain experience in practical master classes. In addition, the

organization of the regular RSU Scientific Conference, including the Student Scientific Conference, as well as the Latvian National Rehabilitation Congress, organized by the Latvian Association of Rehabilitation Professional Organisations in cooperation with RSU is a crucial resource for the development of this new profession. These events also provide an opportunity for students and teaching staff to share information about their work, to learn about the latest developments of other colleagues, and to find ideas for improving the quality, content and methods of studies.

The ratio of the number of students and teaching staff in the study programme: 72 students and 35 lecturers. The ratio of the number of students and teaching staff is 2:1.

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

The qualification of the teaching staff involved in the study programme matches the requirements for its implementation and the regulatory enactments, enabling the study programme's aims and learning outcomes and the relevant study courses to be met. The RSU takes steps to ensure that changes in the teaching staff do not impair the quality of the study programme or its compliance with regulatory requirements. In the last six years, all academic staff members have written in peer-reviewed journals, including international editions or have five years of practical experience per the Law on Higher Education Institutions. A framework for teaching staff cooperation in implementing the study programme promotes its success and the interconnectedness of study courses.

Strengths:

1. The qualification of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme "Art Therapy" complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme.
2. There is a growing number of staff with doctorate degrees and therefore the department is developing in the right direction.
3. There is ample cooperation amongst key stakeholders that enable successful running, improvement and maintenance of study programmes.

Weaknesses:

None.

Assessment of the requirement [7]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

As per Site visit interviews and documentation, SAR (p. 437- 464), here is compliance of the qualification of the academic staff and visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting docents, visiting lecturers and visiting assistants with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements set out in the respective regulatory enactments.

24.7_Analysis_of_the_Composition_of_the_Academic_Staff_Art_Therapy.pdf

6.2_AnxBiographies_teaching_staff_PMSP_Art_Therapy_EN_185pages.pdf

6.4_AnxAc_staff_publications_IF factor_Facult_Rehabilitation.pdf

8.1_AnxDat_on_international_lecturers_Faculty_of_Rehabilitation.pdf

2.5. Assessment of the Compliance

Requirements

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Annex - 17.1_pielik_PMSP_Makslas_ter_atbilstiba_izglitibas_standartam_ENG.pdf confirms that the study programme complies with State Education Standard corresponding to Cabinet Regulations No 305 of 13 June 2023 "Regulations on National Standard for Professional Higher Education"

<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/342818-noteikumi-par-valsts-profesionalas-augstakas-izglitibas-standartu>.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The study programme complies with the profession standard "Standards of the Profession of Art Therapist" (minutes No 7 of 22 October 2008 of the tripartite Cooperation Council on Vocational Education and Employment was approved). (available online:

<https://registri.visc.gov.lv/profizglitiba/dokumenti/standarti/ps0434.pdf>)

- 3 - The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in all languages in which the study programme is implemented, and they comply with the requirements set forth in Section 561 , Paragraph two and Section 562 , Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

The study course descriptions are prepared in English and Latvian that can be accessed under annexes - 20_Anx_Study_course_description_Art_Therapy.pdf and 20_pielik_Kursu_apr_Makslas_terapija.pdf. Descriptions comply with regulations set forth in Law on Higher Education Institutions. The study programme is implemented in Latvian. The study course descriptions and reading lists published in study course descriptions are not fully revised since the last reaccreditation period. Updating the study course content and descriptions is necessary.

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

The provided Diploma samples and their supplements in English -

24.1_Diploma_and_Supplement_Art_Therapy.pdf and the one provided in Latvian -

24.1_Diploms_un_pielikums_PMSP_Makslas_terapija.pdf differ from one another in terms of count of credit points in both Latvian and ECTS credit point systems. In the diploma supplement provided in English under 3.2. It is stated that the study programme's official length is 2,5 years (5 semesters), 100 Latvian credit points/ 150 ECTS points, while in the annex provided in Latvian it is stated that the study length is 2 years (4 semesters) 80 Latvian credit points and 120 ECTS. Thus, it is necessary to review the documents to ensure consistency in both of the provided languages and compliance with the procedure by which state-recognised documents of higher education are issued according to Cabinet Regulation No. 202 "Kārtība, kādā izsniedz valsts

atzītus augstāko izglītību apliecinošus dokumentus”.

- 5 5 - The academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements set forth in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 6 6 - Academic study programmes provided for less than 250 full-time students may be implemented and less than five professors and associated professors of the higher education institution may be involved in the implementation of the mandatory and limited elective part of these study programmes provided that the relevant opinion of the Council for Higher Education has been received in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 7 7 - At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of an academic doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field of science. At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a professional doctoral study programme in arts (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 8 8 - The teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme are proficient in the official language in accordance with the regulations on the level of the official language knowledge and the procedures for testing official language proficiency for performing professional duties and office duties.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Based on the acquired information onsite as well as relevant annexes:

24.4_AnxCertification_Regarding_Latvian_Language_of_the_Academic_Staff.pdf and

6.2_AnxCV_ENG_visas_programmas.7z, it can be evaluated that the

language proficiency of teaching staff is compliant with Cabinet Regulation. Nr. 733 "

Regulations Regarding the Extent of the Knowledge of the Official Language, the Procedures for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language and the State Fee for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language".

- 9 9 - The teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language, if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Sample of attached study agreement 24.8_AnxCStudy contract sample_Health Care study direction.pdf complies with Cabinet Regulation. Nr. 70 "Studiju līgumā obligāti ietveramie noteikumi”.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

RSU has provided confirmation that students will be provided with opportunities to continue their education in the same institution if the implementation of the study programme is terminated. The agreements are specified in the annexes under "24.2_pielik_Apliecinajumi_par_parnemsanu_eng.7z". It is specified that in case of discontinuation of this study programme, students can continue their studies at RSU Academic Master's study programme "Rehabilitation".

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

RSU has provided confirmation that students are guaranteed compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the study programme's license is revoked. It is ensured based on the Section 55(8) of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education and Cabinet of Ministers No 795 of 11 December 2018 "Regulations on Licensing of study programmes", Paragraph 13.4. The relevant document can be found under Annexes - 24.3_AnxCertification_of_Compensation_of_Losses_to_Students.pdf.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The study programme complies with the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 268 "Regulations on the Therapeutic Expertise of Medical Personnel and Students Acquiring the First- or Second-Level Professional Higher Medical Education and the Extent of Their Theoretical and Practical Knowledge" and Medical Treatment Law according to 17.2_pielik_Atibilstiba_nozares_specifikajam_regulejumam_Makslas_ter_ENG.pdf

Assessment of the requirement [8]

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Study programme partially complies with regulatory enactments. The provided Diploma samples and their supplements in English - 24.1_Diploma_and_Supplement_Art_Therapy.pdf and the one provided in Latvian - 24.1_Diploms_un_pielikums_PMSP_Makslas_terapija.pdf differ from one another in terms of count of credit points in both Latvian and ECTS credit point systems. Also, the study course descriptions and reading lists published in study course descriptions are not fully revised since the last reaccreditation period. Updating the study course content and descriptions is necessary.

General conclusions about the study programme, indicating the most important strengths

and weaknesses of the study programme

There is compliance of the Professional master study programme “Art Therapy” with the study field. Study content is in line with the academic and professional requirements for Art Therapists. There is economic and social justification for the Professional Master’s Degree in Healthcare with a Qualification of an art therapist specializing in visual and plastic arts therapy or dance and movement therapy, or music therapy, or drama therapy. The content of the study program, the content of the study courses, and modules are interconnected and complementary, which is relevant for the study programme “Art Therapy”. The content of the program corresponds to the objectives of the program and ensures the achievement of learning outcomes; and the majority of the content satisfies the requirements of the industry, the labor market, and scientific trends. The study programme “Art Therapy” is in accordance with national regulations. The study programme, on the other hand, needs to be updated in order to incorporate subjects that are the product of modern and quick developments in science and technology. Planning the study process for the transition from CP to ECTS should make an effort to avoid discrepancies regarding the associated credits to a course. This is important in light of the fact that the credit system will be changing in the near future to ECTS. Student-centered learning and teaching principles are considered. When assessing the learning outcomes of education, the basic principles and procedure for the assessment of the completion of the study programme; comply with the requirements of the National legislation. The study implementation methods currently used, contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study courses and the study programme. However, there is room for improvement when it comes to the methods of involving students in scientific research. It is highly recommended to involve students in scientific work that will result in excellence. The programme emphasizes cooperation and communication through study modes (pair work, group work, student-to-student) but should promote more of the multidisciplinary collaboration with lecturers, employers, and association representatives, as well as other professionals in clinics to create an interdisciplinary approach in solving complex problems of the profession. The internship during the study programme, the opportunities and provision of internship offered to students, as well as the organization of work are effective, but there is a space for improvement and offer more placements possibilities to students. The topics of students' final theses are relevant to the field and correspond to the study programme. The RSU takes steps to ensure that changes in the teaching staff do not impair the quality of the study programme or its compliance with regulatory requirements. In the last six years, all academic staff members have written in peer-reviewed journals, including international editions or five years of practical experience per the Higher Education Institutions Law. A framework for teaching staff cooperation in implementing the study program promotes its success and the interconnectedness of study courses. The study programme appears to be well-planned and financially sustainable. The combination of diverse funding sources, optimal enrollment plans, and a positive revenue-cost trend suggests effective financial management. This bodes well for the programme's ability to provide quality education while covering its operational and developmental expenses.

Strengths:

1. Bright future perspective of the professional field and demand in the job market as there is a demand for these professionals and therefore there is a market for these professions ensuring study programme viability in terms of employability.
2. Good collaboration with professional organisations and cooperation with placement institutions in Riga, Smiltene, Ludza, Krāslava, Daugavpils, Tukums, Sigulda, Krimulda, Strenči and elsewhere.
3. There is compliance of the Professional Master’s Degree in Health Care “Art Therapy” with the study field. Study content is in line with the academic and professional requirements for Art Therapists.

Weaknesses:

1. The preparation of the students who apply and don't have a background in psychology, should be improved. It is necessary to develop study material that provides a foundation of psychological knowledge for the profession, which is not available to applicants without prior training in psychology and counseling experience.
2. The study course descriptions and reading lists published in study course descriptions are not fully revised since the last reaccreditation period. Updating the study course content and descriptions is necessary.
3. Study courses and their content do not fully comply with the needs of the relevant industry, labor market, and science trends; they do not follow the rapid science and technology development in the field of profession.
4. Underused possibilities of involvement of students in scientific work.
5. Number of placements does not offer as many possibilities as it could, throughout Latvia and the EU, using ERASMUS+ programme.
6. Lack of interdisciplinarity and work with various professions to solve complex problems of profession, obtained during the study programme.

Evaluation of the study programme "Art Therapy"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Art Therapy"

Short-term recommendations

Fully revise study course descriptions and reading lists, recognizing that they have not been comprehensively updated since the last reaccreditation period, and implement necessary updates to the study course content and descriptions within the next assessment period to ensure accuracy, relevance, and alignment with current educational standards.

Enhance the preparation of students without a background in psychology, focusing on the development of study materials that offer a foundational understanding of psychological knowledge for the profession, recognizing the need to address the gap for applicants without prior training in psychology and counseling experience, and implement this plan within next assessment period to ensure comprehensive and inclusive educational support.

Long-term recommendations

Align study courses and their content with the evolving needs of the relevant industry, labor market, and current science and technology trends within the profession, ensuring responsiveness to rapid developments in the field, and implementing necessary adjustments within the next assessment period.

Maximize the involvement of students in scientific work, recognizing and addressing currently underused possibilities, with the goal of fostering a more active and enriching research experience for students within the next assessment period.

Maximize placement opportunities by expanding collaborations throughout Latvia and the EU, utilizing the ERASMUS+ programme to its full potential, with the goal of providing students with a broader array of valuable experiences, and implement this plan within the next assessment period.

Address the lack of interdisciplinarity within the study programme, fostering collaboration with various professions to solve complex problems specific to the profession, with the goal of providing students with a more holistic and diverse educational experience, and ensure the integration of interdisciplinary approaches within the next assessment period.

II - "Clinical Pharmacy" ASSESSMENT

II - "Clinical Pharmacy" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1. Given that pharmacy is an integral part of the healthcare system (Public Health Guidelines for 2021-2027) and a significant part of this practice includes pharmaceutical care (Pharmaceutical Law Section 1.) Professional master study programme "Clinical Pharmacy" (47725)" falls well within the study field "Health Care" since it includes the philosophy of pharmaceutical care only compared to general practice. It combines care with specialized therapeutic knowledge, experience and decision-making to ensure optimal health outcomes for the patient. Clinical pharmacy links the science and practice of rational medication use (SAR, Part II, Study Programme Clinical Pharmacy, Paragraph 3.1.2).

2.1.2. The code of the Study Program is 47725 and according to the regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 322 states that code part "47" refers to second-level professional higher education (professional master's degree or fifth-level professional qualification), which can be acquired after obtaining a bachelor's degree or professional bachelor's degree. The code part "725" describes the group of educational programmes "Pharmacy". Conclusively, the code of the Study Programme describes a master's level professional programme that leads to a professional master's degree in health care and the professional qualification - clinical pharmacist.

According to the available data on the relevant education in Europe, the degree of clinical pharmacist is equivalent to a masters diploma/degree, with an average study duration of 4 semesters. Therefore admission in the given study programme has a compulsory requirement of a Master's degree (or Pharmacist's degree).

In the development process of the Study Programme, the achievable results were determined. These are subject to the main task - to prepare healthcare specialists able to formulate and analyze current problems in the clinical pharmacy area (including analysis of scientific literature), choose the optimal way to solve the problem and collect data, assess and present the results.

The objectives and the achievable results are reflected in the parameters and confirmed by the study course mapping. The parameters mentioned above are interrelated.

In the experts opinion, the duration (2 years and 6 months) and scope (100 CP) of the study programme is sufficient given the amount and variety of its content. The implementation language for the study programme is Latvian which is justified according to the Section 9 of the Education Law.

2.1.3. According to the Self Assessment Report (SAR, Part II, Study Programme Clinical Pharmacy, Paragraph 3.1.1) no changes have been made in the parameters of the study programme since the

last accreditation.

2.1.4. All graduates of the study programme are employed, with the main areas in this regard being work in hospitals, open-type pharmacies, state institutions, education and clinical research.

The small number of students (10 to 14 students per admission) limits the analysis of dynamics, while the narrow specialization can create difficulties for employment that includes the full application of the knowledge and skills, however this includes only the national scale labor market.

In the experts judgment the University has established a reasonable approach to the admission process by organizing it once every 2 years, this way the number of admitted students is higher.

Additional attention should be devoted to the situation with dropouts since the number is considerable especially in the category of "Study continuation after academic leave" (8 students during the 6 year period), (SAR, Part II, Study Programme Clinical Pharmacy, Paragraph 3.1.4, Annex 16).

2.1.5. Not applicable.

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

The study programme demonstrates alignment with the study field, ensuring correspondence with the relevant criteria and requirements of the discipline. The title, code, degree and professional qualification of the study programme, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation, as well as the implementation language, are reasonable and justified. Economic and / or social justification of the study programme, dynamics of the number of students and employment indicators of the graduates of the study programme are justified as there is demand on the market for this profession.

Strengths:

1) The study programme is developed on the basis of international guidelines, which provides an additional competitive edge in both clinical and open-type pharmacy settings.

Weaknesses:

1) Relatively high number of dropouts after academic leave.

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1. According to SAR (SAR, Part II, Study Programme Clinical Pharmacy, Paragraph 3.2.1) the study courses are created using an integrated approach, this includes elements of pathological anatomy, pathological physiology, pharmacology and pharmacotherapy. Lecturers from several departments, including graduates of the Study Programme are involved in the process of teaching.

Overall teaching process can be described in the following steps:

1. Students acquire in-depth theoretical knowledge in the pathology of relevant organ systems.

2. Principles of medicinal treatment of the relevant diseases are learned by analyzing clinical cases.

It should be noted that the knowledge and skills acquired at the beginning of the studies are used in the further learning process.

The study programme provides an opportunity to acquire in-depth knowledge in the analysis and interpretation of the diagnostic data as well as pharmacotherapy of special patient groups.

Limited elective courses deal with in-depth skills in sub-branches of clinical pharmacy (hospital

clinical pharmacy, inpatient and outpatient pharmaceutical care of oncological patients).

An opportunity to get acquainted with the daily work tasks of hospital pharmacy and learn pain medicine in depth is also provided. An important role of a clinical pharmacist is teamwork, so additional training for communication skills is provided. Simultaneously, the study programme also promotes the development of skills and competencies necessary for scientific research.

Furthermore, the expert notes that the programme's compliance with external regulations, as evidenced and confirmed by the content of the following documents:

1. Annex 18.1. for the Qualification Framework of Latvia.
2. Annex 17.1. for the State Education Standard (CM Regulation No. 305).
3. Annex 18.2. for the Professional Standard.

In experts judgment the content of the Study Programme is topical and equips the student with necessary knowledge, skills and competencies needed for work in a clinical setting. The study programme ensures the achievement of study results in all categories - clinical knowledge, therapy monitoring, and evaluation, drug distribution and side effect monitoring, health policy making, monitoring and analysis of drug consumption, clinical studies, communication with healthcare professionals and patients, preparation of scientific publications.

The expert concludes that the study programme meets the needs of the labor market. However, there is a space for improvement in the section of freely chosen study courses. The study programme should also offer students a free choice study courses part, recommended, without specifying a specific course, but allowing students to choose freely. The conclusion that the study programme meets the needs of the labor market is supported not only by the expert's judgment but also by positive feedback from graduates during assessment interviews. The alignment with the Professional Standard further solidifies the programme's relevance and effectiveness in preparing students for clinical pharmacy roles. The expert emphasizes that the content ensures the achievement of study goals, with a comprehensive coverage of clinical knowledge, therapeutic skills, and broader competencies relevant to the labor market.

In the light of future changes in the credit system to ECTS, planning the study process for the transition from CP to ECTS should make an effort in avoiding the discrepancies regarding the associated credits to courses.

2.2.2. According to SAR (SAR, Part II, Study Programme Clinical Pharmacy, Paragraph 3.2.2) the study programme is based on national and international regulatory acts and allows to acquire knowledge, skills and competences necessary for professional duties.

The full evaluation of the acquired knowledge, skills and competencies is done via the state internship and final exam, which is confirmed by the awarded professional master's degree in healthcare with clinical pharmacist qualification.

The issued diploma confirms the ability to fully perform professional duties.

According to SAR (SAR, Part II, Study Programme Pharmacy, Paragraph 3.2.6) the final examination evaluation criteria include professionalism, confidence and compliance with the latest scientific findings, therefore the degree is based on these findings at least partially.

2.2.3. In evaluating the student-centered learning and teaching principles of the study programme, the analysis is guided by insights from the Self-Assessment Report and site visit consultancies. According to the SAR (SAR, Part II, Paragraph 3.2.3) the teaching methods used in the study programme include lectures, seminars, practical classes, discussions, independent work for learning and analyzing scientific literature, reports and presentations as well as analysis of clinical cases and problem situations.

The study process takes place in training rooms of the University as well as clinical bases (major university hospitals). In expert opinion, this is providing students with a comprehensive learning environment.

A significant aspect contributing to the student-centered approach is the active involvement of study programme graduates in the improvement of the study process. Through individual discussions, graduates play an important role in the analysis of program content and teaching methods, offering valuable insights from their firsthand experience. Furthermore, graduates are provided opportunities to participate in scientific projects during the development of master's theses, fostering a dynamic and research-oriented learning environment.

The study implementation methods contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study courses and the study programme. This alignment is attributed to the incorporation of diverse teaching methods that cater to different learning styles and encourage student engagement.

The student-centered approach is observed by providing the surveys to both students and graduates. Individual discussions are organized with the graduates of the study programme. Individual discussions with graduates further enhance the understanding of the programme's effectiveness and relevance. The inclusion of graduates in the evaluation process is noteworthy, reflecting a recognition of their valuable perspectives on the program's topicality, (5 graduates have been involved in this process so far) (SAR, Part II, Paragraph 3.2.3). This demonstrates a proactive approach to continuous improvement. This participatory approach ensures that the study programme remains responsive to the evolving needs of the industry, labor market, and scientific trends.

Overall, in experts opinion, the utilization of various methods to gather feedback, involve graduates, and encourage participation in scientific projects attests to the programme's commitment to student-centered learning and teaching principles.

2.2.4. According to SAR (SAR, Part II, Study Programme Clinical Pharmacy, Paragraph 3.2.4) the purpose of study internship is to strengthen theoretical knowledge and practical skills acquired in various study cycles. The internship amounts to 26 CP (39 ECTS) and it is organized in clinical bases (major university hospitals) according to the principle of consecutive cycles during the period of 3 semesters:

1. 3rd semester – 8 weeks.
2. 4th semester – 10 weeks.
3. 5th semester – 8 weeks.

During each cycle, the student is obliged to perform the following tasks:

1. Perform analysis of clinical cases.
2. Participate in weekly visits.
3. Gather information about the relevant clinical department.

The internship ends in the 5th study semester with an internship exam. During the exam the student presents a clinical case and provides analysis on the role of the clinical pharmacist in the treatment process.

All involved lecturers are also practicing specialists and work in the leading clinics of the relevant sectors, this way the students are introduced to the latest treatment methods and work experience. This also contributes to the formation of an in-depth knowledge and skill base.

Given the specific expertise of the clinical pharmacist profession the internship opportunities are effective in the sense that they involve state-level clinical bases with most experience (variety of clinical cases with different complexity). The internship period complies with the State Educational Standard.

It should also be noted that the internship can be organized as a part of Erasmus+ mobility which is a great opportunity for the student to obtain international experience and compare the organization

of health care systems of different countries.

In the experts view, the internship can be evaluated as sufficient in its scope of tasks and duration, however, additional information on how exactly these tasks are organized and evaluated would be beneficial.

2.2.5. Not applicable.

2.2.6. Students choose the topics and supervisors during the 2nd study year.

The topics generally include the following fields:

1. Cardiology (most popular) ("Estimation of adherence to statin therapy").
2. Pulmonology ("Assessment of the benefits of bronchial asthma therapy with the new MART method of treatment").
3. Urology ("Effect of antimicrobials in bacterial biofilms").
4. Endocrinology ("Factors associated with intentional discontinuation of insulin therapy in adult type 1 diabetic patients hospitalized for diabetic ketoacidosis").
5. Psychiatry ("View on COVID-19 treatment from a psychiatric perspective").
6. Oncology ("Proportion change of approved and off label used oncological medicinal products during clinical studies").
7. Infectious diseases ("Inpatient parenteral and oral antimicrobial therapy for community-acquired pneumonia").
8. Intensive therapy ("The use of direct anticoagulant rivaroxaban for patients with atrial fibrillation - potential risks and benefits") (SAR, Part II, Study Programme Clinical Pharmacy, Annex 22).

The evaluation commission includes the Study Programme lecturers, faculty academic staff, industry professionals representing major clinics, state institution representatives, graduates and members of professional public organizations.

The evaluation criteria include professionalism, confidence, compliance with the latest scientific opinions and findings as well as the work invested.

In the experts' judgment the topics of students' final theses are relevant to the field and correspond to the study programme. There are, however, some instances where the final results were modest (examples would be "The choice of antibacterial treatment for patients with diabetic foot infection," final grade 4 (almost satisfactory) "View on COVID-19 treatment from a psychiatric perspective" final grade 4 (almost satisfactory) "Efficacy of triptorelin, goserelin injections and histerelin implant in the treatment of prostate cancer" final grade 5 (satisfactory)) (SAR, Part II, Study Programme Clinical Pharmacy, Annex 22).

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

The study programme exhibits topical content that is interconnected and aligned with the objectives, industry needs, and national regulations. Study implementation methods contribute to achieving programme aims and learning outcomes. Internship opportunities and provisions are effective, demonstrating a clear connection to achievable learning outcomes and adherence to regulatory requirements, ensuring practical relevance. The topics of final theses align with the study programme, ensuring relevance to the field.

Strengths:

- 1) The study programme provides a wide profile clinical education with significant future potential.
- 2) Successful solutions for the interconnection of theoretical knowledge and practical skills (internship) are implemented.

Weaknesses:

- 1) In some cases, the results of final theses are relatively low.

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Despite a few instances of modest results for the final theses - "The choice of antibacterial treatment for patients with diabetic foot infection," final grade 4 (almost satisfactory) "View on COVID-19 treatment from a psychiatric perspective" final grade 4 (almost satisfactory) "Efficacy of triptorelin, goserelin injections and histerelin implant in the treatment of prostate cancer" final grade 5 (satisfactory)), the Study Programme is based on the achievements and findings of the respective field of science.

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1. The implementation of the study programme involves teaching staff from 15 departments, each of them providing their professional contribution to the students of the programme by giving them the opportunity to learn the perspectives of different professionals on various issues.

Each of the structural units involved in the programme provides the necessary resources for the study process, giving students the opportunity to practice in laboratories (statistics, biochemistry, biology and microbiology), acquire skills in clinical skills, public health and pharmacology departments, and practically analyse drug therapy in clinical base units (for example, Riga East Clinical University Hospital, Pauls Stradiņš Clinical University Hospital, Riga Maternity Hospital). Extensive access to medical records gives an idea of the variety and complexity of the problems to be solved. Currently, there are major challenges in ensuring that students have access to patient data without compromising the security of personal data, but still ensuring that students are able to receive full information about the treatment process (SAR, page 746-747).

Students have the opportunity to undergo placement in other countries as part of the Erasmus programme, which they take advantage of – in academic year 2021/2022, one student did part of her placement in hospitals in the Netherlands and Slovenia. After her return, the student developed and successfully defended her Master's thesis Development and Approval of Prescription Screening Algorithms for Identification of Pharmacotherapy Problems in an Internal Medicine Clinic, where she used her experience to promote the development of clinical pharmacy in Latvia (SAR, page 747).

The RSU Library fully provides students and academic staff with access to scientific databases and study literature. Library resources of the University are considerable, they are focused on informational support and provision of teaching and research activities of the academic staff, researchers, and students of the StP. (Annex No. 23.2).

The experts panel considers that the study financial provision is partly compliant (SAR, page 747-748), but informative provision, material and technical provision are sufficient and comply with specific features and the conditions for the implementation of the study programme, create prerequisites for the achievement of the learning outcomes and indicate the possibility to ensure a high-quality study process.

2.3.2. Not applicable.

2.3.3. The study programme is financed from state budget funds and the funds of individuals and legal entities setting the tuition fee in accordance with the state budget funding without social security of EUR 7335 per year of studies. The tuition fee can be subject to discounts in accordance with internal norms and regulations. The number of students planned to be achieved in the study programme in two and a half years of studies is 25 students, enrolling 10 students in the first year, with the number of students remaining the same in the second and third year. Following high inflation and under conditions of a rapid increase in prices of energy sources, the result of the study programme is negative, because there is shortage of funding from state budget funds in accordance with CM Regulations No.994 – study base costs no longer cover infrastructure maintenance costs. The information on additional performance funding allocated, which was approved in the budget of the Ministry of Education and Science (SAR, page 747).

The average income per student is 8565 euro, and average cost per student is 9198 euro. Funding is distributed as follows: academic staff – 48%; department resources – 3%; other direct expenditure – 3%, scholarships – 4%; fixed costs – 3%; overheads – 39% (SAR, page 747-748).

The costs per 1 student per academic year in the study programme "Clinical Pharmacy" amount to EUR 9198, while the state budget funding for 1 state-funded place from 1 September 2023 is EUR 8197 and 15 state-funded study places are financed in total. Due to insufficient state budget funding and higher costs per 1 student than revenues, it is not possible to ensure the cost-effectiveness of the study programme.

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

All resources are available to students and teaching staff. This has been confirmed during the interview with the Directors of the Study programme, students and teaching staff. During the study programme evaluation it was confirmed that the programme is fully equipped, it has all necessary equipment, classrooms and technical provision. Necessary library resources and databases are available for students.

However, due to insufficient state budget funding and higher costs per student than revenues, it is not possible to ensure the cost-effectiveness of the study programme.

Strengths:

- 1) Advanced material and technical base for students training at RSU and the clinics.
- 2) The study programme provides students with extensive RSU Library resources and databases, student portal MyRSU, e-studies.

Weaknesses:

- 1) Insufficient state budget funding and higher costs per 1 student than revenues, it is not possible to ensure the cost-effectiveness of the study programme.

Assessment of the requirement [6]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Despite the presence of an advanced material and modern technical base for student training, along with an abundance of high-quality library resources, experts have detected that the cost-effectiveness of the study programme is not guaranteed to generate sufficient income.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1. The implementation of the compulsory and restricted elective part of the professional master's study programme "Clinical Pharmacy" is carried out by 67 lecturers, 37 of whom have been elected to the academic positions at RSU. Out of 37 elected representatives of the academic staff, 9 are professors and 6 associate professors and the largest proportion of the position is that of assistant professor out of 37 elected academic staff members, 31 hold a doctoral degree. Out of 67 lecturers involved in the implementation of the StP, 55 lecturers are employed in the main job (the position of an elected lecturer, acting lecturer or adjunct lecturer (staff employees)) and 12 are invited lecturers (specialists from other organizations and experts in the field). Out of 55 lecturers employed in the main job, 37 are elected lecturers, 15 are acting lecturers, while 3 are adjunct lecturers, according to RSU Annex 24.7 and State Education Information (VIIS) System https://www.viis.gov.lv/registri/akademiskais_personals).

The study programme requires careful planning and monitoring due to the huge number of teaching personnel (over 60) from 15 disciplines. Students can seek advice from experts in many fields. Eleven professors, nine associate professors, and 14 assistant professors are top experts and opinion leaders in their disciplines who are also researchers. Alumni and two visiting lecturers (one an assistant professor) from Tartu University overseas programme execution. From January 2017 to October 2022, 52 Master's programme "Clinical Pharmacy" instructors attended over 150 continuing education activities at the Centre for Educational Growth (PIC) for teaching staff. "Clinical Pharmacy" lecturers devoted 4070 academic hours on continuing education (SAR p. 748).

As of 2017, 16% of professors involved in StP implementation hold degrees. By 2017, 84% of instructors got degrees. Doctoral degrees are held by 82% of StP instructors after 2017. Out of 15 elected lecturers working in StP implementation, 41% have worked in RSU research projects since 2017. Around 7% of acting instructors active in StP implementation have worked on RSU research projects since 2017. In terms of LCS expertise, 62% of chosen academics engaging in StP implementation are LCS experts (Annex 24.7 State Education Information (VIIS) System https://www.viis.gov.lv/registri/akademiskais_personals).

Graduates in the programme share their experience and update students on the current advances in the industry. One lecturer, an alumna, presented a poster at the European Society of Oncology Pharmacists (ESOP) conference on Latvian pharmaceutical professionals' awareness of safe drug circulation

(<https://www.farmaceutubiedriba.lv/lv/lfb-onkologisko-farmaceutu-sekcija-piedaljusies-starptautiska-konference-hamburga>). Through articles on the portal and magazine that brings together experts, teaching staff, including alumni, educate health care specialists (<https://www.doctus.lv/autori/alina-krivina/>; <https://www.doctus.lv/autori/liga-henke/>). The

Pharmacists' Society of Latvia has awarded the programme's professors, who are well regarded experts <https://www.farmaceitubiedriba.lv/lv/869>. The awards are granted for public initiatives that advance the pharmaceutical sector.

The main challenge in developing teaching staff is to attract alumni to implement the programme and ensure that clinical pharmacists manage placements in the future, as their number is currently insufficient. Based on RSU alumni data, 31 teaching staff members completed one to four study programmes, with 8 lecturers now enrolled in one of the programmes for the 2021/2022 academic year (SAR p. 750; Annex 24.7).

Lecturers attended these Centre for Educational Growth events: Animated Visual Studio Materials; EndNote Reference Manager; Miro Tool Remote Student Group Work; Local, national, transnational professional and sectoral development collaboration; Making Classrooms Interactive with Active Learning; Higher Education Webinar Contextualization; Pubmed Database and Scientific Publication Search Tools; Web of Science and Scopus Database Capabilities and Comparison; Digital Darwinism: What It Means for Us and Our Institution Teaching in Intercultural Settings; Think Tank: Assessing to Learn? Creating Electronic Tests; How Immersive Technologies Can Improve Learning; Mentimeter Tool Interactive Presentations with Real-Time Feedback; Educational Improvisation; How Games Enhance Education; How to Promote Transversal Skills Relevant to the Work Environment in the Study Process; Research Methodology and Data Statistical Processing; Presentation Visualization; Technology-Enriched Studying; and More. Alumni, including present faculty, are developing and implementing a comparable program at the University of Tartu (Clinical pharmacy e-learning program, <https://clinicalpharmacy.ut.ee/avaleht>) (SAR p. 749).

Finally, RSU presents information on continuing education events for teaching staff. Figures 10 and 11 reveal that 45 or 67% of the 67 StP lecturers had RSU English proficiency levels between A2 and C1. Four of these lecturers also took English classes. The RSU Language Centre or a cooperation partner organizes language competence examinations, compares diplomas, and validates other documents according to internal decrees and international standards (SAR p. 750; 24.7_Anx_Analysis_Academic_staff_Clinical_Pharmacy.pdf).

From the arguments listed above and site visit, it is clear that qualification of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements set forth in the regulatory enactments. The teaching staff qualifications, professional activities and scientific research enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses. Professional development, regarding the teaching skills is high and represents a very positive impact on teaching process. The criteria is well met.

2.4.2. Since many lecturers are involved in the study process, turnover is inevitable. When coordinating current study courses, the director of the study programme ensures that teaching staff has consulted the previous lecturer or, if not, discusses the course, tasks, and objectives with the new lecturer. Practitioners, including residency students, participate in the course, which helps them create collegial relationships and debate treatment options. Upon new lecturers joining the programme, the director requests student input to evaluate their performance. The above professors were all praised for being proficient in their fields, competent to instruct students, and responsive to high-quality teaching. Due to a workplace change, Inese Sviestiņa, the first clinical pharmacist in Latvia, left the programme. However, her professional colleague, assistant professor Inga Urtāne, who has been involved in the course implementation for a long time, took over the lectured course. New lecturers are evaluated for their professional contribution and comprehension

of the clinical pharmacist's position in a multidisciplinary health care team to create a collegial environment during the study (SAR p. 750).

The RSU Faculty of Pharmacy (hereinafter FP) takes measures so that changes in the composition of the teaching staff do not negatively affect the quality of the implementation of the study programme and the compliance of the study programme with the requirements specified in regulatory enactments. However, precautions are necessary since there is only 1 assistant involved in the teaching process. It is highly recommended to take into consideration the generation turnover in a few years that will require new, young personnel. Since in the field it takes time to grow a highly skilled professional to introduce him in academia. As it is already noticed, some of the teaching staff make career changes due to better options in the pharmaceutical industry, and FP is the smallest at the RSU, with high potential for development, it is recommended to use the opportunities for growth and prepare young professionals for a future generation change.

2.4.3. Not applicable.

2.4.4. On March 26, 2023, the RSU Current Research Information System (ZDIS) Pure was used to retrieve the publications of teaching staff in the "Health Care" study field from January 1, 2017 to March 25, 2023. ZDIS Pure is used to extract the list of publications since it contains the most comprehensive information about RSU academic staff's scientific activity—publications, projects, awards, research, datasets, presentations, press and media communication, etc. Since 2017, ZDIS Pure has recorded 1242 publications for 151 lecturers in three Faculty of Pharmacy study programmes in the study field "Health Care": the professional Master's study programme "Clinical Pharmacy", the Second level professional study programme "Pharmacy", and the Second level professional study programme "Industrial Pharmacy". 113/113 professors have publication data.

These years produced the most publications: 2021 (395), 2020 (238), and 2022 (227) (6.4_Anex_Ac_staff_publications_IF factor_Facult_Pharmacy.pdf).

From the presented data, the teaching staff on the list of the professional Master's study programme "Clinical Pharmacy", all members of the academic staff in the last six years have published in peer-reviewed editions, including international editions, or have five years of practical experience in accordance with the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

2.4.5 Since the study programme includes a sequence of integrated courses, lecturers must be aware of each other's work when creating their part. The RSU e-learning environment provides quick access to prepared resources, and course heads oversee the process. The study programme director monitors course description updates and ensures cooperation amongst course heads. Teaching staff must evaluate students' placement reports (examinations) and pre-defend Master's theses. These evaluation panels include faculty from diverse departments who advise students on their Master's theses and discuss study priorities. Since the programme has a few students, the director constantly updates students on current topics and swiftly addresses any issues by contacting the relevant department or professor. Although the number of completed evaluation questionnaires is limited, the programme director informs the teaching team of organizational and content adjustments needed in the study process. Once the national exams are passed, the study programme director meets with alumni to discuss programme adjustments and adopts them as much as possible (additional electives were included), but not all (SAR p. 751). In expert opinion, the study programme director engages in proactive communication with the teaching team, providing valuable feedback and informing them of necessary organizational and content adjustments. The director's swift response to issues and effective liaison with relevant departments or professors contributes to the ongoing improvement of the study process.

The teaching team is collaborative, as the programme is small and unique, requiring a creative

approach from each lecturer to give the necessary information, skills, and competences through an interdisciplinary approach. Because teaching staff know pharmacy and desire to learn clinical information, the study programme's "Clinical Pharmacy" students are demanding. Based on the aforementioned, the teaching staff, programme director, students, and alumni are involved in assuring teaching staff cooperation to improve course quality. This collaborative model enables for quick study process adjustments and enhancements. The study curriculum has 13 students and 67 lecturers. Teaching staff-student ratio is 0.2 (SAR p 752). The expert opinion acknowledges that this model allows for swift adjustments and enhancements in the study process, highlighting the adaptability and responsiveness of the study programme to changing needs and priorities. Additionally, the experts assessment concurs with the RSU's assertion that the teaching staff's cooperative efforts are particularly crucial given the programme's unique nature and its emphasis on an interdisciplinary approach. The small size of the programme necessitates a creative and collaborative teaching approach to effectively impart the required information, skills, and competencies in clinical pharmacy.

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

The expert opinion aligns with the RSU's statements in the SAR, recognizing the established mechanism for teaching staff cooperation as instrumental in achieving the study program's objectives and maintaining interconnection among study courses. Recommendations focus on increasing student participation in evaluations and further exploring avenues for continual improvement based on comprehensive feedback.

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

The implementation of the compulsory and restricted elective part of the professional master's study programme "Clinical Pharmacy" is carried out by 67 lecturers, 37 of whom have been elected to the academic positions at RSU. Out of 37 elected representatives of the academic staff, 9 are professors and 6 associate professors and the largest proportion of the position is that of assistant professor, and 31 hold a doctoral degree. The qualification of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the professional master's study programme "Clinical Pharmacy" complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements set forth in the regulatory enactments, and it enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses. The RSU FP takes measures so that changes in the composition of the teaching staff do not negatively affect the quality of the implementation of the study programme and the compliance of the study programme with the requirements specified in regulatory enactments, however, precautions are necessary.

Strengths:

Teaching staff are highly skilled professionals involved both in science and clinical professions.

Teaching staff invests time in professional development regarding teaching skills, using the Centre for Educational Growth (PIC).

Very small study groups that create an almost individual approach to each student.

Weaknesses:

Small number of young assistants involved in the teaching process represents the threat to the future of the programme when the generation change comes.

Assessment of the requirement [7]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The qualification of the academic staff complies with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements set out in the respective regulatory enactments.

6.2. pielikums

Annex 6.2.

Mācībspēku biogrāfijas (Curriculum Vitae Europass formātā)

Biographies of the teaching staff members (in Europass Curriculum Vitae format)

Profesionālā maģistra studiju programma "Klīniskā farmācija"

Professional Master's study programme "Clinical Pharmacy"

2.5. Assessment of the Compliance

Requirements

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Annex 17.1_Anx_National_educ_standard_Clinical_Pharmacy.pdf confirms that the study programme complies with Cabinet Regulations No 512 of 26 August 2014. "Regulations on the National Standard for the Second Level Professional Higher Education" that is accessible here: <https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=268761> However, it has to be stated that this standard is not in force anymore since 21 June 2023 as a new standard has been developed - CM Regulation No 305.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The study programme complies with the occupational standard for the profession "Clinical pharmacist" based on the information provided in the Annex

18.2_Anx_Mapping_prof_standard_Clinical_Pharmacy.pdf. Table 2 of the Annex reflects the standard requirements and the specific study courses that fulfill each of the requirements.

- 3 3 - The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in all languages in which the study programme is implemented, and they comply with the requirements set forth in Section 561 , Paragraph two and Section 562 , Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The study course descriptions are prepared in Latvian that can be accessed under annex -

20_Anx_Study_course_description_Clinical_Pharmacy.pdf Descriptions comply with regulations

set forth in Law on Higher Education Institutions. The study materials can be accessed and are prepared in the implemented language.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The provided Diploma sample - 24.1._Diploms_Kliniska_farmacija_eng.pdf complies with the procedure by which state-recognised documents of higher education are issued according to Cabinet Regulation No. 202 "Kārtība, kādā izsniedz valsts atzītus augstāko izglītību apliecinošus dokumentus".

- 5 5 - The academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements set forth in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 6 6 - Academic study programmes provided for less than 250 full-time students may be implemented and less than five professors and associated professors of the higher education institution may be involved in the implementation of the mandatory and limited elective part of these study programmes provided that the relevant opinion of the Council for Higher Education has been received in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 7 7 - At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of an academic doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field of science. At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a professional doctoral study programme in arts (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 8 8 - The teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme are proficient in the official language in accordance with the regulations on the level of the official language knowledge and the procedures for testing official language proficiency for performing professional duties and office duties.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Based on the acquired information on-site as well as relevant annexes: 24.4_Anx_Certification_Regarding_Latvian_Language_of_the_Academic_Staff.pdf and 6.2_Anx_CV_ENG_visas_programmas.7z, it can be evaluated that the language proficiency of teaching staff is compliant with Cabinet Regulation. Nr. 733 "Regulations Regarding the Extent of the Knowledge of the Official Language, the Procedures for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language and the State Fee for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language".

- 9 9 - The teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language, if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Sample of attached study agreement 24.8_Anx_Study contract sample_Health Care study direction.pdf complies with Cabinet Regulation. Nr. 70 "Studiju līgumā obligāti ietveramie noteikumi".

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

RSU has provided confirmation that students will be provided with opportunities to continue their education in another higher education institution if the implementation of the study programme is terminated. The agreements are specified in the annexes under "24.2_pielik_Apliecinajumi_par_parnemsanu_eng.7z". It is specified that in case of discontinuation of this study programme, students can continue their studies at Academic Master's RSU study programme "Public health".

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

RSU has provided confirmation that students are guaranteed compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the study programme's license is revoked. It is ensured based on the Section 55(8) of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education and Cabinet of Ministers No 795 of 11 December 2018 "Regulations on Licensing of study programmes", Paragraph 13.4. The relevant document can be found under Annexes - 24.3_Anx_Certification_of_Compensation_of_Losses_to_Students.pdf.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Based on the information accessible under 17-2_Anx_regulation_ClinicalFarm.pdf, the study programme complies with the requirements specified in the other regulatory enactments that apply to this study programme, which is Cabinet Regulations No 220, Riga, 27 March 2007 (Minutes No 21 25§) Procedure for the Acquisition, Storage, Use, Registration and Disposal of Medical Products in Medical Treatment Institutions and Social Care Institutions: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/155314-zalu-iegades-uzglabasanasizlietosanas-uzskaites-un-iznicinasanas-kartiba-arstniecibas-iestades-un-socialas-aprupesinstitucija>

Assessment of the requirement [8]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Study programme fully complies with regulatory enactments.

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

The study programme demonstrates alignment with the study field, ensuring correspondence with the relevant criteria and requirements of the discipline. The title, code, degree to be obtained, professional master's degree in Health Care and professional qualification of the study programme "Clinical Pharmacy", aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation, as well as the implementation language, are reasonable and justified. This contributes to the overall strength of the programme. There needs to be further improvement of the study process and promotion of acquisition of practical skills in clinical placement sites. While acknowledging the need for further improvement in the study process and the promotion of practical skills in clinical placements, the study programme maintains economic and social justification. The programme's dynamics, student enrollment, and employment indicators align with market demand for the profession. The content remains topical, interconnected, and compliant with national regulations, meeting industry needs. The study programme exhibits topical content that is interconnected and aligned with the objectives, industry needs, and national regulations. Study implementation methods contribute to achieving programme aims and learning outcomes. Internship opportunities and provisions are effective, demonstrating a clear connection to achievable learning outcomes and adherence to regulatory requirements, ensuring practical relevance. The alignment of final thesis topics with the study programme further strengthens the programme's relevance to the field. All resources are available to students and teaching staff. This has been confirmed during the interview with the Director of the Study programmes, students and teaching staff. During the study programme's evaluation it was confirmed that the programme is fully equipped, it has all necessary equipment, classrooms and technical provision. Necessary library resources and databases are available for students. However, due to insufficient state budget funding and higher costs per student than revenues, it is not possible to ensure the cost-effectiveness of the study programme. The implementation of the compulsory and restricted elective part of the professional master's study programme "Clinical Pharmacy" is carried out by 67 lecturers, 37 of whom have been elected to the academic positions at RSU. Out of 37 elected representatives of the academic staff, 9 are professors and 6 associate professors and the largest proportion of the position is that of assistant professor, and 31 hold a doctoral degree. The qualification of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme "Clinical Pharmacy" complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements set forth in the regulatory enactments, and it enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses. However the free choice elective part of the courses should offer more options to students. The RSU FP takes measures so that changes in the composition of the teaching staff do not negatively affect the quality of the implementation of the study programme and the compliance of the study programme with the requirements specified in regulatory enactments, however, precautions are necessary.

In expert opinion the study programme's strengths lie in its alignment with the study field, interconnected elements, reasonable implementation parameters, economic and social justification, topical content, effective implementation methods, and qualified teaching staff. The identified weaknesses, notably financial constraints, are acknowledged, yet the overall quality of the

programme persists due to its strong foundational elements and the RSU FP's proactive measures to uphold quality standards despite potential challenges.

Strengths:

- 1) Advanced material and technical base for students training at RSU and the clinics.
- 2) The robust utilization of RSU Library resources and databases, coupled with the effective integration of the student portal MyRSU and e-studies, collectively forms a potent strength of the study programme.
- 3) The study programme is developed on the basis of international guidelines, which provides an additional competitive edge.
- 4) The study programme provides a wide profile clinical education with significant future potential.
- 5) Successful solutions for the interconnection of theoretical knowledge and practical skills (internship) are implemented.
- 6) Teaching staff are highly skilled professionals involved both in science and clinical professions.
- 7) Teaching staff invests time in professional development regarding teaching skills, using PIC.
- 8) Very small study groups that create an almost individual approach to each student.

Weaknesses:

- 1) Small number of young assistants involved in the teaching process represents the threat to the future of the programme when the generation change comes.
- 2) Insufficient state budget funding and higher costs per 1 student than revenues, it is not possible to ensure the cost-effectiveness of the study programme.
- 3) In some cases, the results of final theses are relatively low.
- 4) The narrow specialization can create difficulties for employment that includes the full application of the knowledge and skills obtained during the studies.
- 5) The offer of free elective courses for students should be improved.

Evaluation of the study programme "Clinical Pharmacy"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Clinical Pharmacy"

Short-term recommendations

Enhance the offering of free elective courses for students and increase the selection by 20% within the next 2 academic years.

Long-term recommendations

Address the threat posed by a small number of young assistants involved in the teaching process, recognizing the importance of succession planning. Create initiatives and opportunities for the recruitment, training, and involvement of young assistants within the next assessment period to ensure a smooth transition and secure the future sustainability of the programme during generational changes.

Develop a comprehensive financial plan that recognizes the gap between study base costs and infrastructure maintenance costs, recommending budgetary financial support to address the imbalance. Advocate for increased state budget funding to align with the costs per student and revenues, ensuring the overall cost-effectiveness of the study programme. Implement necessary adjustments within the next assessment period to sustainably support the programme's financial needs and maintain its effectiveness.

Address cases where the results of final theses are relatively low, focusing on areas such as mentorship, guidance, and resource support to enhance the quality of research and outcomes. Implement necessary improvements within the next assessment period.

Mitigate the challenges associated with narrow specialization, focusing on expanding the applicability of knowledge and skills acquired during studies. Explore opportunities for diversification and interdisciplinary training to enhance employability prospects, and implement necessary adjustments within the next assessment period.

II - "Industrial Pharmacy" ASSESSMENT

II - "Industrial Pharmacy" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1. The joint second level higher education study programme "Industrial Pharmacy" (47725) is implemented in close synergy between Riga Technical University (RTU) and Rīga Stradiņš University (RSU). Study programme name, professional qualifications, aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and admission requirements are connected. As the title of the study programme "Industrial Pharmacy" suggests, graduation from the programme ensures mastering of skills on various matters related to the circulation of biologically active substances, which include both basic knowledge of the development of new pharmaceutical substances, large scale manufacturing, as well as in-depth competences regarding the development and manufacture of dosage forms, quality control, development and distribution of authorisation documentation, which may be effectively used during placement in pharmaceutical companies.

The compliance with the study field is confirmed by the following criteria:

1. Admission requirements - compulsory Pharmacists' degree or Master of Health Sciences in Pharmacy.
2. Learning outcomes, which include an in-depth knowledge of the development and manufacture of dosage forms, quality control, development and distribution of authorisation documentation, ability to apply research and problem-solving skills to the analysis of situations in the pharmaceutical industry, ability to fit into an interdisciplinary team, associate oneself with team goals and contribute to common goals, ability to integrate theoretical knowledge acquired during pharmacy and industrial pharmacy studies and, if necessary, to supplement knowledge independently to solve problems and to substantiate own opinion, ability to find, select, analyze, use and collect scientific literature, process data, summarize information obtained, critically analyze it, provide own assessment and present results, and ability to assess the degree of evidence of the data and decide on further actions.

In the experts view, the acquired expertise mentioned above demonstrates compliance with the professional standard and therefore with the study field.

2.1.2. The Joint Second level professional higher education programme "Industrial Pharmacy" is designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the entire medicinal product development and manufacturing cycle. The overarching goal is to equip graduates with the necessary knowledge, skills, and competences for successful engagement in various aspects of industrial pharmacy, including the development of pharmaceutical substances, large-scale manufacturing, dosage form development, quality control, and the preparation and distribution of authorization documentation. The programme aims to foster an integrated vision essential for industrial pharmacists across disciplines related to drug development.

The admission criteria for the study programme include a prerequisite for prior knowledge in organic, inorganic, analytical, medical chemistry, dosage form technology, pharmacology, pharmacotherapy, and pharmaceutical law. To ensure effective participation in studies, candidates are required to hold a degree in pharmacy or a Master of Health Sciences in pharmacy. This admission criterion is crucial as a lack of basic knowledge in pharmacy could pose a significant barrier to effective engagement in the programme.

The study programme "Industrial Pharmacy" is implemented in collaboration between RTU and RSU. In expert opinion, the joint efforts of both institutions are geared towards delivering a program that aligns with industry needs and standards. The collaboration ensures a synergistic approach to education, leveraging the strengths of both universities.

The programme's design is justified by the demand in the job market for professionals with expertise in industrial pharmacy. The integrated nature of the programme, covering development, manufacturing, marketing, and distribution of medicinal and pharmaceutical products, aligns with industry needs and has contact points with engineering and economics. The expert analysis acknowledges the shortage of employees in pharmaceutical companies and emphasizes the relevance of the programme's graduates to the industry.

The programme code has been updated to accurately reflect its nature and align with regulatory changes. The new code, 47725, characterizes the study programme as a short professional programme providing the professional qualification of an industrial pharmacist at the fifth level of professional qualification. The part "47" of the study programme code 47 725 indicates second-level professional higher education (professional master's degree or fifth-level professional qualification), which can be implemented after obtaining a bachelor's degree, professional bachelor's degree or fifth-level professional qualification, consequently the part "725" describes educational programme group Pharmacy (CM regulation No. 322).

An in-depth analysis of study course results is demonstrated by mapping (SAR, Part II, Study Programme Industrial Pharmacy, Appendix 18.1, 18.2) which shows that during the study process students acquire necessary knowledge, skills and competences.

The aim of the study programme is to provide an opportunity to acquire knowledge, as well as to develop and strengthen skills and competences necessary for the involvement in the entire process of drug circulation, from the development and production of pharmaceutical products, registration to distribution. The specific aim corresponds to the learning outcomes, which include an in-depth knowledge of the development and manufacture of dosage forms, quality control, development and distribution of authorisation documentation, ability to apply research and problem-solving skills to the analysis of situations in the pharmaceutical industry, ability to fit into an interdisciplinary team, associate oneself with team goals and contribute to common goals, ability to integrate theoretical knowledge acquired during pharmacy and industrial pharmacy studies and, if necessary, to supplement knowledge independently to solve problems and to substantiate own opinion, ability to find, select, analyze, use and collect scientific literature, process data, summarize information obtained, critically analyze it, provide own assessment and present results, and ability to assess the degree of evidence of the data and decide on further actions.

The admission requirements, as stated previously, include compulsory Pharmacists' degree or Master of Health Sciences in Pharmacy which is reasonable due to extensive knowledge required to

successfully undertake the study process in this discipline.

The duration (3 semesters) and scope (60 CP/90 ECTS) of the study programme is reasonable given the variety of the content. The implementation language - Latvian language is justified for both RSU and RTU according to the Education Law Section 9. While the programme is accredited for implementation in English, it has been primarily implemented in Latvian due to the predominant focus on placement in pharmaceutical companies. The involvement of international students in companies is recognized as an additional burden for the companies involved. However, there are plans to explore the possibility of implementing the programme in English to attract international students, providing potential employees for the Laboratory of Finished Dosage Forms and addressing the shortage of skilled personnel in pharmaceutical companies.

The experts conclude that the above mentioned criteria (correspondence of title, code, professional qualification, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements, duration and scope of the study programme, implementation language) are interrelated, logical and, therefore, well met.

2.1.3. The most significant change in the parameters of the study programme is the code change from 46 725 to 47 725. This was done in response to amendments in CM Regulation No 322. to reflect the title of the study programme more accurately - second level of professional higher education. The study programme is designed as a full-time intramural programme with a duration of 1.5 years, equivalent to 60 CP/ECTS. The structure includes theoretical knowledge in the first semester and practical reinforcement through placements in pharmaceutical companies in the second and third semesters. The small size of the programme is reflected in the teaching staff-student ratio, enhancing a collaborative and interactive learning environment.

In conjunction with this, the admission requirements undergo a pertinent update - evolving from "level 2 professional higher education in pharmacy (pharmacist's degree) or equivalent higher education" to "Higher education in pharmacy (pharmacist's degree or degree of the Master of health sciences in pharmacy)."

The modifications are justified by the need for alignment with the educational framework, taking into account the professional trajectory of the study programme. The code change ensures accurate classification, appropriately reflecting the nature and level of the programme. The adjusted admission requirements align more precisely with the desired qualifications for prospective students, ensuring a robust academic foundation.

In expert opinion, these changes, analyzed and justified, are strong support to enhancing the coherence, relevance, and adherence to regulatory standards within the study field. The intentional modifications affirm the commitment to continuous improvement, ensuring the study programme remains dynamic, reflective of industry needs, and conducive to an optimal learning experience for students.

2.1.4. The economic and social justification of the study programme is robust and well-founded, demonstrating a clear alignment with the needs of the pharmaceutical industry in Latvia. The joint implementation of the "Industrial Pharmacy" programme by RTU and RSU ensures an efficient utilization of resources, including human resources and infrastructure, from both universities. This collaborative approach not only optimizes resource allocation but also fosters effective utilization of academic staff and facilities. The economic justification is further reinforced by the strong development of both the pharmaceutical industry and scientific research in Latvia. The industry's demand for trained professionals, as indicated in the SAR (SAR, Part II, Study Programme Industrial Pharmacy, Paragraph 3.1.3), highlights the programme's relevance to current market needs. The small number of students admitted every other year is seen positively by the experts, as it

maintains relative stability in indicators. The joint implementation of study courses between RTU and RSU allows effective use of capacity and time resources of academic staff. The collaboration facilitates resource sharing and reduces infrastructure load, promoting cross-sectoral cooperation among students of different specialties. This collaborative model is expected to contribute to Latvia's economic development by fostering the creation of products with high added value. The program's societal benefits are evident in its role in supplying highly qualified specialists to the pharmaceutical industry. The demand for graduates of the "Industrial Pharmacy" program is substantiated by the expansion of the pharmaceutical export market and the continual growth of the domestic market. The program's graduates, equipped with knowledge and skills in pharmaceutical preparation development, quality control processes, and documentation preparation, contribute significantly to the industry. The involvement of employers in the implementation of courses, placement of students, and participation in the National Examination Board highlights the program's industry relevance. Employers' appreciation of the program, as reflected in their involvement and the 100% employment rate of graduates, is a strong indicator of the program's success in meeting industry expectations. The program's ability to prepare graduates who can effectively solve problems in drug manufacturing, in accordance with the law and with responsibility for the patient, further highlights its societal importance. Despite the limited number of students and some identified areas for improvement in the organization and conduct of placement, the overall expert assessment is positive. The programme's contribution to the pharmaceutical industry, its responsiveness to market demands, and the effective integration of theoretical knowledge with practical skills position it as a valuable asset in both economic and social contexts.

2.1.5. The development and implementation of the joint study programme "Industrial Pharmacy" exhibit a solid foundation, as justified by the unique and complementary competencies of both partner higher education institutions—Rīga Stradiņš University (RSU) and Riga Technical University (RTU) (SAR, Part II, Study Programme Industrial Pharmacy, 3.1.5). This joint programme leverages the strengths of RSU in healthcare fields, particularly pharmacy, and the leading positions of RTU in organic chemistry, chemical technology, and material science. RSU's expertise in healthcare and pharmacy is implemented in study courses covering the manufacture of finished dosage forms, authorization, and marketing. These courses contribute to the comprehensive training of students in pharmaceutical science and practice. The collaboration with drug manufacturers for placement further enhances the practical exposure of students, aligning with the industry's needs. On the other hand, RTU's contributions focus on chemical technology processes, manufacturing aspects, and the synthesis of biologically active compounds. These courses provide a valuable chemical perspective, promoting an interdisciplinary vision for various branches of chemistry and material science. The inclusion of elective courses, such as "Nanotechnology in Administration of Therapeutic and Diagnostic Preparations," adds a contemporary dimension to the program. The combination of these competencies from RSU and RTU results in a well-rounded curriculum that addresses the entire pharmaceutical development and manufacturing cycle. The study courses are designed to reflect the latest developments in scientific sectors, emphasizing the relevance of theoretical knowledge to practical applications in the pharmaceutical industry.

Considering that industrial pharmacy is an integrated field, the joint study programme is justified because each of the two involved universities provide the study courses that correspond to their specialization. Given that both universities are leading institutions in their respective fields (Riga Technical University in the engineering sciences and Rīga Stradiņš University in health sciences) they can offer the necessary expertise and provisions to achieve excellence in the outcomes of the study programme.

The joint programme's organizational structure, as outlined in the agreement signed in 2014, demonstrates a clear division of responsibilities. RSU takes charge of matriculation, diploma preparations, and diploma supplements, ensuring a streamlined administrative process.

The on-site visit meeting with representatives of partner institutions RSU and RTU, further revealed a collaborative and cooperative approach in the implementation of the study programme. The universities effectively utilize their resources, including experienced teaching staff, to deliver a quality study process. The feedback from the meeting highlighted the commitment of both institutions to maintain high standards and continuous improvement.

From an expert perspective, the joint study programme is highly necessary, offering unique contributions to the field of industrial pharmacy in Latvia. The collaboration addresses the industry's demand for well-trained professionals by combining healthcare and pharmaceutical expertise with strong chemical and technological foundations. The benefits extend to students who receive a comprehensive education, equipping them with skills essential for the pharmaceutical sector.

The joint programme's positive impact on society is evident through the creation of highly skilled professionals for the pharmaceutical industry. The programme aligns with the Smart Specialisation Strategy (RIS3) in Latvia, promoting pharmaceutical and medical research. By facilitating interdisciplinary education and research, the program contributes to the development of pharmaceutical science and the growth of the industry.

In expert opinion, the joint study programme "Industrial Pharmacy" is well-justified, offering a synergistic blend of competencies from RSU and RTU. Its significance lies in addressing industry demands, providing students with a robust education, and contributing to the advancement of pharmaceutical science and the pharmaceutical industry in Latvia.

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

The joint second level higher education study programme "Industrial Pharmacy" is implemented in close synergy between RTU and RSU. Study programme name, professional qualifications, aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and admission requirements are connected. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation, as well as the implementation language, are reasonable and justified. Economic and social justification of the study programme, dynamics of the number of students and employment indicators of the graduates of the study programme are justified as there is demand on the market for this profession. In conclusion, the assessment of indicators describing the study programme reveals a comprehensive evaluation of its alignment with the study field.

Strengths:

- 1) The interdisciplinary approach strengthens the programme's relevance and connection to the evolving needs of the healthcare sector.
- 2) The programme is implemented collaboratively between RTU and RSU. This collaboration leverages the strengths of both institutions to deliver a comprehensive programme in industrial pharmacy.
- 3) 100% employment rate of graduates, is a strong indicator of the programme's success in meeting industry expectations
- 4) The programme aligns with the Smart Specialisation Strategy (RIS3) in Latvia, promoting pharmaceutical and medical research.

Weaknesses:

- 1) While the decision to admit students every other year is a positive strategy to maintain stability, the small cohort size may impact the generalizability of certain findings and trends related to student dynamics and post-graduation employment.

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1. The joint second level professional higher education programme Industrial Pharmacy complies with national regulations, including the Qualification Framework of Latvia, State Education Standard (CM Regulation No. 305). This adherence ensures that the programme meets established educational and professional requirements.

According to the Self-Assessment Report (SAR, Part II, Study Programme Industrial Pharmacy, Paragraph 3.2.1) the Study Programme was created at the request of representatives of the pharmaceutical industry of Latvia (drug manufacturers). The content of the study programme "Industrial Pharmacy" demonstrates a high level of relevance, coherence, and alignment with the objectives of the programme. The thorough analysis, as presented in the Self-Assessment Report (SAR), highlights the programme's responsiveness to the needs of the pharmaceutical industry, labor market, and scientific trends. The programme's creation was initiated at the request of Latvian pharmaceutical industry representatives, particularly drug manufacturers. This illustrates a proactive approach to addressing industry demands.

The study programme is designed as a full-time intramural programme with a duration of 1.5 years, equivalent to 60 CP/ECTS. The inclusion of theoretical knowledge in the first semester and practical reinforcement through placements in pharmaceutical companies in the second and third semesters reflects a strategic and sequential organization of content.

In expert opinion, the study programme covers a comprehensive range of topics, including the production of pharmaceutical preparations, good manufacturing practices, drug registration issues, scientific writing, pharmaceutical marketing, and more. This ensures that students gain a well-rounded understanding of the pharmaceutical field. The interconnectedness of study courses is emphasized, creating a cohesive curriculum that aligns with the program's objectives and ensures the achievement of learning outcomes. The programme effectively integrates theoretical principles with practical applications, enhancing the overall learning experience. A substantial part of the programme is dedicated to practice and research, organized in collaboration with leading companies in the pharmaceutical sector. This approach enhances the practical skills and theoretical knowledge of students, aligning with the requirements of the Industrial Pharmacist's profession standard. The involvement of industry stakeholders in proposing research paper topics and guiding students in their development underscores the programme's commitment to addressing practical challenges and ensuring real-world applicability. The programme addresses crucial aspects of the pharmaceutical industry, including intellectual property rights. Students gain expertise in types of intellectual property, patent searching, and preparation of patent claims. This reflects a forward-looking approach to preparing professionals for the complex landscape of the pharmaceutical field.

A significant part of the studies includes practice and research work, which is organized in close cooperation with leading companies of the industry. The involvement of specialists from JSC "Grindeks" in the implementation of key courses, such as "Good Manufacturing Practice" and "Finished Dosage Forms," promotes the programme's alignment with industry requirements. This collaboration ensures that the content of these courses is directly relevant to current practices and standards in pharmaceutical manufacturing. The emphasis on academic writing skills, including the ability to describe, analyze, and interpret experimental results, promotes the graduates' communication skills which are essential for professionals engaged in pharmaceutical research and development. The programme has garnered support from the Association of the Latvian Chemical and Pharmaceutical Industry and was created in collaboration with the request of Latvian manufacturers of pharmaceutical products. This recognition from industry stakeholders tells about the programme's relevance and importance in meeting labor market needs.

The purpose of the study programme is to provide theoretical knowledge and practical skills in accordance with the Professional Standard requirements.

The compliance with external regulations is confirmed by the content of the following documents:

1. Annex 18.1. for the Qualification Framework of Latvia.
2. Annex 17.1. for the State Education Standard (CM Regulation No. 305).
3. Annex 18.2. for the Professional Standard.

Upon conducting a comprehensive analysis of the learning outcomes within the study programme "Industrial Pharmacy," as stated in the mapping process (Annexes 18.1 and 18.2), it is evident that graduates will attain essential knowledge, skills, and competences necessary for active engagement throughout the entire medicinal product development and manufacturing cycle. The programme strategically equips students with research skills, empowering them to adeptly address challenges within the pharmaceutical industry. The learning outcomes of individual study courses integrate with and contribute to the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study programme. These programme-wide outcomes align with the requisite knowledge, skills, and competencies expected of an industrial pharmacist, as stated in the profession standard for acquisition of the professional qualification "Industrial Pharmacist." In expert opinion, the programme is effective in delivering a comprehensive educational experience, ensuring that graduates are well-prepared to navigate the complexities of industrial pharmacy, contribute meaningfully to medicinal product development, and successfully meet the standards of the profession. In expert opinion, the study programme "Industrial Pharmacy" successfully fulfills the specified criteria. The program meets industry and labor market requirements, offering students an education that aligns with the evolving trends and standards in the pharmaceutical sector. The strong collaboration with industry partners and the proactive approach to addressing industry demands contribute to the program's overall excellence. In the light of future changes in the credit system to ECTS, planning the study process for the transition from CP to ECTS should make an effort in avoiding the discrepancies regarding the associated credits to courses.

2.2.2 Not applicable.

2.2.3. According to the Self-Assessment Report (SAR, Part II, Study Programme Industrial Pharmacy, Paragraph 3.2.3) the study implementation methods include:

1. Formative Assessment: Occurs during routine study processes, involving regular control questions, interactive discussions, and evaluations of students' independent work throughout the study period.

2. Summative Assessment: Implemented at the end of each study course, encompassing written or oral tests, or a hybrid of both formats. Detailed individual assessments are accessible to students through the RSU E-learning platform.

RSU and RTU embrace student-centered education, offering diverse support mechanisms to facilitate students in achieving course objectives.

During the initial class, students are briefed on study requirements, with comprehensive information available on the dedicated study course website.

All study materials are digitally available on the ORTUS website, and students can engage in written communication with course lecturers through the ORTUS environment.

Study formats are adaptable, with a blend of in-person and remote learning based on prevailing epidemiological conditions.

Online lectures and video formats are integral to the E-studies platform, supplemented by various resources such as self-tests, interactive tasks, and industry-specific problem-solving exercises.

Noteworthy are the tasks assigned by RSU visiting professor A. Juppo from the University of Helsinki in the "Finished Dosage Forms" course, emphasizing practical formulation considering the physical and chemical attributes of active substances.

Both institutions employ mechanisms to gather feedback from students, encouraging their active

participation in monitoring program quality.

Surveys are conducted, and students are required to complete questionnaires as part of the assessment process.

Feedback from surveys is meticulously analyzed by course heads, department heads, and programme leaders, leading to discussions on improvements and enhancement measures.

RTU conducts surveys twice a semester, with students providing feedback on the progress and quality of the study process, including suggestions for improvements, thereby fostering ongoing dialogue for continuous enhancement. Graduates also contribute to programme evaluation through questionnaires, ensuring a holistic perspective on the efficacy and relevance of the study programme. Students at both institutions have tools to propose changes and improvements at any time, fostering a dynamic and responsive educational environment.

The experts conclude that the study implementation methods contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study courses and the study programme.

2.2.4. The internship structure and organization within the study programme "Industrial Pharmacy" are effective and aligned with industry needs. The placement programme outlined for the "Industrial Pharmacy" study course demonstrates a well-structured and comprehensive approach to bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical skills, in alignment with the Industrial Pharmacist's profession standard. The allocation of 26 CP / 39 ECTS for placement, spanning the second and third semesters, ensures a substantial and immersive experience.

The structured organization of the placement into four sections facilitates a gradual and focused immersion into key aspects of pharmaceutical manufacturing. According to the Self-Assessment Report (SAR, Part II, Study Programme Industrial Pharmacy, Paragraph 3.2.4, Annex 9) the internship is divided as follows:

1. Production of active pharmaceutical substances (1 month (4 CP)).
2. Production of finished dosage forms (1 month (4 CP)).
3. Quality control laboratory (1 month (4 CP)).
4. Registration department and marketing department (1 month (4 CP)).
5. Specialization in the production of active substances or finished dosage forms (optional), during which research paper development is 2 months (8 CP).

In expert opinion, the internship structure includes a comprehensive approach and ensures that students gain a holistic understanding of the pharmaceutical industry.

During the internship, the student is obliged to prepare an internship report giving an overview of the daily activities, industrial processes. At the end of the report, the student gives an evaluation of the internship, a description of his contribution and proposals. Some of the internship tasks are included in the final exam. Both the research paper and the analysis and presentation of the problem situation are evaluated by the State Examination Commission, which consists of representatives of drug manufacturing companies.

This integration ensures a seamless connection between theoretical knowledge acquired during study courses and practical experiences gained during the internship. Both the research paper and the analysis and presentation of the problem situation are a form of evaluation process that reinforces the real-world applicability of the internship tasks.

The outcomes of the study courses provide an opportunity to start an internship, the internship tasks are prerequisites for the development of a research paper and the passing of the final exam. Additionally the internship process is monitored by the study programme director. Their participation in evaluating research papers and problem-solving analyses reflects a direct link to the expectations of potential employers.

The experts conclude that the internship process is effective as it takes place in actual drug manufacturing settings involving companies with highly developed field expertise (JSC Grindeks, JSC

Olainfarm). Additionally the students are simultaneously familiarized with the local employment market.

The regular contact between the head of the study programme (placement monitor), representatives of employers supervising the placement, and students during the placement process demonstrates effective monitoring and allows for the identification and resolution of any challenges faced by students, such as balancing employment with placement responsibilities. The flexibility in implementing placement over an extended period helps reduce the workload on students, contributing to a more manageable and fruitful learning experience.

The integration of new modern facilities of the Faculty of Pharmacy, technological platforms, and collaborative efforts with the pharmaceutical industry positions the "Industrial Pharmacy" study programme as dynamic and industry-responsive. This approach establishes a robust foundation for students' future careers in the pharmaceutical sector. The newly established LFDF not only offers opportunities for research work but also serves as a platform for placement of Industrial Pharmacy students. This integration with real-world industrial settings enhances students' practical understanding and prepares them for the challenges of the pharmaceutical sector.

In expert opinion, the clarification regarding the current absence of placement opportunities in English due to potential burdens on employers provides transparency about language considerations. The future prospect of offering placements in the RSU structural unit with an international team of researchers reflects a forward-looking approach to internationalization.

The experts find the organization of the internship within the study programme "Industrial Pharmacy" to be highly effective, well-structured, and aligned with both academic objectives and industry requirements. The integration of practical experiences with theoretical knowledge, industry collaboration, and a reflective assessment process collectively contribute to the success of the internship component. The flexible approach, allowing for placement during the summer months between semesters, adds adaptability to the programme, accommodating individual student needs.

2.2.5. Not applicable.

2.2.6. According to the Self-Assessment Report Section 3.2. Subsection 3.2.6. the research paper is developed as part of an internship. This is done in a drug manufacturing company therefore it involves the issues of concern to the producers (i.e. the industry).

Some of the research paper topics are:

1. "Characterisation of the physical and chemical, structural and mechanical properties of the ingredients of the dosage form – a powder for oral solution."
2. "Validation of the manufacturing process of a finished dosage form."
3. "Development of validation of the "potentiometric titration" method for determining the quantitative content of a finished dosage form."
4. "Validation of the duration of holding of 5 mg of product X and unpackaged tablets in the manufacturing process."
5. "Development of a validation protocol for the manufacturing process of a finished dosage form."
6. "Modern approach to the development of finished dosage forms."
7. "Improving the formulations of veterinary dosage forms and observation of poor flow and adhesion of the final blend at the press."
8. "Primary study of a patent-free finished dosage form."
9. "Development of a generic product (solid dosage form)."
10. "Dependence of pellet sizes on the end point of mass humidification in the pseudo-boiling layer rotation unit."
11. "Effect of changes in the amount of microcrystalline cellulose on the properties of pellets."
12. "Optimization of pelleting process parameters."

The experts acknowledge that the topics mentioned above correspond to the specifics of industrial pharmacy. In one instance the final result was mediocre "The improvement of veterinary drug form recipe and elimination of poor flowability and adhesion of tablet mass to puanson" (final grade 5 (satisfactory)).

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

The overall assessment by experts reflects a positive view of the study programme "Industrial Pharmacy." The collaborative model between RTU and RSU is acknowledged as effective in delivering a well-rounded educational experience. The programme's emphasis on practical placements in pharmaceutical companies aligns with industry needs, providing students with valuable hands-on experience. The in-depth analysis of learning outcomes demonstrates that graduates acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, and competences for successful engagement in the pharmaceutical industry. The commitment to adapt and improve the programme, as evidenced by the exploration of English language implementation and responsiveness to market needs, further contributes to a favorable expert assessment. The study programme effectively addresses the outlined criteria, ensuring that the content is relevant, interconnected, and aligned with programme objectives. It meets industry and labor market needs and adheres to national regulations, as evidenced by compliance with Qualification Framework of Latvia, State Education Standard, and Professional Standard. However, it is essential to note that the analysis also identifies challenges, such as financial constraints and the need for internationalization. The decision to primarily implement the programme in Latvian, driven by industry demands and the burden on companies with international students, is presented as a practical consideration. The ongoing commitment to address these challenges and the acknowledgment of the programme's effectiveness in meeting its objectives contribute to an overall positive assessment. In summary, the expert assessment recognizes the strengths of the study programme in terms of collaboration, practical relevance, and meeting industry demands. The identified challenges are viewed as areas for improvement, and the proactive approach to program adjustments indicates a commitment to ongoing enhancement and adaptability.

Strengths:

- 1) The study programme provides an effective solution for the specialist demand in the relevant field at the national level.

Weaknesses:

- 1) In some cases, the results of final theses are relatively low. This raises concerns about the selection and evaluation procedures of research paper topics.

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The study programme is based on the achievements and findings of the relevant field of science, as evidenced by the comprehensive approach to curriculum design, content, and implementation methods detailed in the analysis.

Additionally, the study programme aligns with national regulations and industry needs, it offers

interconnected and complementary content that is also research-oriented. The topics of students' final theses are closely related to the field of industrial pharmacy and address current issues within the industry on the national level. The collaboration with pharmaceutical companies and industry experts in the programme's development and implementation ensures that the curriculum is grounded in the latest industry practices and scientific discoveries.

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1. In recent years, the RSU Faculty of Pharmacy has been developing very rapidly, external funding has been raised, which is intended for the construction of a new faculty building with the Laboratory of Finished Dosage Forms (LFDF) and purchasing of equipment and technologies for study and scientific needs.

Modern premises, a comfortable, safe and evolving environment, as well as the opportunity to learn and work with newer analytical and technological equipment open up opportunities for further scientific growth of both staff and students in the field of science, and to learn the knowledge and skills necessary for the labor market. The new LFDF will provide a technological platform for study courses and will also be a platform for conducting scientific research, a workplace for scientific groups and projects, as well as provide the services needed for the pharmaceutical industry.

LFDF will ensure research and training of students in the field of industrial pharmacy. Two functional units of equipment will be used in the laboratory: solid dosage form development unit with equipment for preparing and packaging powders, granules, tablets and capsules; standardisation unit with equipment for research of raw materials, intermediates, final products and materials, as well as for quality control by chromatographic, spectrometric and other analytical methods (SAR, page 775).

Thus, there will be greater opportunities for research work, placement of students of the Joint second level professional higher education programme "Industrial Pharmacy" (47725), incoming student mobility and even closer synergies between industrial pharmacy studies and the pharmaceutical industry. The laboratory already employs one graduate of the study programme "Industrial Pharmacy" and will serve as a potential workplace for several more graduates of the programme.

The new building and the laboratories started functioning at the beginning of 2023, new analytical (HPLC – FD/PDA/RI, HPLC – MS/MS, GC/HS – FID, GC – FID, ICP – MS/MS, Calorimeter, Rheometer, Polarimeter, FTIR, TLC/HPTLC) and technological (High-shear mixer, Fluid bed dryer/processor, Roller compactor, Benchtop tablet press-simulator, Rotary tablet press, Automatic capsule filling machine, Tablet coater, Semi-automatic blister packing machine) equipment has already been purchased, which will ensure a full solid dosage form manufacturing process and research (SAR, page 774).

The RSU Library fully provides students and academic staff with access to scientific databases and study literature. In the supply of e-resources, five e-book databases and seven full-text databases of journals are available in the pharmaceutical sector. Since 2021, a special database of e-books in the pharmaceutical sector AccessPharmacy is subscribed. E-books in pharmacy are available in subscribed databases AccessPharmacy, ebook Academic Collection (EBSCO), Ebook Central (Proquest), AccessMedicine and ClinicalKey. Subscribed multidisciplinary databases Ebook Central (ProQuest) and EBSCO eBook Academic Collection offer e-books in different fields and from different publishers that provide selected information results searching by various topics / keywords. The AccessPharmacy database is an interactive, educational platform in pharmacology and pharmacy by McGraw-Hill, which offers internationally recognised textbooks, video materials, images, information on medicines and other electronic resources. The full texts of scientific articles in pharmacy are available in subscribed databases: SAGE Premier 2022, Health Research Premium Collection (Proquest), MEDLINE Complete (EBSCO), BMJ Journals, Wiley Online Journals, Science Direct,

Academic Search Complete (EBSCO). The single search Primo shows 593 journal names in "Pharmacy and Pharmacology". Two databases – DynaMed and ClinicalKey – contain information on medicinal products. Section "List of recommended reading e-books" on the website of the library lists the e-books referred to in study programmes – both purchased and from subscribed databases (such sections as "Pharmacology and Toxicology", "Pharmacy, Pharmaceutical Chemistry", "Medical Chemistry", etc. are available) (SAR, page 775).

RTU also provides students with scientific databases (for example, Scopus, Web of Knowledge, ScienceDirect, Wiley), which provide access to the leading industry journals. At RTU, the implementation of the study programme "Industrial Pharmacy" is ensured by the Institute of Technology of Organic Chemistry and the Department of Chemical Technology of Biologically Active Compounds. Until now, RTU was not involved in writing research papers of students. However, if needed, it has all the necessary infrastructure and modern scientific equipment (for example, Bruker 500 and 300 MHz nuclear magnetic resonance units, Agilent and Waters liquid and gas chromatography systems with different detectors) to work on research papers on pharmacy related topics (in particular, synthesis of active substances) (SAR, page 775).

The experts panel considers that the study financial resources are reasonable; the infrastructure, informative provision (library resources), financial provision, material and technical fully comply with requirements of the Joint second level professional higher education programme "Industrial Pharmacy" (47725) and demonstrate achievements of programme learning outcomes.

2.3.2. Not applicable.

2.3.3. The study programme in the Latvian flow is financed from state budget funds and the funds of individuals and legal entities setting the tuition fee in accordance with the state budget funding without social security of EUR 7335 per year of studies. The tuition fee can be subject to discounts in accordance with internal norms and regulations. In the Latvian flow, the number of students planned to be achieved in the study programmes in 1 year, 6 months of studies is 17 students, enrolling 9 students in the first year, planning a drop-out of 1 student in the second year. Such a number of students is optimal to ensure a high-quality study process and to make the study programme cover its implementation, as well as development costs. Meanwhile, in the English flow, which lasts 1 year, 6 months, the study programme will be able to cover implementation and development costs, if a group consists of 9 students (with a minimum drop-out), who pay a tuition fee of EUR 10750 per year. Remuneration of the academic staff in the first year of the Latvian flow StP is planned to be approximately 20 thousand EUR and approximately 24 thousand EUR in the English flow study programme. (SAR, page 776).

The average income per student (SAR, page 776) is 5642 euro in the Latvian flow, and average cost per student is 5287 euro. Funding is distributed as follows: Academic staff, % - 32, Department resources, % - 15, Scholarship costs, % - 5, Fixed costs, % - 4, Overheads, % - 44.

The average income per student (SAR, page 777) is 7504 euro in the English flow, and average cost per student is 6226 euro. Funding is distributed as follows: Academic staff, % - 34, Department resources, % - 13, Fixed costs, % - 3, Overheads, % - 50.

The study programme is implemented only in Latvian; there have been no English-speaking students enrolled in the programme in recent years (2016/2017 – 2022/2023). It should also be taken into account that the number of students enrolled in the study programme has been under 9 in recent years (2016/2017 – 2022/2023). (Annex 16).

The average income/cost balance per student is positive. However, the number of enrolled students is low, which could have an impact on the financial situation in the future.

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

The infrastructure, including informative resources such as library materials, financial support, and technical resources, wholly align with the demands of the study programme, showcasing tangible accomplishments in meeting programme learning objectives.

The allocated funding for the study programme is effectively utilized to guarantee the comprehensive execution of the educational process. Furthermore, the programme maintains an optimal student enrolment size, ensuring its financial viability while fostering the continual growth and enhancement of the study curriculum.

The average income/cost balance per student is positive. However, the number of enrolled students is low, which could have an impact on the financial situation in the future.

Strengths:

- 1) Advanced material and technical base for student training.
- 2) The study programme provides students with extensive RSU Library resources and databases, student portal MyRSU, e-studies.

Weaknesses:

- 1) The number of enrolled students is low, no students were enrolled in the English stream of the study program, which could have an impact on the financial situation in the future.

Assessment of the requirement [6]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Advanced material and technical base for student training; plenty of high-quality library resources.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1. The implementation of the compulsory and restricted elective part of the Joint second level professional higher education programme "Industrial Pharmacy" (47725) is carried out by 14 lecturers, 4 of whom have been elected to the academic positions at RSU. Out of 4 elected representatives of the academic staff, one is a professor and two are associate professors. Of the 4 academic staff members elected for the implementation of the study programme, all of them hold a doctoral degree, and the largest proportion of the position is that of Associate Professor. In Annex 24.7, Figure 3 shows that out of 14 lecturers involved in the implementation of the study programme, 8 lecturers are employed in the main job (the position of an elected lecturer, acting lecturer or adjunct lecturer (staff employees)) and 6 are invited lecturers (specialists from other organizations and experts in the field). Out of 8 lecturers employed in the main job, 4 are elected lecturers, 1 is acting lecturer, while 3 are adjunct lecturers. Out of 2 lecturers, or ~50% of all elected lecturers involved in the implementation of the study programme have been employed at least once in RSU research projects since 2017. Whereas, since 2017, 1 or ~ 100% of all acting lecturers involved in the implementation of the StP have been employed in RSU research projects at least once. 21% of the total number of lecturers employed in the implementation of the StP have obtained a degree as of 2017. While, 79% of lecturers have obtained a degree by 2017. Of all the degrees

obtained after 2017, 67% of StP lecturers have obtained a doctoral degree. With regard to the status of an expert of the Latvian Council of Science (LCS), 4 or 100% of the elected lecturers involved in the implementation of the StP has the status of an expert of the LCS (Annex 24.7).

The study programme's academic team aims to successfully implement the "Industrial Pharmacy" study programme and collaborate with the pharmaceutical sector. Doctoral degrees are held by most RSU study course professors. RSU Faculty of Pharmacy teaching staff participate in various research initiatives. Projects can be implemented using department equipment. Students in the BBCE project can share resources with RTU and Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis. Participation in projects promotes scientific competences, academic staff growth, and criteria fulfillment, as well as student involvement in research projects to develop student research projects and increase student understanding of scientific activities. Faculty and students are working on several projects with RTU, Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies, and scientific institutes (Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis, Latvian Biomedical Research and Study Centre). To qualify, they must have three anonymously reviewed scientific publications in a scientific journal indexed in Scopus or Web of Science, including an open access publication, or two such publications and a scientific monograph. Lecturers actively participate in international and national research projects. Lecturers constantly participate in research work, read reports at scientific conferences, including international ones (SAR p. 778).

As regards the continuing education activities of lecturers, in the period from 1 January 2017 to 1 October 2022, 6 lecturers from the study programme "Industrial Pharmacy" participated in the continuing education activities of the Centre for Educational Growth, attending more than 50 training activities of different content. The lecturers of the study programme "Industrial Pharmacy" have devoted a total of 937 academic hours to the continuing education activities.

Out of 14 lecturers involved in the implementation of the StP, 6 or 43% of lecturers have an English proficiency level determined by RSU between B2 and C1. In addition, 2 of these lecturers have acquired the English language by taking language courses. The RSU Language Centre or a cooperation partner organizes the language proficiency tests, compares diplomas and validates other documents following the approved internal decrees and generally accepted international standards.

Faculty staff and students are currently involved in several projects, part of which are related to the development of dosage forms and drug delivery systems: HORIZON (1); European Agricultural Fund (3) and RSU grants (2). For detailed analysis of teaching staff projects check the section 2.4.1. of StP Pharmacy.

Invited lecturers' practical work experience in industrial pharmacy, such as manufacturing job duties at JSC "Grindex" and laboratory experience at JSC "Olainfarm", clinical trial organization and supervision, and medicinal product authorization at the State Agency of Medicines, is highly valued. Visiting lecturers are carefully selected to update the study programme and align it with industrial pharmacy programmes worldwide, promoting internationalization. Since the study programme began, a Professor from the University of Helsinki, Lithuanian University of Health Sciences, a known industrial pharmacy expert with international journal publications in the last five years, has collaborated. Three teaching staff members are involved in the implementation of the study programme from RTU, having expertise as an international expert of ECTS/DS and Member of Latvian Bologna process promoters' Group, Director of RSU and RTU joint professional study programme "Industrial Pharmacy" at RTU; expert of the Latvian Council of Sciences in the fields of chemistry, chemical engineering and pharmacy, member of the Council of Experts of the Chemical Industry and its Allied Sectors; vice dean for academic affairs of the Faculty of Materials Science and Applied Chemistry of RTU, head of the Department of Chemical Technology of Biologically Active Compounds; expert in contract research for the largest European pharmaceutical companies, is the director for scientific work of the Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis, the head of the Methodological Group on Organic Synthesis, a correspondent member of the Latvian Academy of

Sciences and an expert of the Latvian Academy of Sciences in chemistry, a patent specialist at the Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis responsible for patents protecting organic chemistry, medical chemistry and biochemistry inventions – that is with intellectual property related to pharmacy (SAR p. 781).

The qualification of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements set forth in the regulatory enactments, and it enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses.

2.4.2. The RSU Human Resources Department ensures that academic and scientific staff are hired for new study programmes in accordance with the Law on Higher Education Institutions (Section 55(1)(3), (28) and (30), etc.) and the Law on Scientific Activity. When selecting workers and collecting documentation for academic elections, the RSU Human Resources Department ensures that staff speak the official language. The RSU offers annual seminars on issues related to teaching and research techniques in order to improve academic staff knowledge and skills. Lecturers might attend School of Junior Academics and RSU Centre for Educational Growth seminars to strengthen their skills. Doctoral students and instructors can attend research competence development seminars and networking activities at the Doctoral School. 1–2 pharmacy doctors defend PhD theses per year and work academically. Edijs Vāvers, a modern Doctor of Pharmacy, began academic work after the inclusion of the “Preparation of Scientific Papers” course in the study programme (SAR p. 781).

The study programme showed minimal changes in teaching staff, resulting in a strong academic team. Changes for objective reasons (workplace, retirement) have not harmed study quality. M. Stare (JSC “Grindeks”) and O. Brante (JSC “Olainfarm”), now RSU Laboratory of Finished Dosage Forms (LFDF) were invited lecturers. The composition of most RTU study courses has remained unaltered since the inception of “Industrial Pharmacy”. Māra Rozenblate, a top specialist at the Patent Office of Latvia, previously taught the “Patent Science” study course. K. Čapase-Jastržemska, a patent specialist at the Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis, teaches this course on patenting organic chemistry, including medical chemistry and new biologically active substances. This study course was implemented by a specialist with extensive knowledge of intellectual property protection in pharmacy (SAR p. 781).

2.4.3. Not applicable.

2.4.4. On March 26, 2023, the RSU Current Research Information System (ZDIS) Pure was used to retrieve the publications of teaching staff in the “Health Care” study field from January 1, 2017 to March 25, 2023. ZDIS Pure is used to extract the list of publications since it contains the most comprehensive information about RSU academic staff's scientific activity—publications, projects, awards, research, datasets, presentations, press and media communication, etc. Since 2017, ZDIS Pure has recorded 1242 publications for 151 lecturers in three Faculty of Pharmacy study programmes in the study field “Health Care”: The Professional Master's study programme “Clinical Pharmacy”, The Second level professional study programme “Pharmacy”, and The joint second level professional study programme “Industrial Pharmacy”. 113/113 professors have publication data. These years produced the most publications: 2021 (395), 2020 (238), and 2022 (227) (6.4_An_x_Ac_staff_publications_IF factor_Facult_Pharmacy.pdf).

All the members of the academic staff in the last six years have published in peer-reviewed editions, including international editions, or have five years of practical experience in accordance with the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

2.4.5. The joint second level professional higher education programme “Industrial Pharmacy” is a

three-semester degree with only few study courses included therein.

The lecturers cooperate by mutually visiting lectures and classes (observing teaching), which allows them to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of their work; preparing annual reports on academic, scientific, and creative activities, publications, participation in scientific research and conferences; and promoting international lecturer exchange, which allows lecturers to gain experience. Several professors execute different study courses, which diversifies content while retaining equal requirements. The teaching staff's dedication to their tasks confirms the StP's sustainability. Teaching personnel are routinely invited to address study process difficulties and improvement. For instance, lecturers, representatives of the new LFDF, and manufacturers meet to discuss the progress of the research papers referred to, promoting mutual exchange of ideas and integration of the programme into LFDF and development opportunities (SAR p. 782).

In expert opinion, the established mechanism for mutual cooperation among the teaching staff in the implementation of the joint second level professional higher education programme "Industrial Pharmacy" contributes significantly to the achievement of the study programme's aims and the interconnection of study courses. The collaborative approach is characterized by a proactive engagement of lecturers in various activities that enhance the overall quality of the programme. One notable strength is the practice of mutual visits to lectures and classes, allowing lecturers to observe and evaluate each other's teaching methods. This promotes a culture of continuous improvement, enabling the identification of both strengths and weaknesses in teaching approaches. Several instructors collaborate on course implementation, research projects, and student paper supervision. Teaching is a collaborative effort where everyone knows their role. Teacher qualifications and enthusiasm to provide study and research are strong. Humane, open relationships with students are maintained along with severe study task requirements, fostering an environment conducive to effective learning. Students can receive lessons and support while studying. If something is unclear, students can visit the Head or Dean for advice on improving the study process individually and collectively. Students help improve and control study programme quality. Nine students and 14 instructors in the study programme. Students to teachers ratio is 0:6 (SAR p. 782).

In expert opinion, the low students-to-teachers ratio of 0.6 indicates a personalized and attentive approach to education, allowing for individualized support and guidance. Shared feedback from lecturers and students provides additional validation of the cooperative environment within the study programme. The emphasis on strong teacher qualifications and enthusiasm for both study and research activities contributes to the overall quality of the educational experience. The active involvement of students in the improvement and control of study programme quality is a noteworthy practice, promoting a sense of ownership and shared responsibility. In expert opinion, the established mechanism for cooperation among the teaching staff is a strength of the study programme, contributing positively to its internal quality and overall effectiveness. The collaborative model, dedication of the teaching staff, and student engagement collectively enhance the learning environment and contribute to the success of the joint second level professional higher education programme "Industrial Pharmacy."

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

The qualification of the teaching staff involved in the study programme matches the requirements for its implementation and the regulatory enactments, enabling the study programme's aims and learning outcomes and the relevant study courses to be met. The RSU takes steps to ensure that changes in the teaching staff do not impair the quality of the study programme or its compliance with regulatory requirements. In the last six years, all academic staff members have written in peer-

reviewed journals, including international editions or five years of practical experience per the Higher Education Institutions Law. A framework for teaching staff cooperation in implementing the study programme promotes its success and the interconnectedness of study courses. The programme's emphasis on mutual cooperation, regular feedback and collaborative efforts among the teaching staff contribute significantly to its sustainability and continuous improvement. The well-established mechanisms ensure that the study programme at RSU maintains a robust academic environment and high-quality learning experience for students.

Strengths:

- 1) The programme benefits from a teaching staff with a majority holding doctoral degrees, showcasing a high level of qualification.
- 2) The active involvement of visiting lecturers and collaboration with external experts enhances the international perspective and industry relevance.
- 3) Practice of mutual visits to lectures and classes, allowing lecturers to observe and evaluate each other's teaching methods.

Weaknesses:

- 1) A potential weakness in the teaching staff composition is the identified English proficiency level of lecturers (43% possessing proficiency between B2 and C1). This could potentially impact the effectiveness of international collaboration.

Assessment of the requirement [7]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

All of the teaching staff that the qualifications of both academic and visiting staff complies with respective regulatory enactments. 6.2. pielikums Annex 6.2. Mācībspēku biogrāfijas (Curriculum Vitae Europass formātā)

Biographies of the teaching staff members (in Europass Curriculum Vitae format)

2. līmeņa profesionālā studiju programma "Rūpnieciskā farmācija"

2nd level higher education study programme "Industrial Pharmacy"

6.2. pielikums

Annex 6.2.

Mācībspēku biogrāfijas (Curriculum Vitae Europass formātā)

Biographies of the teaching staff members (in Europass Curriculum Vitae format)

2. līmeņa profesionālā studiju programma "Rūpnieciskā farmācija"

2nd level higher education study programme "Industrial Pharmacy". Despite minor limitations mentioned above, the qualification of the academic staff meets the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements set out in the respective regulatory enactments.

2.5. Assessment of the Compliance

Requirements

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Annex - 17.1_Anx_National_educ_standard_Industrial_Pharmacy.pdf confirms that the study programme complies with National Education Standard corresponding to Cabinet Regulations No 305 of 13 June 2023 "Regulations on National Standard for Professional Higher Education"
<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/342818-noteikumi-par-valsts-profesionalas-augstakas-izglitiba-standartu>.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

According to the Annex provided -

18.2_Annex_compliance_with_prof_standard_mapping_Ind_Pharmacy.pdf, there is currently no valid profession standard, so mapping was performed against the last available regulation of the profession in the repealed Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 626 (in force from 9 October 2018 until the amendments to the Vocational Education Law of 03.02.2022)

"Regulations on the Procedure of Publication of Mandatory Profession Standards and Lists of Professional Qualification Requirements and Profession Standards and Professional Qualification Requirements Included into it"

https://registri.visc.gov.lv/profizglitiba/dokumenti/standarti/20170614_Profesiju_standarti_5.pdf

- 3 3 - The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in all languages in which the study programme is implemented, and they comply with the requirements set forth in Section 561 , Paragraph two and Section 562 , Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The study course descriptions are prepared in English and Latvian that can be accessed under annexes - 20_Anx_Study_course_description_Industrial_Pharmacy.pdf and 20_pielik_Kursu_apr_Rupnieciska_farmacija.pdf. Descriptions comply with regulations set forth in Law on Higher Education Institutions. The study materials can be accessed and are prepared in both implemented languages.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The provided Diploma sample 24.1-Rupnieciska-f-eng.pdf- complies with the procedure by which state-recognised documents of higher education are issued according to Cabinet Regulation No. 202 "Kārtība, kādā izsniedz valsts atzītus augstāko izglītību apliecinošus dokumentus".

- 5 5 - The academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements set forth in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 6 6 - Academic study programmes provided for less than 250 full-time students may be implemented and less than five professors and associated professors of the higher education institution may be involved in the implementation of the mandatory and limited elective part of these study programmes provided that the relevant opinion of the Council for Higher Education has been received in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 7 7 - At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of an academic doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field of science. At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a professional doctoral study programme in arts (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 8 8 - The teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme are proficient in the official language in accordance with the regulations on the level of the official language knowledge and the procedures for testing official language proficiency for performing professional duties and office duties.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Based on the acquired information onsite as well as relevant annexes:

24.4_AnxCertification_Regarding_Latvian_Language_of_the_Academic_Staff.pdf and

6.2_AnxCV_ENG_visas_programmas.7z, it can be evaluated that the

language proficiency of teaching staff is compliant with Cabinet Regulation. Nr. 733 "

Regulations Regarding the Extent of the Knowledge of the Official Language, the Procedures for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language and the State Fee for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language".

- 9 9 - The teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language, if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

As one of the implementing languages of this programme is English, it is required for the teaching staff to have at least B2 level English. The attached documents:

6.2_AnxCV_ENG_visas_programmas.7z and

24.5_AnxCertification_Regarding_the_English_Language_Knowledge.pdf confirm the English

language skills of the teaching staff members. Their skills were also assessed during onsite visits and the expert group confirms that they are at least on B2 level

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Sample of attached study agreement 24.8_AnxCStudy contract sample_Health Care study direction.pdf complies with Cabinet Regulation. Nr. 70 "Studiju līgumā obligāti ietveramie noteikumi".

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

RSU has provided confirmation that students will be provided with opportunities to continue their education in another higher education institution if the implementation of the study programme is terminated. The agreements are specified in the annexes under "24.2_pielik_Apliecinājumi_par_parnemsanu_eng.7z". It is specified that in case of

discontinuation of this study programme, students can continue their studies at Academic Master's study programme "Public health" at RSU.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

RSU has provided confirmation that students are guaranteed compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the study programme's license is revoked. It is ensured based on the Section 55(8) of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education and Cabinet of Ministers No 795 of 11 December 2018 "Regulations on Licensing of study programmes", Paragraph 13.4. The relevant document can be found under Annexes - 24.3_Anx_Certification_of_Compensation_of_Losses_to_Students.pdf.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The joint study programme complies with the requirements prescribed in the Law on Higher Education Institutions based on annex - 15_Anx_Joint_StP.pdf providing compliance of assessment of the Section 55.1 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions according to the sample of Annex 4 to The Guidelines for the Development of Self-assessment Report of the Study Direction of the Quality Agency for Higher Education.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Assessment of the requirement [8]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Study programme fully complies with regulatory enactments.

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

The joint second level professional higher education programme "Industrial Pharmacy" (47725) demonstrates a full alignment with the study field, meeting industry demands and national regulations. The interdisciplinary approach and collaboration between Riga Technical University (RTU) and Rīga Stradiņš University (RSU) strengthen its relevance to the evolving sector of industrial pharmacy, reflecting a strategic interdisciplinary approach. The Study Programme effectively integrates theoretical knowledge with practical skills through well-balanced curriculum and teaching methods. Strengths of the programme include its effective solution to meet the specialist demand problem at the national level, an advanced material and technical base and well-established collaboration with the pharmaceutical industry. The joint implementation of the Study Programme ensures efficient resource utilization and offers expertise from both leading institutions. The title, code, professional qualification to be obtained, of the joint second level professional higher

education programme "Industrial Pharmacy", aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation, as well as the implementation language, are reasonable and justified. Economic and social justification of the study programme, dynamics of the number of students and employment indicators of the graduates of the study programme are justified as there is demand on the market for this profession. In conclusion, the assessment of indicators describing the study programme reveals a comprehensive evaluation of its alignment with the study field. The infrastructure, including informative resources such as library materials, financial support, and technical resources, wholly align with the demands of the study programme, showcasing tangible accomplishments in meeting programme learning objectives. The allocated funding for the study programme is effectively utilized to guarantee the comprehensive execution of the educational process. Furthermore, the programme maintains an optimal student enrolment size, ensuring its financial viability while fostering the continual growth and enhancement of the study curriculum. The average income/cost balance per student is positive. However, the number of enrolled students is low, which could have an impact on the financial situation in the future.

The qualification of the teaching staff involved in the study programme matches the requirements for its implementation and the regulatory enactments, enabling the study programme's aims and learning outcomes and the relevant study courses to be met. The RSU takes steps to ensure that changes in the teaching staff do not impair the quality of the study programme or its compliance with regulatory requirements. The programme's emphasis on mutual cooperation, regular feedback and collaborative efforts among the teaching staff contribute significantly to its sustainability and continuous improvement. The well-established mechanisms ensure that the study programme at RSU maintains a robust academic environment and high-quality learning experience for students. Despite acknowledging certain challenges, such as the current financial constraints and the need for internationalization, the programme is deemed effective in meeting its objectives, addressing industry demands, and preparing graduates with the requisite skills for successful careers in industrial pharmacy. The collaborative approach between RSU and RTU enhances the programme's strength, offering a well-rounded educational experience. The ongoing commitment to adapt and improve the programme demonstrates responsiveness to market needs and ensures its continued relevance. The expert assessment recognizes the strengths of the study programme in terms of collaboration, practical relevance, and meeting industry demands. The identified challenges are viewed as areas for improvement, and the proactive approach to programme adjustments indicates a commitment to ongoing enhancement and adaptability. In the expert opinion, despite the identified weaknesses, the programme is of good quality regarded for its effectiveness in meeting objectives, addressing industry demands, and preparing graduates for successful careers in industrial pharmacy. The acknowledged challenges are viewed as areas for improvement, with a proactive approach to program adjustments demonstrating a commitment to ongoing enhancement and adaptability. The expert assessment underscores the overall strength and resilience of the study programme, ensuring its continued relevance and high-quality learning experience for students.

Strengths:

1. Advanced material and technical base for students training.
2. The robust utilization of RSU Library resources and databases, coupled with the effective integration of the student portal MyRSU and e-studies, collectively forms a potent strength of the study programme.
3. The programme is implemented collaboratively between Riga Technical University (RTU) and Rīga Stradiņš University (RSU). This collaboration leverages the strengths of both institutions to deliver a comprehensive programme in industrial pharmacy.
4. The interdisciplinary approach strengthens the programme's relevance and connection to the evolving needs of the healthcare sector.

5. The programme benefits from a teaching staff with a majority holding doctoral degrees, showcasing a high level of qualification.
6. The active involvement of visiting lecturers and collaboration with external experts enhances the international perspective and industry relevance.

Weaknesses:

1. While the decision to admit students every other year is a positive strategy to maintain stability, the small cohort size may impact the generalizability of certain findings and trends related to student dynamics and post-graduation employment.
2. A potential weakness in the teaching staff composition is the identified English proficiency level of lecturers (43% possessing proficiency between B2 and C1). This could potentially impact the effectiveness of international collaboration.
3. In some cases, the results of final theses are relatively low. This raises concerns about the selection and evaluation procedures of research paper topics.
4. The number of enrolled students is low, no students were enrolled in the English stream of the study program, which could have an impact on the financial situation in the future.

Evaluation of the study programme "Industrial Pharmacy"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Industrial Pharmacy"

Short-term recommendations

Address the potential weakness in the teaching staff composition related to the identified English proficiency level of lecturers, with 43% possessing proficiency between B2 and C1. Implement targeted initiatives, such as language training or recruitment strategies, within the next assessment period. Addressing this language proficiency gap through targeted training practices could improve the situation.

Long-term recommendations

Maintain the positive strategy of admitting students to maintain stability while addressing the potential impact of small cohort sizes on the generalizability of findings and trends related to student dynamics and post-graduation employment, within the next assessment period.

To mitigate relatively low final thesis results, implement measures, including enhanced criteria for topic selection and rigorous evaluation standards, aiming for increase in the average thesis quality within the next assessment period.

A recommendation to monitor more closely the number of enrolled students is made, aiming to promote the English stream program and attract more students.

II - "Medicine" ASSESSMENT

II - "Medicine" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1. The second level professional higher education programme “Medicine” (49721), complies with indicators, conditions and criteria of the study field of “Health care”. The length of the implementation of the study programme, which is 6 years, is evaluated as sufficient for acquiring the necessary skills for receiving a Medical doctor’s degree, further development and application for residency.

2.1.2. According to SAR p. 820, the title of the programme is “Medicine” in the study field “Health care” with education classification code 49721 with the last 3 numbers (721) , describing the group of medical education programmes falling under the thematic area of health care. The relevance of the programme code and degree to be awarded is evident. The first part of the code, “49”, refers to second-level professional higher education to be implemented after secondary education, which leads to a Medical doctor's degree. Classification of Latvian education can be accessed here: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/291524-noteikumi-par-latvijas-izglitiba-klasifikaciju>.

According to the SAR p.813, the aim of the programme is to create an opportunity for students, through the study content, to acquire the knowledge, skills, competences, and ethical qualities necessary for the implementation of modern health care based on the science of doctor’s profession for each individual and for society as a whole. According to the information provided in the SAR p.815, the general admission requirement of this programme is secondary education. This programme is implemented in two languages - Latvian and English. For studies in English, an additional requirement is knowledge of English at least of B2 level. It has been stated in the SAR p.815 that after successful completion of the studies, students are awarded with a Medical doctor’s degree. According to the SAR p.815, the study programme is a full-time study programme with 240 CP (360 ECTS CP) to be gathered during the study process of 6 years. According to the SAR p.814, at the end of the studies, students have a final examination upon the completion of the study programme of a national level. In the opinion of the experts, the title, code, degree to be obtained of the study programme, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation as well as the implementation languages, are reasonable and justified.

2.1.3. According to SAR p.817, there have been no significant changes made within the programme since the approval of changes in the content of the study programme Medicine at the Quality Agency for Higher Education (AIKA) of the Academic Information Centre (AIC) at its Study Quality Commission (SQC) (decision No. 2020/28-I of 1.07.2020).

The aforementioned changes were implemented in 2020 to synchronize the programme with similar study programmes of known and developed European universities. According to SAR p.818, On 9 July 2020, the new study programme “Medicine” obtained approval from AIKA to the changes made to the study programme “Medicine 2.0” compared to the already accredited programme. It should be noted that, as a result of these changes, the study programme “Paediatrics” was consolidated into the programme “Medicine”. In addition to that as described in the SAR p. 818 and explained to expert group during on-site visit, during academic year 2019/2020, the Faculty of Medicine, carried out extensive work, both relating to organization and content, to implement three placement rotations (surgery, internal diseases and free elective) in the programme, which take place in medical treatment institutions throughout Latvia. The study programme “Medicine 2.0” has two weeks of placement in a regional hospital, which is mandatory for all students. Because of the reform implemented, it was described during the on-site visit that a student placement portfolio was introduced. As part of the mechanism, every student completes the portfolio during the respective placement rotation and which reflects the performance of the student during placement, knowledge and skills acquired, receives a progress report on the work from the placement supervisor and provides feedback on the placement progress. When defending placement, the student submits the placement portfolio to the commission and it serves as the basis for discussion between the

commission and the student and for the assessment.

Another change implemented as stated in the SAR p.819, has been vertically integrated project (VIP) courses introduced in the study programme “Medicine” in academic year 2019/2020. In total, three VIP study courses were implemented: Ergonomic Workplaces in a Healthy Environment AUVMK_052, VIP Microbiology BUMK_063, Coeliac Disease Research Programme for Children in Latvia PEK_047. In each VIP course, research was carried out in teams of at least 10 students.

As discussed during the on-site visit, a substantial change in the future is going to be the transition to ECTS defined in the amendments to the Law on Higher Education Institutions should be mentioned, which should be introduced by 31.12.2024. As a result, the review of the programme and the progressive switching to a proper definition ECTS within the set deadline is planned to be continued in the study programme “Medicine”.

Based on the opinion by the expert group, the corrections made to the study programme’s parameters within the assessment of the study field are analyzed, justified and would be supported.

2.1.4. According to SAR p. 821, students of the “Medicine” programme after successful completion of 6 years of studies are awarded with a Physician’s degree. There is a confusion with the translation on the diploma sample and the RSU self-assessment report. The diploma sample states Medical doctor's degree, however in the self-assessment report RSU states Physician's degree. The experts underline that the title of the degree should be aligned. Graduates of the programme can further apply for residency studies, which is an accredited professional education programme aimed at obtaining a specific physician’s specialty. As clarified during on-site visit, no more than 5-10% graduates of the programme continue their medical career development abroad. It regards the study programme implemented in Latvian. As it was discussed with the management of the programme, international students that come to study in this programme in English have mandatory Latvian language courses and RSU provides them with an opportunity to learn Latvian language, however, to be able to enter residency in Latvia, students are required to know Latvian on a native level, which is at least C1. Thus, international students in most of the cases even if wished to continue their residency here, are forced to leave and go back to do the residency in their home country or somewhere else.

Based on the data provided in the SAR p.821, 98% of RSU graduates work within a year according to the qualifications obtained, which is a good indicator. Although RSU does not have separate data that regards only specifically employment of new physicians, it is considered to be high and close to 100%.

It is safe to say that there is a high labor market demand for highly qualified specialists in the thematic field of education “Health Care”. As stated in the SAR p.821-822, based on the information provided by the forecasts of the Ministry of Economics, the demand for specialists in health care is about to increase by 2030 by 47%. It can be concluded that graduates of the programme are in demand and their employment is highly valued, as the deficit of specialists is also predicted.

According to the statistical numbers provided in the SAR p.823 and as also discussed during on-site visit with the management of the programme, all state budget funding and self-funded study places are filled every study year. In recent years, the number of applicants of the programme has increased, with 6 applicants competing for one study place. In the academic year 2022/2023 there were 1294 students studying in Latvian and 2368 students studying in English. The number of students studying in English has been gradually and steadily increasing since the academic year 2016/2017, while the number of students studying in Latvian has been steady with slight fluctuations. In the academic year 2022/2023, the number of students enrolled in English was higher, which is why the total number of newly enrolled students was also higher compared to the academic year 2016/2017, namely 494 students in the academic year 2016/2017 and 627 students in the academic year 2022/2023.

It is evident that there is a demand for the programme from students, which is clearly reflected in

the dynamics of student numbers that are increasing every year. However, as stated in the SAR p.823 and also discussed during on-site meetings, the programme cannot make a significant increase in the number of students, but would like to guarantee the gradual development of the number of programmes and thus, gradual increase of student numbers when possible.

2.1.5. Not applicable.

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

All of the indicators of the study programme are in compliance with the existing preconditions of the implementation of the study programme. The study programme "Medicine" (49721) complies with the study field indicators, conditions and criteria. In the opinion of the experts, the title, code, degree to be obtained of the study programme, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation as well as the implementation languages, are reasonable and justified. The study programme is implemented in Latvian and English. There is a high demand for the programme, especially from international students. The goals, objectives, learning outcomes are in line and in compliance.

Strengths:

- 1.High demand of the programme from local and international students;
2. After graduation, nearly all of the graduates are successfully employed and in demand.

Weaknesses:

None.

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1. Compliance of the second level professional study programme "Medicine" with the Cabinet Regulations No 305 of 13 June 2023 "Regulations on National Standard for Professional Higher Education" and the Cabinet Regulations No. 716 of 5 December 2017 "Minimum Requirements for the Content of the Compulsory Civil Protection Course and the Content of the Civil Protection Training for Employees" requires that upon completion of a secondary education programme the amount of the study programme implemented is not less than 300 credit points (The study programme has 240 CP/360 ECTS. The duration of the professional programme is 12 semesters - 6 academic years, which is more than 5 years required 17.1_Anx_National_educ_standard_Medicine (1).pdf.

The programme consists of Part A (compulsory courses), Part B (restricted elective courses) and Part C (elective courses). Part A of the programme consists of 230 CP/350 ECTS and, of them:

- 20 / 30 CP/ECTS Prakse / Placement;
- 10/15 CP/ECTS Valsts pārbaudījums / State Examination;
- 2/3KP/ECTS Pētnieciskais darbs / Research Paper.

The volume of Part B study courses in the programme is 8 - 10 CP /12 - 15 ECTS, while the volume of Part C study courses is 2 CP /3 ECTS. This is in accordance with standard requirements of the selection of study courses, content and amount of study courses, including the content and amount of work-based studies, as well as the content of placement in accordance with the professional qualification to be awarded are defined in the study content and implementation description of the study programme implemented after completion of the secondary education programme in accordance with the professional qualification requirements or regulatory enactments on

competence, scope of theoretical and practical knowledge necessary for a student of a professional higher education programme for the relevant profession. (Annex 17.1 National_educ_standard_Medicine).

More than 40 percent of the professional programme (excluding the amount intended for placement and development of the Diploma Paper (Diploma project)) shall be contact hours. The amount of contact hours is not even, it differs between different courses and is very much higher in particular courses. This criteria is in accordance with state standard (Annex 17.1 National_educ_standard_Medicine).

Study courses in the compulsory amount of at least 30 credit points – study courses in the humanities and social sciences, including study courses that develop basic social, communicative and organizational skills. Study courses include a study module for developing the professional competence of entrepreneurship (innovation, business organization and establishment, management techniques, the basics of business economy, project development, and management, record-keeping and financial accounting system, knowledge of regulations governing labor relations, incl. creation of a social dialogue in society, as well as knowledge of other innovations in business management or management of an establishment). A study module is created by combining study courses or parts thereof, which have a joint objective and learning outcomes, and at least nine credit points, is included in all study programmes implemented after the completion of a secondary education programme if it is not included in the theoretical knowledge basic courses of the respective area of specialization (area of professional activity) in the programme implemented after the completion of a secondary education programme. The student studies the study module if it has not been studied in the previous professional study programme: This criteria is in accordance with state standard (Annex 17.1 National_educ_standard_Medicine. The compulsory content of the programme implemented is 20 CP/30 ECTS.

The industry-specific theoretical knowledge basic courses and information technology study courses have 54 credit points; according to Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 305 on the State Standard for Professional Higher Education. The relevant industry-specific specialization study courses have much above required 90 ECTS. The elective study courses have more than required nine ECTS. Placement has 20 CP/30 ECTS, or more, which is implemented in accordance with Paragraph 26 of these Regulations. National degree examination of at least 18 ECTS. When mastering the study programme referred to in Sub-Paragraph 4.2 of these Regulations, the student develops and defends at least three study projects or papers. In addition to the conditions referred to in Paragraph 41 of these Regulations, the study content and implementation description of the programme implemented after completion of a secondary education programme also includes the requirements to the content of study courses defined in the Environmental Protection Law and the Civil Protection and Disaster Management Law. The criteria is well met. (Annex 17.1 National_educ_standard_Medicine)

Synchronization of the "Medicine" study programme with established European universities was implemented. Programme material was compared to numerous German, Austrian, Scandinavian, and Italian colleges to identify parallels and variances. To enhance internationalization and facilitate student exchange, a modern programme aligned with European universities was designed in collaboration with many departments and faculty leaders at the Faculty of Medicine. Medicine 2.0 was the working title of the new programme. The adjustments increased the study programme's international visibility and equivalency for European students.

The new definition of credit points requires a full distribution of ECTS, which have previously been counted in the programme. This shift may bring some discrepancies in the transition of credit points, already noticed in the study programme. Thus, it is crucial that the FM regarding the "Medicine" programme, continue its review and transition to ECTS within the deadline. In the register of course descriptions, to clarify the conformity of credit points, contact hours, semester and final examinations with the study programme plan in course descriptions, taking into account the

transition to the ECTS system in the study process.

Despite many good changes and improvements in the study programme, there is still room for improvement. The goal of these changes should be to enhance the quality of courses in the study programme and ensure compatibility with top European medical programmes. This will improve mobility, research, student placement, and meet labor market requirements.

The goal is to maintain student workload balance by developing skills in simulated environments and improving real-world placements in outpatient medical treatment institutions. This will help students learn about current medical technologies and work organizations in relevant sectors. In collaboration with companies and professional organizations, it is recommended to expand clinical rotation study period. Based on agreements between RSU and cooperation partners — more than 120 medical institutions in Latvia and several hospitals abroad — the student spends time in internal diseases and its sub sectors, surgery, and the rotation of their choice, which corresponds to their study programme. The Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Education and Science, and Ministry of Health of Latvia have collaborated to include a one-week placement in military medical facilities in the 6th year of studies. Create a plan to adapt programme structure and layout for new study courses, such as “Basics of Military Medicine” or “Digital Medicine”, to meet medical science and industrial needs. Additionally, it is recommended to achieve rational and responsible cooperation with medical treatment institutions on financing, and spread national and international networks of clinics for student rotations.

For study programme’s students studying in English it is necessary to provide them more opportunities for practical experiences, to take as many clinical courses as possible in their home countries and familiarize themselves with the health system and practical working conditions of their home countries; to prepare for the postgraduate stage of studies.

Questions asked during the site visit showed that there needs to be more awareness toward bringing the study programme that will include teaching and learning should not only encompass the biomedical model, but biopsychosocial approach that focuses on human beings as a whole. The biopsychosocial approach emphasizes that health and illness result from the interplay of these three dimensions. It encourages healthcare professionals to consider the patient as a whole, taking into account not only the physical symptoms but also the individual's mental and social context. This approach is particularly relevant in chronic illnesses, where the impact of psychological and social factors on the course of the disease can be significant. This approach should include principles of personalized and evidence - based medicine. Personalized medicine aligns well with the biopsychosocial model by recognizing the unique biological, psychological, and social aspects of each individual. By incorporating genetic information and other personalized data, healthcare providers can develop treatment plans that are more specific and effective for the individual patient. Evidence-based medicine involves the integration of the best available evidence from scientific research, clinical expertise, and patient preferences in the decision-making process for individual patient care. It is in full alignment with the new strategic switch of the RSU to a Science - driven University, which is highly encouraged, but with a notion of keeping the focus on human - centered approach. Evidence - based medicine complements the biopsychosocial model by emphasizing the importance of incorporating scientific evidence into clinical decision-making. It encourages healthcare providers to use the most up-to-date and reliable evidence when considering the biological, psychological, and social aspects of a patient's health. In the light of new changes and strategic turn of the University to science - based one, and in the context of rapid science and technology development, the integration of personalized medicine and evidence-based medicine can lead to more optimal patient outcomes. By tailoring interventions based on individual characteristics while considering the best available evidence, healthcare providers can offer treatments that are both effective and well-suited to the specific needs of the patient. The biopsychosocial approach, personalized medicine, and evidence-based medicine can work together to provide comprehensive and individualized care, taking into account the diverse and

interconnected aspects of health and illness.

The development of transferable skills is crucial in the biopsychosocial approach, where effective communication with patients, critical thinking about complex health issues, and collaboration among healthcare professionals are essential. These skills contribute to a more patient-centered and holistic approach to care. In the context of science - based university strategic approach, the development of transferable skills should be kept in the focus throughout the study program. The biopsychosocial model inherently encourages a multidisciplinary approach by recognizing the interconnectedness of biological, psychological, and social factors in health. Collaboration among professionals with diverse expertise ensures a more holistic understanding and management of health conditions. The combination of transversable skills and multidisciplinary ultimately leads to improved patient care. The diverse expertise and perspectives contribute to a more thorough assessment and treatment approach, aligning with the holistic principles of the biopsychosocial model. The development of transversable skills and the promotion of multidisciplinary can be integrated into the education and training of healthcare professionals, ensuring that they are well-equipped to navigate the complexities of modern healthcare. The rapid pace of scientific and technological advancements has transformed various aspects of healthcare. Innovations in diagnostics, treatments, and information management have significantly impacted the delivery of patient care. The challenges that bring rapid development to science and technology will be the challenges of future changes in the study program. It is already important to keep in mind that the changes will be necessary to keep pace to ensure that these technologies benefit all individuals. This all leads to a conclusion that the study program is designed to train highly skilled professionals who will need to deal with complex problem solving in patient care. There is no doubt that many of the mentioned aspects are already included in the program.

It is highly recommended to keep in mind all these aspects when making new changes, as already mentioned in the development plan, and put special focus on developing new study courses that will use biopsychosocial economic approach, using personalized and evidence based medicine inspired by the rapid development of science and technology, in order to train knowledgeable, skilled professionals with strong transferable skills who are able to work in multidisciplinary teams and solve complex healthcare problems for patients.

The study programme is topical, the study courses / modules are interconnected and complementary, meets the programme's objectives and learning outcomes, and meets industry, labor market, and scientific trends. The study programme conforms to national regulations and professional qualification standards.

2.2.2. The Education Law, the Law on Higher Education Institutions, and Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No. 268 "Regulations on the Therapeutic Expertise of Medical Personnel and Students Acquiring the First- or Second-Level Higher Professional Medical Education and the Extent of their Theoretical and Practical Knowledge" describe physicians' competencies and should be considered when designing and implementing the study programme's course system: 1) admission requirements, which are based on regulatory enactments adopted in the Republic of Latvia, i.e. the competition of the results of centralized examinations, where secondary education assessments in profiling subjects - chemistry or biology - are evaluated; in the case of similar entrance examinations, the results of the English language examination may be evaluated 2) aligning study course outcomes with programme outcomes 3) study programme results meeting profession standard requirements, regulated by CM Regulations No. 268, 4) Comparing the content of study programme "Medicine" to similar programmes at leading European universities reveals a harmonization of content with the most recognized European programmes. To align study courses, study programmes and physician requirements, the content mapping results are in Annexes 17.1, 17.2, 18.2. A consistent definition system has been designed to apply national legislation and documentation, including entrance criteria, StP aims, tasks, learning outcomes, and education needs

(SAR p. 819 . 820).

According to the Latvian legislation, state-recognized degrees/diplomas may be awarded upon the completion of an accredited programme in an accredited HE institution holding a state-approved Satversme (by-law) or college statute. Decisions on programme accreditation are taken by the Study Accreditation Commission, while those on the institutional accreditation – by the Higher Education Council (24.1_Diploms_Medicina_eng.pdf). This Diploma Supplement follows the model developed by the European Commission, Council of Europe and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO/CEPES). The purpose of the supplement is to provide sufficient independent data and ensure academic and professional recognition of qualifications (diplomas, degrees, certificates etc.). It is designed to provide a description of the nature, level, context and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed by the individual named on the original qualification to which this supplement is appended (Annex 24.1_Diploms_Medicina_eng.pdf). The study programme curriculum aligns with current healthcare trends and demands, particularly in medical treatment. The 2nd year of studies includes a new course called “Introduction to Research” to emphasize the scientific approach and the principle of “study through research” since RSU became a university of science. The RSU's internal research funding system fosters student, lecturer, and researcher activity in priority science subjects, including oncology, children's health, and infectious diseases. According to Annex 7 of the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 202 of April 16 April 2013, the Latvian higher education system emphasizes that a Master's degree is equivalent to degrees in medicine and professional studies (years 5 and 6). Physician, dentist, and pharmacist programs receive exclusive status, granting both a professional qualification and a degree (equivalent to a Master's degree) simultaneously. According to the Law on Higher Education Institutions (information in Latvian and English), RSU complies with the typology of higher education institutions in Latvia. Based on the analysis and site visit consultations, it is clear that the awarding of a degree is based on the achievements and findings of the relevant field of science.

A new study course “Introduction to Research” is planned in the 2nd year of studies, which, when RSU becomes a university of science, will reflect intensification of the scientific approach and the principle “study through research”. In expert opinion, this course contributes to preparation of students for scientific work and awarding of a degree, based on the achievements and findings of the relevant field of science.

The criteria is well met.

2.2.3. The practical implementation of the study programme takes place in academic structural units of the Faculty of Medicine. The Department of Clinical Skills and Medical Technologies joined the Faculty of Medicine, and is the 21st academic structural unit subordinated to the Faculty of Medicine (SAR p. 827). The programme is a full time study programme - 6 years in Latvian and full time studies - 6 years in English language, therefore the following analysis explains in detail the methods used for the implementation of both study programmes.

The Academic Regulations I authorized by the RSU Senate outline the criteria and assessment system for student knowledge. The regular assessment of the knowledge, skills and competences acquired by students is based on the RSU Academic Regulations I approved by the RSU Senate on 21 February 2023, available in Latvian https://www.rsu.lv/sites/default/files/imce/Dokumentu/studijas/studiju_reglaments_i_01032023.pdf, in English https://www.rsu.lv/sites/default/files/imce/Documents/academic-regulations_i_01032023.pdf, from the section on the university website: Latvian – <https://www.rsu.lv/studentiem/dokumentu> (in the section “studies”), English – <https://www.rsu.lv/en/students/documents> (in the section “studies”). Academic Regulations I are regularly revised by a working group directed by the Vice-Rector for Studies, including student engagement (academic-regulations_i_01032023.pdf (rsu.lv; SAR p. 828). The regulations incorporate the current study trends, which reflect European and global higher education recommendations, and are submitted to the RSU Senate for approval. The Academic

Regulations' assessment system overview matches Cabinet of Ministers Regulations on professional higher education" (No. 305). Colloquia, practical work tests, theoretical tests, exams, and cumulative exams are used to evaluate students in the "Medicine" curriculum. Assessments of learning and provisional outcomes use qualitative and quantitative markers. Qualitative assessments use a 10-grade scale, with 10 (with distinction) being the highest grade and 4 (nearly adequate) being the lowest. Course length in CP/ECTS is the quantitative measure. Grades are given for exams, research projects, colloquia, and tests (SAR p. 828).

Students study in lectures, seminars, and labs. Students create a research paper under the guidance of a lecturer in any academic unit of the Faculty of Medicine. Some studies are meant as independent work. Clinical care and rotation placements are taken outside the university in the 5th and 6th years, respectively. Before the semester begins, lecturers of each academic unit familiarize students with course content, readings, assignments, class test requirements, and evaluation methods within 10 days of course implementation. All department office staff' contact information is supplied for support in case of confusion. The Council of the Faculty of Medicine and the full faculty are reminded of the necessity to ask to submit feedback by completing questionnaires after the end of each course. RSU is moving towards consensus decisions amongst students and academic units regarding mandatory survey completion (SAR p. 826 -828).

Academic staff helps students succeed and accomplish study programme outcomes efficiently within the required timeframe. Students receive consultations during the study semester, before provisional outcomes tests (colloquia), examinations, and the national degree exam. E-learning involves regular contact (SAR p. 828).

Exams use various forms of tests, including written, oral, combined, computer, objective structured clinical examination (OSCE), and cumulative exams that assess students' knowledge, skills, and abilities based on their results throughout the year or semester.

Basic principles and procedure for the assessment of the completion of the study programme corresponds to the standard which is published on the RSU website and with which students are familiarized at the beginning of each study course. In order to successfully complete the study programme, it is necessary to obtain a successful assessment of the acquisition of the entire content of the study programme, which consists of a successful assessment for each study course. When assessing learning outcomes in the study programme, study module or study course on a 10-point grading scale, the higher education institution may also stipulate additional criteria for determining a specific assessment on a 10-point grading scale. The requirements referred to in Paragraph 58 of these Regulations for the assessment of learning outcomes on a 10- point scale may also be applied to the assessment of learning outcomes in the examinations prescribed by the higher education institution or college within the framework of study courses. Assessments "pass" or "fail" are used depending on whether the learning outcomes of the student demonstrated in the examination correspond or do not correspond to the level defined by the higher education institution or college in the respective examination. Credit points are given for each study course and placement completed if the assessment obtained is "pass" or, on a 10- point scale, not lower than 4 – almost satisfactory. (17.1_An_x_National_educ_standard_Medicine (1).pdf).

All student final papers should be submitted electronically to e-learning via Turnitin to assess the amount of unique content. Turnitin, an RSU tool, lets lecturers check and correct student papers for originality. The ability to compare submitted papers to database and internet information is this tool's biggest benefit. Electronically submitting and correcting student papers to Turnitin is crucial. A national degree exam in "Clinical Medicine" concludes the second-level professional study programme "Medicine". The national degree exam has three parts: patient interpretation in a clinic, theoretical test, and manipulation skills in medical technology centers. The first COVID-19 infection and pandemic study organization and resources should be described (SAR p. 829).

In spring 2020, the Ministry of Education and Science of Latvia recommended higher education institutions to transition to remote studies due to a large increase in COVID-19 cases. After this

appeal, remote lectures were launched the next day to avoid students from gathering in auditoriums, and Panopto was used to record almost 200 video lectures in two weeks. Many departments switched to the online environment using Panopto, Zoom, and Microsoft Teams. Additionally, certain clinical courses retained on-site research to assure practical study programme "Medicine" skills. The RSU Rector ordered research to prohibit students from gathering during theoretical training while preserving clinical training (SAR p. 829).

Clinical course implementation relies on cooperation with medical institutions and hospital decisions regarding student entrance to clinical departments (patients and data).

During the pandemic, medical treatment institutes and main partners, Riga University hospitals, warned RSU that students may not visit hospitals or use their study content in clinics. The limits persisted in 2020, 2021, and partially in 2022. In those conditions, the study programme "Medicine" worked uninterrupted and precisely according to study content design using remote study options with no curriculum breaks, which is highly appreciated. The Medical Education Technology Centre (MITC) prepared simulation packages and sent them to students' homes (including abroad), which made up for the lack of regular studies, especially in courses like "Surgery," "Gynaecology and Obstetrics," "Basics of Family Medicine," etc. Students filmed model manipulation training for professors to evaluate. This was an inexperienced, modern, and flexible strategy to offer study content and ensure quality during the pandemic and total restrictions (Latvia was in emergency in 2021-2022). These instances demonstrate that the study programme "Medicine" continued to apply its study content during the emergency situation of pandemics (SAR p. 830).

During distant studies, the Faculty of Medicine prioritized continuous study by organizing regular meetings with students, departments, and lecturers. The Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Vice-Dean met with the senior student of each course to discuss study challenges and successes. The issues were promptly addressed with department and course heads to make remote learning easier and more understandable for students. The Dean's Office of the Faculty met with student group leaders and other students to request input on the study process and possible adjustments. The Medical Faculty responded quickly to student inquiries. The Council of the Faculty of Medicine includes four student representatives from different years of study who jointly determine and approve the study program (SAR p. 830).

During the energy crisis, the Cabinet of Ministers of Latvia mandated 15% energy savings in state institutions. Study programme utilized its COVID-19 experience to implement content according to its academic plan and expand remote study opportunities. During the energy crisis, clinical courses can be implemented at medical treatment centers, thus the influence on studies is minimal (SAR p. 830).

Study implementation strategies support course and programme goals and learning objectives. Student-centered learning is considered while teaching. It should be noted that the programme exists in the Latvian and English languages, and some discrepancies were noticed when using the methods of teaching and assessment. Even though there is an intention to treat Latvian and English students equally during the study process, during the site visit it was observed that the English studying students do not have equal opportunities for practical activities. This inequality comes from the language barrier and lack of proficiency in English among Latvian medical healthcare professionals. For example, as it was observed during the site visit, international students were not allowed to practice in the hospital during COVID time. Additionally, due to a language barrier, students have limited opportunities for placements and exam taking. Even though it is obvious that the RSU is making efforts to tackle the challenges of the language barrier, more precautionary measures should be taken to reduce any inequalities during the study process for international students.

The methods of scientific work and the involvement of students is not enough. Research in the study process encourages student participation in scientific initiatives. Sharing thesis results at conferences can help integrate thesis findings into the professional environment, allowing graduates

to present their findings to professionals and contribute to the field's development. Involving teaching staff and students in research projects enhances research skills, quantitative indicators, creativity, cooperation, and expands the audiology-speech therapy field.

The programme emphasizes cooperation and communication through study modes (pair work, group work, student-to-student) and should promote more multidisciplinary collaboration with medical professions representatives, as well as other professionals in clinics, to create an interdisciplinary approach in solving complex problems of the profession.

2.2.4. The study programme gives students the opportunity for an internship. During the 6th year of undergraduate study, students conduct 17 weeks of clinical practical studies, including 6 weeks of internal disease profiles, 6 weeks of surgical disease profiles, and 5 weeks of free choice in proposed treatment profiles. Students visit outpatient and inpatient medical facilities, as well as general practitioners' practices nationwide (around 150 agreements). In collaboration with the Latvian Ministry of Defense, the Faculty of Medicine will offer "Basics of Military Medicine". This shows that Latvia has to improve its security and future capabilities in this area (SAR p. 830).

The Faculty of Medicine, in collaboration with relevant departments, medical treatment institutions, and the Student Union, organized and implemented three placement rotations (surgery, internal diseases, and free elective) in Latvian medical treatment institutions during 2019/2020. University clinics, regional hospitals, outpatient facilities, and family medical offices host placement rotations. The placement rotations and documentation were based on the Clinic-based training (CBT) model successfully adopted at the faculty two years prior, when student groups voluntarily spent several weeks in medical treatment institutes taking one of their courses. This training was also successful at Daugavpils, Northern Kurzeme, Liepaja, and Vidzeme hospitals. The healthcare business was also involved, as doctors-clinicians shared their practical work experience and completed academic work that met StP standards (SAR p. 818).

All "Medicine 2.0" students must complete a two-week placement in a regional hospital. Every student who completes the two-week regional hospital or outpatient practice placement is eligible for a unique scholarship to motivate them. The scholarship covers transportation and living expenses. Regional medical schools provide students with good housing. In response to changes in placement organization, departments of the Faculty of Medicine (FM).

Numerous discussions with medical care institution representatives and managers were held during the study year. The Faculty of Medicine Dean and Vice-Rector for Health Studies, introduced placement rotation and listened to recommendations. When, how many, and what specialization of students will proceed to placement was crucial for medical treatment institutes. Registration for placement rotations begins in spring, some months before the rotations begin. The Dean's office of the Faculty of Medicine holds multiple sessions with students to clarify placement procedures and current information before registration (SAR p.818).

Timely placement in the 6th year offers many benefits:

1. Students get practical skills in a healthcare system to enhance theoretical understanding.
2. During placement, students evaluate their perception and choice of specialization to make sensible and responsible medical career selections.
3. Students get to know individual firms and demonstrate themselves as future workers, as well as the study programme's "Medicine" strengths and flaws, allowing them to gain employer input and enhance the programme.
4. The COVID-19 pandemic showed that 1,200 RSU students (including 6th-year study programme "Medicine") worked at various health institutions to prevent the national emergency during 17 weeks of placement.
5. Foreign students can fully implement the aforementioned in their home nations (SAR p. 833).

The student is expected to apply his/her professional knowledge and skills gained during studies during the placement rotation. The student aids the medical doctor, the placement rotation

supervisor, with patient follow-up, practical manipulations, medical paperwork, and other tasks. The student integrates into a real medical treatment work process, environment, and team during placement to apply theoretical knowledge. Students study separately under a placement supervisor (certified physician). The student and placement supervisor follow the placement rotation description for the specific profile, which determines the scope of the competencies and manipulations to be performed. Each day, the student completes the placement portfolio, which describes the work done and is assessed by the placement supervisor (SAR p. 831).

The RSU Faculty of Medicine collaborates with medical institutions to identify placement sites and offer 5th-year students application opportunities for the following year using a web-based tool. Condition: Students must spend two weeks in a family doctor's office and two weeks in a medical treatment facility outside Riga. This stay in the region is funded by a 12-euro-per-day scholarship. Medical institutions also attempt to provide students as many friendly residency options as feasible. RSU collects student and supervisor input and assessments for placement and surveys shows the practical worth of StP and the cumulative benefit and capacity to work in a sector gained over six years of education. It shows StP's strengths and the necessity for placement to develop manual and other professional abilities. The survey reveals that 6th-year students see rotation placement as a chance to enhance abilities, learn new competencies, and enhance competencies earned during studies. The placement site and clinical colleague communication in medical treatment institutes greatly affect placement quality. (SAR p. 831.).

Within the study course "Basics of Family Medicine", fifth year students of the Faculty of Medicine undergo a one-week placement in a general practitioners' practice in order to acquire and improve their practical skills, communication skills, and knowledge of the principles of organizing general practitioners' practice, as well as to reinforce the theoretical knowledge acquired in the study course. A total of 145 agreements have been concluded by RSU for the provision of clinical placement, of which 33 are in hospitals and outpatient centers and 112 in a family doctor's practice, depending on the size of each medical treatment institution, providing placement for 17 weeks of clinical placement for all 6th year students of the Faculty of Medicine at the same time, and their number of around 200 each year (SAR p.832).

For 17 weeks, international students participate in the clinical placement year of studies, which involves visiting outpatient and inpatient medical facilities, family doctor practices, and RSU cooperation clinics abroad and Latvia. Around 20% of students (autumn and winter admission) stay in Latvia each semester. Approximately 135 international students enroll each semester. International students can 1) choose a placement location in their own country, 2) attend RSU cooperation clinics overseas, or 3) execute placement in Latvia. RSU collaborates with medical treatment institutions in Latvia and abroad to identify placement sites and offer 5th-year students application opportunities one to two semesters before placement. If they are RSU cooperation institutions, RSU plans placement based on student profiles and institution opportunities. Condition: If a student finds a placement site independently, a 40-euro scholarship is paid for one week. RSU hopes this will encourage students to find future jobs and lessen the effort of university administrative staff to arrange placement. There are 118 foreign clinics/institutions, including RSU cooperation hospitals, in Germany, Austria, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Italy, Israel, Portugal, UK, Spain, Netherlands, Malta, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, United States, New Zealand, Tanzania, South Africa, and India. (SAR p. 832-833).

The RSU collaborates with the Ministry of Health of Latvia to showcase the potential and capacity of 6th-year students in the "Medicine" programme in the healthcare system, particularly in regions with acute shortages of healthcare and medical staff. RSU and the Faculty of Medicine, the major implementer of StP "Medicine", propose a new medical trainee profession standard in Latvia. 6th-year StP "Medicine" students could apply for this position, performing their rotation placement and the head of the medical treatment institution's duties under the supervision of a certified medical practitioner. Students back the proposal, which has predecessors in Austria, Germany, and others

(SAR p. 833).

Even the international students have the opportunity to choose a placement location in Latvia and in their own country, and there are total of 118 foreign clinics/institutions in the following countries, including RSU cooperation hospitals in Germany, Austria, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Italy, Israel, Portugal, United Kingdom, Spain, Netherlands, Malta, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, United States, New Zealand, Tanzania, South Africa, India, from the site visit it was obvious it does not work smoothly regarding these choices. International students have difficulties regarding the language barrier to overcome challenges during the placement in Latvia, whereas there are some differences and challenges they need to overcome in their home countries. This should be improved and taken into account in the future to give international students equal opportunities to obtain knowledge at RSU.

2.2.5. Not applicable.

2.2.6. Students' research paper themes align with RSU's science policy and study process aims. The study programme "Medicine" prioritizes research in oncology, cardiovascular illnesses, children diseases, infectious diseases, psychiatric diseases, trauma, and pharmacy, which have been recognized worldwide and within RSU. These fields are essential for organizing research people, constructing RSU infrastructure, and collaborating with international partners on Latvian and international scientific projects. Researchers at RSU and the study programme establish student research paper subjects that reflect and develop science sector topics, allowing students to contribute to research in both study programme "Medicine" and RSU research. Additionally, each RSU department utilizing the study programme "Medicine" must provide student research paper themes for development. Students' interests in medicine and research differ greatly, thus each department develops research topics in its field, coordinates with the Faculty of Medicine, and offers them to students for research papers. Research papers are written under paper supervisors, examined, and defended to the department lecturers and researchers. Student research is assessed using the Academic Regulations I (10-point system) and reflected in the graduate's diploma. Defending the paper is required for the national degree test. Research paper subjects for second-level professional higher education students in "Medicine" are: "Preoperative fibrinogen effect on bleeding in orthopedic surgery"; "First data from Latvian chronic thromboembolic pulmonary hypertension registry."; "Evaluation of Biological treatment in patient with Juvenile Idiopathic arthritis; Development of the diagnostic algorithm for headache" and many others (Annex 22). The topics of students' final theses are relevant to the field and correspond to the study programme.

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

: Compliance of the second level professional study programme "Medicine" (49721) with the State Education Standard requires that upon completion of a secondary education programme the amount of the study programme implemented is not less than 300 credit points (Cabinet Regulations No 305 of 13 June 2023 "Regulations on National Standard for Professional Higher Education", The Cabinet Regulations No. 716 "Minimum Requirements for the Content of the Compulsory Civil Protection Course and the Content of the Civil Protection Training for Employees"). The study programme is topical, the study courses / modules are interconnected and complementary, meets the programme's objectives and learning outcomes, and meets industry, labor market, and scientific trends. The study programme conforms to national regulations. The study implementation methods are numerous and various. Colloquia, practical work tests, theoretical tests, exams, and cumulative exams are used to evaluate students in the "Medicine" curriculum. Assessments of learning and

provisional outcomes use qualitative and quantitative markers. They contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study courses and the study programme. Student-centered learning and teaching principles are considered. The topics of students' final theses are relevant to the field and correspond to the study programme. Still, there is room for improvement, especially in the content of the study programme and study courses. The new transition to the ECTS credit system could cause some discrepancies that should be taken into account.

Strengths:

1. The Faculty of Medicine, in collaboration with relevant departments, medical treatment institutions, and the Student Union, organized and implemented three placement rotations (surgery, internal diseases, and free elective).
2. University clinics, regional hospitals, outpatient facilities, and family medical offices host placement rotations which offer students vast opportunities for learning.
3. A total of 118 foreign clinics/institutions in the following countries, including RSU cooperation hospitals in Germany, Austria, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Italy, Israel, Portugal, United Kingdom, Spain, Netherlands, Malta, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, United States, New Zealand, Tanzania, South Africa and India.
4. The topics of students' final theses are very relevant to the field and correspond to the study programme, which gives a strong impression on the theoretical and practical skills they obtain.

Weaknesses:

1. Some discrepancies in the transition of credit points have already been noticed in the study programme, and register of course descriptions has to be updated with clear corresponding credit points, contact hours, semesters, and final examinations with the study programme plan in course descriptions, taking into account the transition to the ECTS system in the study process.
2. English studying students don't have equal opportunities for practical activities and internship placements due to language barriers.
3. The study programme does not promote the biopsychosocial approach, personalized and evidence based medicine and does not include topics related to rapid development of science and technology.
4. Workload balance by developing skills in simulated environments and improving real-world placements in outpatient medical treatment institutions is not well developed.
5. The clinical rotation study period should be expanded in collaboration with companies and professional organizations.
6. The network of cooperation partners for the rotation, both nationally and internationally, is not fully utilized.
7. It is necessary to create a plan to adapt programme structure and layout for new study courses, such as Basics of Military Medicine or Digital Medicine, to meet medical science and industrial needs.
8. The methods of scientific work and involvement of students are not utilized enough.
9. The programme is not utilizing enough multidisciplinary collaboration with medical professions representatives, as well as other professionals in clinics, to create an interdisciplinary approach in solving complex problems of the profession.

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1. The infrastructure, informative provision (library resources), financial provision, material and technical fully comply with requirements of the second level professional higher education programme “Medicine” (49721) and demonstrate achievements of programme learning outcomes. The studies take place in appropriate lecture rooms/facilities and classrooms, laboratories, hospital departments and study centers. During studies, free access to study e-resources such as e-books, videos, scientific databases and other world-class e-resources is ensured (Annex No. 23.1, Annex No. 23.2). The study process includes placement in clinical care of patients, internal diseases, surgery, obstetrics and gynecology, complementing theoretical knowledge with practical skills.

Following the site visit observations it is necessary to give praise to some of the excellent resources that RSU students could use during their studying process such as Medical Education Technology Centre (MITC), RSU library, Anatomicum, a list of 118 foreign clinics/institutions in the following countries, including RSU cooperation hospitals in Germany, Austria, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Italy, Israel, Portugal, United Kingdom, Spain, Netherlands, Malta, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, United States, New Zealand, Tanzania, South Africa, India; number of Latvian hospitals involved in clinical placements such as the largest Riga hospitals: Riga East Clinical University Hospital, P. Stradins Clinical University Hospital, Children’s Clinical University Hospital, Hospital of Traumatology and Orthopaedics, Riga Maternity Hospital, 25 departments of Faculty of Medicine.

The Medical Education Technology Centre of RSU is the only simulation center in Latvia and the largest in the Baltic States, with the right infrastructure and equipment in one place to ensure acquisition and improvement of skills, as well as implementation of simulation programmes in various healthcare sectors. The simulation-based medical education approach is implemented at the MITC (information in Latvian, English) in Riga, at Anniņmuižas bulvāris 26a, using multi-level state-of-the-art simulations to improve practical skills in both individual and team scenarios. For the first time in history, a simulated operating unit has been opened in MITC premises that includes a complete simulation of operational infrastructure in a state-of-the-art hospital and where simulation scenarios can be played out by students from many sectors, including students of study programme “Medicine”. Products of the cooperation partner “Exonicus” – 3D virtual reality applications – are gradually being introduced, for example, for the introduction of the Military Medicine course in the study programme “Medicine” (SAR, page 835).

The Latvian Anatomicum stands as a cornerstone of medical education in Latvia, providing a state-of-the-art learning environment for students pursuing studies in the medical faculty. This cutting-edge facility is equipped with advanced anatomical resources, including modern dissection rooms, high-tech laboratories, and interactive learning spaces. Students at the medical faculty have unparalleled opportunities for hands-on experience in human anatomy, allowing them to deepen their understanding of the complexities of the human body. The Latvian Anatomicum fosters an immersive and collaborative learning atmosphere, encouraging students to engage in research, practical exercises, and discussions with experienced faculty members. Moreover, the Anatomicum serves as a hub for interdisciplinary collaboration, facilitating connections between medical students and professionals from various healthcare fields. With its emphasis on innovation and comprehensive education, the Latvian Anatomicum empowers aspiring medical professionals to excel in their studies and prepares them for the challenges of a dynamic and ever-evolving healthcare landscape.

With a network spanning 118 foreign clinics and institutions across a diverse range of countries, including collaboration with RSU cooperative hospitals, the medical faculty offers students an unparalleled global perspective and an extensive panel of opportunities for clinical exposure and experience. This international collaboration offers students the possibility to engage with diverse healthcare systems, practices, and cultures, and benefit from a comprehensive and globally

informed medical education that prepares them for the challenges and complexities of a dynamic healthcare landscape. The collaboration with a wide spectrum of institutions enhances the depth and breadth of medical training, ensuring that students graduate with a well-rounded understanding of medicine on a global scale.

Locally, students have the opportunity to learn in the environment of the most prominent Latvian hospitals. Starting with the fourth semester, classes are held in improved rooms for theoretical and practical classes in the largest Riga hospitals. Some study courses can be completed in leading foreign hospitals at the choice of the students themselves in European Union countries within the Erasmus + programme. Many Latvian students also voluntarily choose to continue their study work in international groups. These partnerships provide medical students with invaluable opportunities for hands-on clinical experience, exposure to a diverse range of medical specialties, and engagement with cutting-edge healthcare practices. The collaboration with these Riga hospitals ensures that students receive comprehensive and locally relevant training, fostering a deep understanding of the healthcare challenges and practices specific to the region.

Within the Faculty of Medicine, students benefit from a multifaceted educational experience facilitated by its 25 diverse departments. These departments collectively form the backbone of the medical education curriculum, offering students a comprehensive and specialized approach to their studies. Covering a broad spectrum of medical disciplines, these departments provide students with the opportunity to delve into fields such as anatomy, physiology, pharmacology, surgery, internal medicine, pediatrics, and more.

All resources (library resources, databases, etc.) are available to students, academic staff and faculty members. This was confirmed in interviews with the programme director, students and faculty. During the evaluation of the study programme, it was confirmed that the programme is fully equipped, with all necessary equipment, modern, technically equipped classrooms and technical support.

2.3.2. Not applicable.

2.3.3. The study programme “Medicine” (49721) is planned to be financed from state budget funds and the funds of individuals and legal entities setting the tuition fee in the Latvian-taught programme in accordance with the state budget funding without social security of EUR 5705, in the English-taught programme - EUR 12500 per year of studies. The tuition fee can be subject to discounts in accordance with internal norms and regulations. The number of students planned to be achieved in the Latvian-taught programme in six years of studies is 1236 students, enrolling 211 students in the first year of studies and planning drop-outs of 1-5 students per year in the following years. The number of students planned to be achieved in the English-taught programme in six years of studies is 2251 students, enrolling 591 students in the first year, planning a drop in the number of students to 511 in the second year of studies, to 307 in the third year of studies, remaining unchanged in the fourth year, reducing to 295 in the fifth year, and to 240 in the sixth year. Such a number of students is optimal to ensure a high-quality study process and to make the study programme cover its implementation, as well as development costs (SAR, page 836).

There are 200 state-funded study places in the Latvian-taught programme. The state funding per budget is set at EUR 6377 per academic year as of 1 September 2023. Fee-paying students are also admitted to the study programme. The minimum number of students at the beginning of the academic year to start the programme would be 200. The programme currently has 1198 students. As the 837 demand for places in the study programme is very high (6.83 applicants per place in the 2023 application period), there is no reason to believe that it would be a problem to recruit the required number of students in the future (SAR, p. 836-837).

In the English-taught programme, due to significant demand, tuition fees are set on the basis of market research. The tuition fee is €12500 per year, while the StP expenditure is €7268. The cost-

effectiveness of the English study programme would be achieved with a lower number of students than the Latvian study programme. According to the SAR, the total number of students in the programme is 2349. The surplus of the study programme's revenue is invested in university development activities (SAR, p. 837).

The average income per student is EUR 5990/year in the Latvian flow, and average cost per student is EUR 5531/year. Funding is distributed as follows: remuneration of academic staff – 50%; department resources – 4%; other direct expenditure – 4%, scholarships – 6%; fixed costs – 6%; overheads – 30% (SAR, p. 837-838).

The average income per student is EUR 11514/year euro in the English flow, and average cost per student is EUR 7268/year. Funding is distributed as follows: remuneration of academic staff – 44%; department resources – 3%; other direct expenditure – 1%, scholarships – 1%; fixed costs – 4%; overheads – 47% (SAR, p. 837-838).

It is evident that the programme has sufficient students to generate sufficient income.

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

The infrastructure, including informative resources such as library materials, financial support, and technical resources, wholly align with the demands of the StP, showcasing tangible accomplishments in meeting programmes learning objectives. It is necessary to give praise to some of the excellent resources that RSU students could use during their studying process such as Medical Education Technology Centre (MTC), RSU library, Anatomicum, a list of 118 foreign clinics/institutions in the following countries, including RSU cooperation hospitals in Germany, Austria, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Italy, Israel, Portugal, United Kingdom, Spain, Netherlands, Malta, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, United States, New Zealand, Tanzania, South Africa, India; number of Latvian hospitals involved in clinical placements such as the largest Riga hospitals: Riga East Clinical University Hospital, P. Stradins Clinical University Hospital, Children's Clinical University Hospital, Hospital of Traumatology and Orthopaedics, Riga Maternity Hospital, 25 departments of Faculty of Medicine.

The allocated funding for the study programme is effectively utilized to guarantee the comprehensive execution of the educational process. Furthermore, the programme maintains an optimal student enrolment size, ensuring its financial viability while fostering the continual growth and enhancement of the study curriculum.

Strengths:

1. Advanced material and technical base for students training at RSU and the clinics. Classes are held in improved rooms for theoretical and practical classes.
2. Students have the possibility of learning in the settlement of the largest Riga hospitals: Riga East Clinical University Hospital, P. Stradins Clinical University Hospital, Children's Clinical University Hospital, Hospital of Traumatology and Orthopaedics, Riga Maternity Hospital and elsewhere.
3. Students have the possibility of learning in the settlement of the Anatomicum.
4. The programme's strength lies in its comprehensive provision of abundant resources and databases from the RSU Library, access to the student portal MyRSU, and utilization of e-studies, ensuring students have a robust support system for their academic endeavors.
5. The simulation-based medical education approach implemented at the Medical Education Technology Centre (MITC), the largest in the Baltic States, with the infrastructure and equipment in one place to ensure acquisition and improvement of skills, as well as implementation of simulation programmes in various healthcare sectors.
6. Collaboration with a list of 118 foreign clinics/institutions in the following countries, including RSU cooperation hospitals in Germany, Austria, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Italy, Israel, Portugal, United

Kingdom, Spain, Netherlands, Malta, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, United States, New Zealand, Tanzania, South Africa, India, 25 departments of Faculty of Medicine.

Weaknesses:

None.

Assessment of the requirement [6]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Advanced material and technical base for student training; plenty of high-quality library resources.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1. The number of academic members of staff is substantial and composed of 33 professors, 38 assoc. professors, 78 docents, 23 lecturers and 16 assistant lecturers. The qualifications of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme comply with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements set forth in the regulatory enactments, as shown in the self-assessment report and supported by Annex 24.7 Analysis of the Composition of the Academic Staff Involved in the Implementation of the Second Level Professional Higher Education Study Programme "Medicine" and Annex 6.2 Biographies of the teaching staff members (in Europass Curriculum Vitae format). The site visit interviews showed the capacity and capability of the staff of achieving the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme across the various systems and medical specialisations required for the successful running of the relevant study courses. There is a transparent mechanism for academic promotions.

The academic work of the study programme "Medicine" is organized in such a way that professors and associate professors are responsible for the preparation and recording of highly qualified lectures and recordings (in video format), the development of new study courses, the monitoring of the quality of existing courses, the performance of methodological work, and the implementation of the principle of "study through research," in addition to a number of other functions that are in accordance with the requirements of the Law on Higher Education Institutions of the Republic of Latvia. This is done in order to ensure that the studies are organized in a manner that is both rational and financially efficient. Concurrently, assistants and invited lecturers are primarily responsible for the implementation of practical seminars, which include courses, the demonstration of clinical cases involving patients, the leadership of laboratory work, and the monitoring of the daily practical progress of the study programme (SAR p. 839).

According to provided information (SAR p.839) 20% of the professors of RSU are visiting professors, reflecting the implementation of the RSU strategy of being an open and international university. For instance, a professor of surgery at Charite, a famous clinic in Germany, has served as the deputy head of the National Examination Board for a number of years. Students of the study programme "Medicine" have also acquired a new study base: in Stade, Lower Saxony, Germany, where seven distinct study courses are read to students of StP "Medicine" by top experts of Elbe hospital (<https://www.krankenhaus.de/elbe-klinikum-stade/>). It is also important to note that such a common strategy of RSU has a substantial and very favorable impact on the quality, international supervision, and development of StP "Medicine," which provides the most contemporary and up-to-

date content (SAR p. 839).

The Faculty of Medicine Council proposes a lecturer assistant position to support practical classes and lab work for a large number of students. This position is intended to attract senior students and biomedical specialists or specialists of other life sciences who can technically and organizationally support highly qualified lecturers of StP "Medicine," provide laboratory support, ensure efficient student flow management, and create conditions of sufficient quality for simultaneous study plans for several groups, especially in basic courses like chemistry, biology, and morphology. This financial-efficient option is being analyzed and will be implemented after a discussion on study quality assurances. Study participants include healthcare professionals. The Faculty of Medicine collaborates with Latvian physicians, introducing infectology students to laboratory medicine at SIA "Centrālā laboratorija" or "E. Gulbja laboratorija" through lectures by specialists. This approach ensures the study aims are met and allows them to be periodically improved, updated, and modernized in the context of an international, modern, scientific vision and changes to StP "Medicine" and some of its courses (SAR p. 839).

The qualification of the teaching staff members who are involved in the implementation of the study programme satisfies the requirements for the implementation of the study programme as well as the requirements that are outlined in the regulatory enactments. Furthermore, it enables the achievement of the goals and learning outcomes of the study programme as well as the study courses that are relevant to the study programme.

2.4.2. To maintain high quality standards in the study programme "Medicine" academic and research domains, the programme aligns with the RSU's quality strategy and personnel policy. Since the last reaccreditation, 193 elected academic staff members were promoted, 5% more than before. Established scientific activity activation standards, promoted doctorate thesis production and defense, increased research project participation, and mobility through internal RSU research funding. All these initiatives have allowed several academic professionals to engage in academic elections and win seats. This technique improves academic work, reduces staff turnover, and attracts young and prospective workers to study. 82% of elected academic personnel hold doctorates, while 54% of StP "Medicine" staff are LSC experts (SAR p. 840, Annex 24.7.).

The RSU successfully increased the number of qualified academic staff contributing to StP implementation, ensuring its quality, sustainability, international visibility, and prestige. StP "Medicine" is esteemed. Contests for Latvian and English study programmes demonstrate this. The majority of the 193 elected academic staff are assistant professors (78), who can provide high-quality academic work and future staff development prospects at Faculty of Medicine departments (SAR p. 840, Annex 24.7.).

To effectively manage financial resources for StP staff remuneration, it is crucial to structure academic work and attract qualified industry lecturers to departments. Assistants and lecturers, acting staff in these positions, and invited lecturers help implement the study process by implementing practical classes, supporting student learning of lecturer, associate professor, and professor-developed study courses, assisting in the accurate fulfillment of students' plans, and performing other basic academic tasks. Approximately 105 lecturers are invited to the Faculty of Medicine, most of whom are healthcare industry representatives who can advise course heads and programme coordinators on industry-related improvements. The Faculty of Medicine explores staff restructuring and a lecturer assistant job. Such an individual would provide technological support during practical classes like lab work, maintain academic integrity during exams, organize student flows in study spaces, etc. Having such an employee would free up lecturers' time to teach, interact with students, and explain study topics (SAR p. 841, Annex 24.7.).

The introduction of international visiting teaching staff of 20%, can greatly improve and advise on continuing improvement of StP content. Visiting lecturers improve the research study programme, make it international, competitive, intelligible, and demanded by international students, lecturers,

and researchers. All academic personnel should attend Centre for Educational Growth (PIC) qualifying courses at least once a year to develop their teaching skills. Total of 303 lecturers took CEG qualifications in 2017–2022. This develops teaching skills in StP “Medicine” professors at all levels. These courses have improved teaching skills by introducing new methods, information technology, and technical chances (SAR p. 841, Annex 24.7.).

RSU’s Faculty of Medicine shows that there is a distribution of Professors (33), Associate Professors (38), Assistant Professors (78), Lecturers (23) and Acting Lecturers (16) – suggestive of a reasonable blend of experienced academicians with those in the earlier stages of the academic career. There is also clear identification of the Lead Researchers (5). 82% of academic members of staff hold a doctoral degree. This was shown during the site visit interviews, but also well supported by documentation in particular Annex 24.7 Analysis of the Composition of the Academic Staff Involved in the Implementation of the Second Level Professional Higher Education Study Programme “Medicine”. During the site visit, the Faculty of Medicine demonstrated a well-prepared management and leadership team that is capable of workforce planning in that it ensures that the composition of the teaching staff is aligned to the requirements to ensure consistent quality of the implementation of the study programme and the compliance of the study programme with the requirements specified in regulatory enactments. In order to ensure that changes in the composition of the teaching staff do not have a negative impact on the quality of the implementation of the study programme and the degree to which the study programme complies with the requirements specified in regulatory enactments, the RSU takes measures on purpose.

2.4.3. Not applicable,

2.4.4. Annex 6.4 Results of the scientific activity of the academic staff of RSU Faculty of Medicine and a list of publications by Journal Impact Factor (IF) shows a list of 100 publications by RSU’s academic staff in the last six years. Some of the publications are in very high impact factor journals such as The Lancet and The New England Journal of Medicine. This confirms publications in peer-reviewed editions, including international editions. The list of keywords shows that many topics have been researched, which on the one hand reflects a growing interest in research in diverse areas, but on the other hand should alert the researchers to team up and move towards more focused areas that would identify the faculty as a centre of excellence in very specific areas. Most of the academic members of staff in the study programme “Medicine” are specialists with the highest professional expertise and involved in the implementation of the programme, amongst whom are full professors, associate professors, assistant professors, also lecturers, assistants. In addition, according to the self-assessment report, there are a number of practicing professors who are also full members and correspondent members of the Latvian Academy of Sciences.

Over the course of the past six years, every member of the academic staff has contributed to publications that have been subjected to peer review. These publications have included international editions, as required by the Law on Higher Education Institutions. If the teaching staff was involved later on, within the six year framework, the number of publications should be indicated in proportion to the period worked.

2.4.5. Faculty of Medicine department heads and teaching personnel collaborate to coordinate and implement the study programme "Medicine" study content. This is organized on multiple levels.

1. Collaboration among teaching staff by meeting and discussing topics to avoid course repetition. Students are crucial to this process. They highlight similar information in different study courses in questionnaires or orally.

2. Faculty department heads meet to harmonize content, such as in Microbiology and Infectious Diseases, where the Departments of Obstetrics and Family Medicine coordinate family planning, disease prevention, and other topics.

3. Posting qualitative course descriptions in an e-learning environment that is accessible to department leaders to prevent repetition and create a consistent programme material.
4. Cross-departmental teaching observation.
5. The Council of the Faculty of Medicine considers and approves the "Medicine" study programme, course layout, and sequence with student participation.
6. The StP director maps to highlight common study goals, cooperative course cooperation, and other program structure issues.
7. In meetings with senior year students of all years of study, Dean of Medicine colleagues highlight students' comments on current topics, including course substance and uniformity.
8. Course leaders are encouraged to examine student opinions and provide feedback on student surveys, which mainly focus on study material. Interdisciplinary cooperation between departments has been formed to implement study courses, such as good cooperation between the three RSU structural units in the 5th year in the course "Pneumonology". The Department of Internal Diseases (main noologies), Department of Pathology (pathology details), and Medical Education Technology Centre (clinical simulations and model manipulations) implement this course. A comparable strategy will be developed. The study course has 3415 students and 448 lecturers. Student-teacher ratio is 7:6.

Interviews with management and leadership, academic members, graduates and students shows that the heads of departments and teaching staff of the Faculty of Medicine cooperate for coordination and implementation of study content and are actively involved in the implementation of study programme "Medicine". This is organized on several levels. Regular meetings are held discussing details of content so as to prevent repetition between different study courses. Students are also invited to give feedback to faculty by means of questionnaires or verbally/ directly, to draw attention to similar content in different study courses. A mechanism for mutual cooperation of the teaching staff in the implementation of the study programme has been established, it ensures the achievement of the aims of the study programme and the interconnection of study courses within the study programme.

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

The qualification of the teaching staff members who are involved in the implementation of the study programme satisfies the requirements for the implementation of the study programme as well as the requirements that are outlined in the regulatory enactments. Furthermore, it enables the achievement of the goals and learning outcomes of the study programme as well as the study courses that are relevant to the study programme. In order to ensure that changes in the composition of the teaching staff do not have a negative impact on the quality of the implementation of the study programme and the degree to which the study programme complies with the requirements specified in regulatory enactments, the RSU takes measures on purpose. Over the course of the past six years, every single member of the academic staff has contributed to publications that have been subjected to peer review. These publications have included international editions, as required by the Law on Higher Education Institutions. A mechanism for mutual cooperation of the teaching staff in the implementation of the study programme has been established; it ensures the achievement of the aims of the study programme and the interconnection of study courses within the study programme.

Strengths:

- 1) RSU-Faculty of Medicine's capacity and capabilities are in place to successfully run courses in medicine, as 82% of elected academic personnel hold doctorates, while 54% of StP "Medicine" staff are LSC experts.
- 2) 20% of the teaching staff are visiting lecturers that provide an international perspective to the

programme.

3) There is sufficient expertise across specialties to be able to cover all the systems and study units in the programme. Specialists with the highest professional expertise are involved in the implementation of the study programme.

4) Many of the academic members of staff are also practicing and correspondent members of the Latvian Academy of Sciences.

5) Research carried out by teaching staff is increasing over the years with publications in high impact factor journals.

Weaknesses:

1) Many topics have been researched, and therefore, there is a lack of focus by researchers to establish themselves in very specific areas.

Assessment of the requirement [7]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The qualifications of academic staff as officially documented in the following annexes are adequate and as expected in Europe. They fully comply with the requirements of higher educational institutions.

24.7_An_x_Analysis_Academic_staff_Medicine.pdf

6.2_An_x_Biographies_teaching_staff_2LPSP_Medicine_EN_1873pages.pdf

6.4_An_x_Ac_staff_publications_IF factor_Facult_Medicine.pdf

2.5. Assessment of the Compliance

Requirements

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Annex - 17.1_An_x_National_educ_standard_Medicine (1).pdf confirms that the study programme complies with State Education Standard corresponding to Cabinet Regulations No 305 of 13 June 2023 "Regulations on National Standard for Professional Higher Education"

<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/342818-noteikumi-par-valsts-profionalas-augstakas-izglitiba-standartu>.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The study programme complies with the Professional Standard. Annex

18.2_pielik_Prof_Standarta_Kartejums_Medicina_tika_A_kursi_eng.pdf specifies that the Standard was approved at the meeting of the Tripartite Cooperation Sub-Council of Vocational Education and Employment on 16 October 2019, Minutes No 7 Available online:

<https://registri.visc.gov.lv/profizglitiba/dokumenti/standarti/2017/PS-116.pdf>

- 3 3 - The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in all languages in which the study programme is implemented, and they comply with the requirements set forth in Section 561 , Paragraph two and Section 562 , Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The study course descriptions are prepared in English and Latvian that can be accessed under annexes - 20_Anx_Study_course_description_Medicine.pdf; 20_pielik_Kursu_apr_Medicina.pdf; 19_Anx_Study_plan_StP_Medicine.pdf; 19_pielik_Planojums_2023.pdf Descriptions comply with regulations set forth in Law on Higher Education Institutions. The study materials can be accessed and are prepared in both implemented languages.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The provided Diploma sample - 24.1_Diploms_Medicina_eng.pdf complies with the procedure by which state-recognised documents of higher education are issued according to Cabinet Regulation No. 202 "Kārtība, kādā izsniedz valsts atzītus augstāko izglītību apliecinošus dokumentus".

- 5 5 - The academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements set forth in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 6 6 - Academic study programmes provided for less than 250 full-time students may be implemented and less than five professors and associated professors of the higher education institution may be involved in the implementation of the mandatory and limited elective part of these study programmes provided that the relevant opinion of the Council for Higher Education has been received in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 7 7 - At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of an academic doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field of science. At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a professional doctoral study programme in arts (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 8 8 - The teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme are proficient in the official language in accordance with the regulations on the level of the official language knowledge and the procedures for testing official language proficiency for performing professional duties and office duties.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Based on the acquired information onsite as well as relevant annexes: 24.4_AnxCertification_Regarding_Latvian_Language_of_the_Academic_Staff.pdf and 6.2_AnxCV_ENG_visas_programmas.7z, it can be evaluated that the language proficiency of teaching staff is compliant with Cabinet Regulation. Nr. 733 "Regulations Regarding the Extent of the Knowledge of the Official Language, the Procedures for

Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language and the State Fee for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language".

- 9 9 - The teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language, if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

As one of the implementing languages of this programme is English, it is required for the teaching staff to have at least B2 level English. The attached documents:

6.2_AnxCV_ENG_visas_programmas.7z and

24.5_AnxCertification_Regarding_the_English_Language_Knowledge.pdf confirm the English language skills of the teaching staff members. Their skills were also assessed during onsite visits and the expert group confirms that they are at least on B2 level.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Sample of attached study agreement 24.8_AnxCStudy contract sample_Health Care study direction.pdf complies with Cabinet Regulation. Nr. 70 "Studiju līgumā obligāti ietveramie noteikumi".

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

RSU has provided confirmation that students will be provided with opportunities to continue their education in another higher education institution if the implementation of the study programme is terminated. The agreements are specified in the annexes under "24.2_pielik_Apliecinajumi_par_parnemsanu_eng.7z" and agreement signed 3-L-11-62-2023 RSU Medicina - LU Arstnieciba. It is specified that in case of discontinuation of this study programme, students can continue their studies at University of Latvia second level professional higher education programme "Medicine".

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

RSU has provided confirmation that students are guaranteed compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the study programme's license is revoked. It is ensured based on the Section 55(8) of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education and Cabinet of Ministers No 795 of 11 December 2018 "Regulations on Licensing of study programmes", Paragraph 13.4. The relevant document can be found under Annexes - 24.3_AnxCertification_of_Compensation_of_Losses_to_Students.pdf.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Assessment of the requirement [8]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Study programme fully complies with regulatory enactments.

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

Compliance of the second level professional study programme "Medicine" with the National Education Standard requires that upon completion of a secondary education programme the amount of the study programme implemented is not less than 240 CP/ 300 ECTS credit points (Cabinet Regulations No 305 of 13 June 2023 "Regulations on National Standard for Professional Higher Education", The Cabinet Regulations No. 716 "Minimum Requirements for the Content of the Compulsory Civil Protection Course and the Content of the Civil Protection Training for Employees"). The study programme is topical, the study courses / modules are interconnected and complementary, meets the programme's objectives and learning outcomes, and meets industry, labor market, and scientific trends. The study programme conforms to national regulations and professional qualification standards. The study implementation methods are numerous and various. Colloquia, practical work tests, theoretical tests, exams, and cumulative exams are used to evaluate students in the "Medicine" curriculum. Assessments of learning and provisional outcomes use qualitative and quantitative markers. They contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study courses and the study programme. Student-centered learning and teaching principles are considered. The topics of students' final theses are relevant to the field and correspond to the study programme. Still, there is room for improvement, especially in the content of the study programme and study courses. The new transition to the ECTS credit system could cause some discrepancies that should be taken into account. The infrastructure, including informative resources such as library materials, financial support, and technical resources, wholly align with the demands of the study programme, showcasing tangible accomplishments in meeting programme learning objectives. It is necessary to give praise to some of the excellent resources that RSU students could use during their studying process such as Medical Education Technology Centre (MITC), RSU library, Anatomicum, a list of 118 foreign clinics/institutions in the following countries, including RSU cooperation hospitals in Germany, Austria, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Italy, Israel, Portugal, United Kingdom, Spain, Netherlands, Malta, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, United States, New Zealand, Tanzania, South Africa, India; number of Latvian hospitals involved in clinical placements such as the largest Riga hospitals: Riga East Clinical University Hospital, P. Stradins Clinical University Hospital, Children's Clinical University Hospital, Hospital of Traumatology and Orthopaedics, Riga Maternity Hospital, 25 departments of Faculty of Medicine. The allocated funding for the study programme is effectively utilized to guarantee the comprehensive execution of the educational process. Furthermore, the programme maintains an optimal student enrolment size, ensuring its financial viability while fostering the continual growth and enhancement of the study curriculum. The qualification of the teaching staff members who are involved in the implementation

of the study programme satisfies the requirements for the implementation of the study programme as well as the requirements that are outlined in the regulatory enactments. Furthermore, it enables the achievement of the goals and learning outcomes of the study programme as well as the study courses that are relevant to the study programme. In order to ensure that changes in the composition of the teaching staff do not have a negative impact on the quality of the implementation of the study programme and the degree to which the study programme complies with the requirements specified in regulatory enactments, the RSU takes measures on purpose. Over the course of the past six years, every single member of the academic staff has contributed to publications that have been subjected to peer review. These publications have included international editions, as required by the Law on Higher Education Institutions. A mechanism for mutual cooperation of the teaching staff in the implementation of the study programme has been established; it ensures the achievement of the aims of the study programme and the interconnection of study courses within the study programme. All of the indicators of the study programme are in compliance with the existing preconditions of the implementation of the study programme. The study programme "Medicine" complies with the study field indicators, conditions and criteria. In the opinion of the experts, the title, code, degree to be obtained of the study programme, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation as well as the implementation languages, are reasonable and justified. The study programme is implemented in Latvian and English. There is a high demand for the programme, especially from international students. The goals, objectives, learning outcomes are in line and in compliance.

Despite some identified weaknesses, such as discrepancies in credit point transitions and language barriers for English-speaking students, the program's strengths outweigh these challenges. By addressing these weaknesses through targeted improvements, such as clarifying credit point transitions and offering language support for practical activities, the program can further enhance its quality and effectiveness. Overall, the "Medicine" study programme remains a reputable and valuable educational pathway for aspiring healthcare professionals and a strong educational offering with several notable strengths makes this programme good.

Strengths:

1. Diverse placement rotations in collaboration with reputable institutions locally and internationally.
2. Relevant final thesis topics reflecting strong theoretical and practical skills.
3. State-of-the-art facilities for both theoretical and practical classes.
4. Extensive learning opportunities at major Riga hospitals and the Anatomicum.
5. Access to comprehensive resources including libraries, databases, and online portals.
6. Leading simulation-based medical education center in the Baltic States.
7. Highly qualified academic personnel with doctorates and LSC expertise.
8. Strong demand for the program from both local and international students.
9. High employment rates post-graduation.

Weaknesses:

1. Discrepancies in credit point transitions and course descriptions need clarification.
2. Language barriers hinder practical activities for English-speaking students.
3. Need for better promotion of modern medical approaches and inclusion of emerging topics.
4. Workload balance between simulated and real-world placements requires improvement.
5. Expansion of clinical rotation periods and utilization of cooperation networks is needed.
6. Insufficient utilization of scientific methods and student involvement.
7. Lack of multidisciplinary collaboration in problem-solving.
8. Lack of focus in research areas leading to dispersed efforts.
9. Inability of international students to continue development in Residency due to language barrier.

Evaluation of the study programme "Medicine"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Medicine"

Short-term recommendations

Revise and update the study programme, along with the register of course descriptions, to include clear corresponding credit points, contact hours, semesters, and final examination details aligned with the study programme plan, while considering the transition to the ECTS system in the study process, with the goal of preventing discrepancies, and ensure implementation until complete transition to ECTS CP.

Long-term recommendations

Broaden the opportunities for English-speaking students to engage in practical activities and secure internship placements, addressing challenges associated with language barriers, with the objective of enhancing the overall learning experience, and implementing these expanded opportunities within the next assessment period.

Enhance the study programme to more effectively promote the biopsychosocial approach, personalized and evidence-based medicine, and incorporate topics relevant to the rapid development of science and technology, aligning with contemporary advancements, and implement these improvements within the next assessment period to ensure a comprehensive and up-to-date curriculum.

Enhance workload balance for students by refining skills development in simulated environments, and optimizing real-world placements in outpatient medical treatment institutions, with the aim of providing a more effective and well-rounded learning experience, and implementing these improvements within the next assessment period.

Extend the clinical rotation study period through collaborative efforts with companies and professional organizations, fostering a more comprehensive and practical learning experience, with aim to implement this expansion within the next assessment period.

Enhance the network of cooperation partners for rotations, both nationally and internationally, to broaden opportunities for diverse and enriching experiences, and implement improvements within the next assessment period to strengthen collaboration and provide a more robust learning environment.

Develop a comprehensive plan to adapt the programme structure and layout for new study courses, including Basics of Military Medicine or Digital Medicine, with a focus on aligning with current medical science and industrial needs, to ensure relevance and responsiveness to evolving educational and professional demands, within the next assessment period.

Enhance the utilization of scientific work methods and increase student involvement within the program. Recommend initiatives that promote active participation in research activities and incorporate varied scientific methodologies, implementing these changes within the next assessment period.

Enhance multidisciplinary collaboration within the programme, fostering partnerships with medical professionals and representatives from various disciplines in clinics. Recommend initiatives that promote interdisciplinary approaches to solving complex problems within the profession, implementing these changes within the next assessment period.

Address the challenge of international Medicine students leaving after their studies due to language barriers in placement, acknowledging the national-level regulations, with the goal of finding feasible solutions to allow international students the opportunity to stay in Latvia if they wish to pursue and continue their residency, and aim to implement these recommendations within next assessment period.

Encourage teaching staff to develop research interests within collaborative teams, fostering identification with focused areas of research with aim to be recognized at the international academic level, and implement a structured plan/activities to facilitate this collaborative research development within the next assessment period.

II - "Dentistry" ASSESSMENT

II - "Dentistry" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1. The aim of the Second level Professional higher education programme (PHESP) "Dentistry" is to train qualified dentists with sufficient knowledge and practical skills to practice in general dentistry - to treat patients with diseases of oral cavity and teeth and to take practical and public education measures to prevent the aforementioned diseases (SAR, p. 587). The PHESP "Dentistry" complies with the aim of the study field "Health Care" to provide excellent, research-based and inclusive education of health care professionals to promote sustainable development of public health and well-being, realizing everyone's potential throughout life (SAR, p. 22). The inclusion of the PHESP "Dentistry" in the study field "Health Care" is justified and follows from the aim of the given study programme, the learning outcomes to be achieved, the content of the programme and the degree and qualification to be awarded.

2.1.2. The second level PHESP "Dentistry" is a full-time study programme with the implementation duration of 5 years and the amount of 200 CP (Latvian credits)/300 ECTS. The languages of instruction - Latvian and English. The admission requirements of the PHESP "Dentistry" - secondary education (for studies in Latvian) and secondary education and a minimum B2 level of proficiency in English (for studies in English). The qualification to be obtained - Degree of Doctor of Dental Surgery. The code of the study programme according to the classification of Latvian education - 49724, where the first part of the code 49 indicates that the type of the PHESP "Dentistry" is a professional higher education programme (Level 5 professional qualification) and the digits of the second part of the code 724 indicate that the thematic area of education is Health Care, but the group of educational programmes is Dentistry.

The learning outcomes of the PHESP "Dentistry" (results of the study programme) correspond to Level 7 of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (LQF), which is described in the Cabinet Regulations No. 322 "Regulations on the Classification of Education in Latvia" (June 13, 2017). The aim of PHESP "Dentistry" is coordinated with the objectives and the learning outcomes of the study programme.

The name, code, degree to be obtained (in the Latvian language), aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements of the PHESP "Dentistry" are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation, as well as the languages of implementation are

reasonable and justified. In 2020, the study programme “Dentistry” participated in the European Commission’s DG GROW project, “Mapping and assessment of developments for sectoral professions under Directive 2005/36/EC: Section 1 – Profession of dentist” (SAR, p. 593). The study programme “Dentistry” is harmonized with the dentist’s occupational standard, the Law the Regulated Professions and the Recognition of Professional Qualifications, the Cabinet Regulation No. 68 Minimum Requirements of Educational Programmes for the Acquisition of the Professional Qualification of Dentist, Pharmacist, Nurse and Midwife and Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (of September 7, 2005) on the recognition of professional qualifications. The study programme Dentistry complies with EU directives and national legislation on regulated specialities.

2.1.3. During the accreditation period some changes have been made to the parameters of the second level PHESP “Dentistry”: the learning outcomes have been specified in accordance with the aim and objectives of the study programme, and Latvian qualifications framework, as well as AIKA’s instructions on the number of learning outcomes; changes have been made to the programme in respect of the compliance of the study programme with the occupational standard, by changing the names and specifying the content of some study courses. For instance, a new study course Integrated Placement in Dentistry (9 ECTS) has been developed by combining two study courses, namely, Integrated Dentistry and Paediatric Dentistry, and is implemented in a real clinical setting outside the RSU clinical base units (SAR, p. 592).

There is a change made in the translation of the qualification in English, changing from a Degree of Dentist to Degree of Doctor of Dental Surgery. “Degree of Dentist” and “Doctor of Dental Surgery” are equivalent translations. “Doctor of Dental Surgery” indicates a specific level of education obtained. According to the European Parliament and Council Directive 2001/19/EC in English-speaking countries (United Kingdom - Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS or B. Ch. D.), Ireland - Bachelor of Dental Surgery) and France - Diplôme d'Etat de docteur en chirurgie dentaire DDS) is understood to mean a dentist, not a hygienist or dental therapist, which is a lower level of education. Taking into account the fact that all RSU resident sub programmes in the dentistry field (oral and maxillofacial surgeon, dental prosthesis, periodontist, orthodontist, endodontist, paediatric dentist) as an admission requirement have a “degree of a doctor of dental surgery” we can conclude that RSU's approach is acceptable.

The corrections made to the parameters of the study programme within the assessment of the study field are justified and are to be supported.

2.1.4. It was very clear during the site visit of facilities and premises that RSU has invested heavily over the years in “Dentistry”. The study programme “Dentistry” is very popular and attracts substantial competition for places being consistently high at 6-7 applicants per place, with 2022 attracting 10 candidates per state-funded study place (SAR, p. 594). The share of the state budget in the study programme’s total financing is 15%, with 85% being earned by the university. Indeed, the study programme is financially viable and has stable income.

According to SAR (p.594) and confirmed by interviews during the site visit with different stakeholders, RSU Faculty of Dentistry is the only educational institution in Latvia that educates dental specialists in Latvian. This stimulates cooperation with the regions, such that students are financed by municipalities, and later continue their careers in the regions after graduating from the programme. Furthermore, the study programme “Dentistry” is also conducted in English and attracts a substantial number of international students who make up 40% of the dentistry student complement.

Employability following completion of the study programme is very high both for Latvian as well as for international students – with recent graduate surveys demonstrating more than 90% employment. With an ageing demography for dentists [44% of 1646 dentists in Latvia being 55 years or older (SAR, p. 594)] is suggestive of a current and future need for specialists in this profession.

In addition, remote regions and rural areas suffer from a shortage of dental specialists more than urban areas. During the site visit interviews with faculty and employers, as well as stated in SAR (p. 594) that according to the Register of Medical Practitioners, there is also a shortage of specialists in the dental subspecialties – orthodontists, pediatric dentists, periodontists, endodontists and prosthodontists. This puts more pressure on the health system on the need to encourage capable, motivated dental professionals to move on to postgraduate training programmes and to attract new lecturers to the study process to ensure sustainability of the Dentistry study programme. Employers are actively involved in the Faculty Council, thereby contributing to the discussion of having the study programme maintaining a high quality.

2.1.5. Not applicable.

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

The inclusion of the second level PHESP “Dentistry” in the study field “Health Care” is justified and follows from the aim of the given study programme, the learning outcomes to be achieved, the content of the programme and the degree and qualification to be awarded.

The name, code, degree to be obtained (in the Latvian language), aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements of the second level PHESP Dentistry are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation, as well as the languages of implementation are reasonable and justified.

The corrections made to the parameters of the 2nd level PHESP “Dentistry” within the assessment of the study field are justified and are to be supported.

Strengths:

1. It is well recognised that RSU’s investment in the field of dentistry has resulted in successful positioning of the University as a center of excellence both in Latvia and internationally.

The faculty attracts a substantial number of international students, thereby confirming the study programme’s good reputation in Latvia and abroad.

Weaknesses:

- None

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1. The learning outcomes of the study programme “Dentistry” are in line with the 7th level of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (LQF), corresponding to the descriptions of the levels of the European Qualification framework (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.1., Annex 18.1, Table 1). The mapping results (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.1., Annex 18.1, Table 2) demonstrate the evident links between the learning outcomes of the study programme and the study courses. The content of the study courses is derived from the aims and learning outcomes of the study course, which in turn are derived from the purpose and outcomes of the programme. The plan for full time studies in the second level professional study programme Dentistry (SAR, Part II, Annex 19) is constructed in a logical way, starting from the fundamental sciences in the first semester, such as Human Molecular Biology, General Medical Chemistry, etc., these subjects are followed by more specific and relevant subjects such as Dental Anatomy in the second semester and even more speciality-related in later semester, for example, Oral and Maxillofacial Surgical Anatomy and Operations in fourth semester. There are also the subjects Civil and Environmental Protection, First Aid in the plan, which are in line with the general requirements for all study programmes. The programme includes mandatory (A part), limited elective (B part) study courses, however, there are no elective (C part) courses, as it is required according to Law on Higher Education Institutions - Section 55, part 1, point 2 support c. The study programme “Dentistry” is fully compliant with the industry-specific regulatory framework

(SAR, Part II, Annex 17.2), it complies with the Minimum requirements of Educational Programmes for the Acquisition of the Professional Qualification of Dentist, Pharmacist, Nurse and Midwife (Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 68), Regulations on the Therapeutic Expertise of Medical Personnel and Students Acquiring the First-Or-Second-Level Professional Higher Medical Education and the Extent of their Theoretical and Practical Knowledge (Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 268), Directive 2001/19/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2001, Law On the Regulated Professions and the Recognition of Professional Qualifications Medical Treatment Law. The study plan is in line with the scientific trends, it reflects the most relevant research areas in Dentistry, such as focusing on Public Health Care in Dentistry, or Integrated Dentistry. The study programme "Dentistry" is fully compliant with the general requirements for education of dental practitioners, and professional standard of Dentistry. Study course descriptions are clear, however, the hours distribution for the students' independent work is not reflected in the descriptions, only contact hours are described. Literature sources in some of the descriptions, could be updated (there are some published in 2015) (SAR, Part II, Annex 20.1). Procedure of „Study Placement in Therapeutic Dentistry“, study programme Dentistry (approved at the RSU Faculty of Dentistry Council meeting 14 February 2015) is informative and useful for the students, as well as for the receiving organization.

Students during the on-site visit mentioned they knew about the possibility to use Erasmus+ mobility, but they could not use this possibility due to the high workload. It seemed they felt unsure if they could get the same study quality while studying in another institution of higher education. On the other hand there might be some doubts about the recognition of the study results. In the opinion of an expert panel, the administration of the faculty should make more efforts in finding the Erasmus+ partners which have a very similar study programme or/and increase the flexibility in recognition of the study results, in order to encourage the students to use the Erasmus+ possibilities. There were also some teachers which mentioned there was some kind of workload disbalance. The expert panel agrees there should be better workload planning in the Faculty. There should be more efforts made to help teachers in balancing their workload, keeping in mind their additional workload in the dental clinics as practitioners. Strengths named by the students were that lecturers are offering the guidance, there is a constant contact with the teachers. Students also named some weaknesses or challenges, which in the opinion of the experts are important and should be addressed by the implementers of the study programme. Students during on-site visit found it challenging to change from preclinical to clinical practice. The expert panel agrees there should be some preparation organized during the transition time, for example, there could be a meeting with the students organized and all the important questions discussed. Communication in Latvian language was named as one of the greatest challenges for the foreign students. The expert panel suggests to strengthen the students' competence in Latvian language by organizing additional training sessions or encourage students' to participate more actively in the non-formal activities, which are in Latvian language, to increase their ability to communicate in Latvian language when it is necessary in the study process, for example, with the patients. First year, second year and fifth year students said there was a very high intensity of the learning, great amount of assessments and much information to study. The expert panel agrees there is a concern that the students workload is really disbalanced, it can be also confirmed by the fact that students are avoiding to use Erasmus+ possibilities, that is why the workload should be re-assessed.

2.2.2. The degree of a doctor of dental surgery is awarded on the basis of the results of the student's Scientific Research Paper and successful completion of the State Examination. Students are choosing their own topic depending on their scientific interests (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.2.). Students can choose their own topics for their scientific research work – thus stimulating their interest in the scientific field – or choose from the topics offered. Students may take the State examination only after successfully defending the Scientific Research Paper. The State examination consists of several parts – an accumulated practical part, a theoretical written part and a clinical

case analysis, both written and oral. Clinical case analysis includes the development of a comprehensive treatment plan. Intermediate assessment of the competence level is implemented in the pre-clinical level, and then in the clinical level as the final (State) examination, it was confirmed during the meeting with administrative staff of the study programme. Teachers are involving the students in the scientific activity in an interdisciplinary manner, it was confirmed by the students during the on-site visit.

2.2.3. In the SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.3. there is detailed information provided about the study implementation methods and their input to achieving the learning outcomes of the study programme "Dentistry". It is logical that in the pre-clinical phase of training some specific methods, such as manipulations on models and virtual simulations, are used, aiming to achieve the required skills with the individually defined number of repetitions. Virtual simulators are the most effective way to apply a student-centered approach, as they allow individuals to adapt the workload, the degree of difficulty and to let the student take responsibility for their own work, to oversee the formation and development of their personal professional skills. In the clinical phase role playing method is applied (one student acts as a doctor and one as an assistant), in the student groups of 8 persons. As far as the aim of the study programme is to train the dentist to be able to work independently, all methods enabling students to take responsibility for their actions, are helpful in achieving the aim and learning outcomes. However, the classes are supervised by lecturers. The teaching content is supported by the digital data processing with the use of intraoral scanners, digital planning and design. The content of examination is being updated regularly, self-assessment methods are also used in the study process. Updating the study courses is continuous in clinical courses, many of which use a clinical case as an examination, which includes both medical and dental information. State examination cases are updated completely every year. At the end of the study programme - at the end of the 10th semester, students take the State Examination to evaluate their theoretical knowledge and practical skills. The evaluation of the State Examination performed by the administrative staff, as well as representatives from the Board of the Latvian Dental Association and employers' institutions. The Chair of the State Examination Board is an expert in the field who has not been involved in the study process, so the objectivity is achieved.

Example of the response to the students' feedback - there was no understandable General pathology course, it was suggested by the students to make some corrections, and the course was corrected.

2.2.4. The internship takes place in the student clinics of RSU Institute of Stomatology under the supervision of experienced specialists (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.4.). The external internship is provided in the amount of 6 ECTS in the summer between the 4th and 5th year as a B study course Study Placement in Therapeutic Dentistry (ZTMVK_028) and in the amount of 6 CP / 9 ECTS during the 10th semester as an A study course Integrated Placement in Dentistry (ZTMVK_055).

The internship opportunities are quite wide and cooperation has been established with a number of internship providers both in Latvia and abroad, for example, Dalarna province patient fund in Sweden; Liepāja and Daugavpils municipal outpatient clinic; many private practices.

Employers have stated they accepted the students for internships, and the feedback was really good, and some part, about 20 percent has stayed in the clinic. Of course, the practical skills are not as good as theoretical knowledge. Diagnostic skills are really good, students are independent, they have a wider profile of knowledge. New graduates are demonstrating some new technology-based knowledge. The employers believe the graduates are up-to-date with the newest information. The younger generation is more interested in learning from the literature, the older one is learning from the mistakes, according to the employer's opinion. The employers appreciate the preparedness of the graduates for the digital solutions. The recommendation provided by the employers - to teach more clinic management skills and to work more with children. Good practice examples were provided by the administration of Dentistry and Dental Hygiene study programmes to illustrate the collaboration between two specialties, Dentistry and Dental Hygiene. Dental hygienists are

providing educational and motivational interviewing practices in periodontology, orthodontic clinical training of Dentistry, following the newest requirement in Dental Hygiene and Dentistry practice. Students are having some outside internships in Dentistry, and there is some positive feedback given from the outside units.

2.2.5. Not applicable

2.2.6. The students' final thesis topics are adapted to the current scientific innovations of the departments of the Faculty of Dentistry and the scientific projects in which the departments are involved (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.6.). Students can choose the topic of their paper. Students participate in research related to osteoporosis in the jaw area, as well as in the use of virtual simulators in dental education. Students also take part in projects involving 3D examinations of the maxillofacial region. The topics are relevant to the Dentistry area and the study programme. For example, the final theses Bipphosphate osteonecrosis in jaw bones, Dental implants in the elderly population, The influence of nutrition on the development of periodontal diseases in overweight patients – a systematic literature review reflect the diversity of the thematics and compliance with the learning outcomes of the study programme. Each student's Scientific Research Paper is evaluated by a reviewer appointed by each department. After evaluating the reviewer's opinion and the student's presentation, the final assessment of the Scientific Research Paper is prepared.

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

The mapping results demonstrate the evident links between the learning outcomes of the study programme and study courses. The content of the study courses is derived from the aims and learning outcomes of the study course, which in turn are derived from the purpose and outcomes of the programme. Wide variety of the study methods are being applied in the study process of „Dentistry“, different ones depending on the learning phase – preclinical or clinical. Digital instruments used are adding value to the teaching quality and achieving learning outcomes. As far as the aim of the study programme is to train the dentist to be able to work independently, all methods enabling students to take responsibility for their actions, are helpful in achieving the aim and learning outcomes. Updating of study courses is continuous in clinical courses, many of which use a clinical case as an examination, which includes both medical and dental information. State examination cases are updated completely every year. Study placement takes place in the student clinics of RSU Institute of Stomatology under the supervision of experienced specialists. The students' final topics are adapted to the current scientific innovations of the departments of the Faculty of Dentistry and the scientific projects in which the departments are involved.

Dental Hygienists are providing educational and motivational interviewing practices in periodontology, orthodontic clinical training of Dentistry, following the newest requirement in Dental Hygiene and Dentistry practice. Students are having some outside internships in Dentistry, and there is some positive feedback given from the outside units. Teachers are involving students in scientific activity in an interdisciplinary manner. Students are not involved in the Erasmus+ mobility, due to the high workload. Disbalance in the workload was also mentioned by the academic staff. The employers are satisfied with the graduates' preparedness for the digital solutions, however there is a need for deeper knowledge in the dental clinic management and working with children skills.

Strengths:

- 1) Study methods fully comply with the aim and learning outcomes of the study programme, added value is provided by the digital instruments. The study methods are enabling the students to take responsibility for their actions, and are helpful in achieving the aim and learning outcomes.
- 2) Collaboration between two specialties, Dentistry and Dental Hygiene is well developed and maintained, it gives the possibility to train the interprofessional communication in the best way.
- 3) The employers are highly satisfied with the graduates' preparedness, their readiness for the digital solutions and perfect communication skills.

Weaknesses:

- 1) Lack of elective courses in the study programme "Dentistry".
- 2) Lack of information in the study course descriptions about the distribution of the students' independent work hours.
- 3) Some of the literature sources in the study course descriptions are outdated.
- 4) Lack of Latvian language training for the foreign students, resulting in difficulties in the practical training with the patients.
- 5) The disbalance of the students' workload in the first year of their studies.
- 6) Students have a possibility to go on Erasmus+ visits, but they are not using this possibility because of the workload and doubts about having lower study quality.
- 7) Lack of dental clinic management skills.
- 8) Lack of skills while working with children.

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1. The buildings are equipped with teaching classrooms, spaces for group work, library, laboratories relevant to the specifics of the programme. The technological equipment, Internet connection, Wi-Fi coverage, etc. is in full compliance with Programme's needs as well as with data safety principles.

Library resources of the University are considerable, they are focused on informational support and provision of teaching and research activities of the academic staff, researchers, and students of the programme. Students and staff have full access to the international electronic library databases. Resources of the Information Centre of the Library are freely available to any RSU student and lecturer. The collection has been formed in accordance with the Universal Decimal Classification (UDC). Collection of the library consists of approximately 560,500 physical units, including around 252,200 books (data as at 1 January 2023). Library resources are regularly supplemented with both new procurements and donations corresponding to the profile, as well as books published by RSU. The subscribed databases provide access to around 500,000 subscribed electronic resource units (458,458 e-books and 41,607 e-journals). The Library provides lecturers and students with access to Latvian and international electronic resources. In total, more than 30 online e-resources are available (see <https://www.rsu.lv/biblioteka/resursi>). (Annex 23.2_Anx_Evaluation of the Library Resources_Faculty of Dentistry StP.pdf).

The existing environment at University is adapted for people with special educational needs and disability.

The Faculty of Dentistry has the Institute of Stomatology at its disposal, which is the largest clinical base unit in the Baltic States in the field of dentistry <https://www.rsu.lv/sia-rsu-stomatologijas-instituts>. All the dental subspecialties are represented in the Institute of Stomatology. Students also work in the Paula Stradiņš Clinical University Hospital (PSKUS) Oral and Maxillofacial Department (PSKUS) and the Riga East Clinical University Hospital (RAKUS) Oncology Centre.

The study programme "Dentistry" has many modern equipped simulatory rooms for the effective

conduct of theoretical and practical classes: 3 rooms with training dummies and 2 rooms with simulators are available for student pre-clinic training. Students have access to six clinical rooms at RSU, at the Institute of Stomatology students work with patients both as doctors (under the supervision of experienced specialists) and as dental assistants, as well as observers and assistants in operating theaters. Students have access to study laboratories in both the pre-clinic and the clinic (RSU Institute of Stomatology serves as a clinical base unit for student training).

All resources are available to students and teaching staff. This has been confirmed during the interview with the Directors of the Study programmes, students and teaching staff. The programme Director confirmed that the programme is fully equipped, it has all necessary equipment, modern, technically designed classrooms, and technical provision. Library resources and databases are available for students. The infrastructure, informative provision (library resources), financial provision, material and technical fully comply with requirements of the second level professional higher education programme "Dentistry" (49724) and demonstrate achievements of programme learning outcomes.

2.3.2. Not applicable.

2.3.3. The study programme "Dentistry" (49724) is planned to be financed from state budget funds and the funds of individuals and legal entities setting the tuition fee of EUR 13000 in the Latvian flow, EUR 14000 in the English flow in the first two years of studies and EUR 15000 in years of studies 3 – 5. The study programme in the Latvian flow has state funding for 120 budget funded places, where the funding per one study place is EUR 7193 per year of studies, which is smaller than the costs per student. The number of students planned to be achieved in the Latvian flow in five years of studies is 206 students, enrolling 44 students in the first year of studies and planning a small drop-out in the following years. The number of students planned to be achieved in the English flow in five years of studies is 283 students, enrolling 60 students in the first year of studies and planning drop-outs of 1-3 students per year in the following years. Such a number of students is optimal to ensure a high quality study process and to make the study programme cover its implementation, as well as development costs (SAR, page 603).

The average income per student for 2022-2023 is EUR 9440 in the Latvian flow, and average cost per student is EUR 9274. Funding is distributed as follows: remuneration of academic staff – 43%; department resources – 28%; other direct expenditure – 1%, scholarships – 2%; fixed costs – 4%; overheads – 22%. The average income per student for 2022-2023 is EUR 13839, and average cost per student is EUR 11964. Funding is distributed as follows: remuneration of academic staff – 45%; department resources – 19%; other direct expenditure – 1%, fixed costs – 3%; overheads – 32%.

It is evident that the programme has sufficient students to generate sufficient income.

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

The infrastructure, informative provision (library resources), financial provision, material and technical fully comply with requirements of the study programme "Dentistry" and demonstrate achievements of the programme's learning outcomes.

The funding available to the study programme and the use of funding ensures full implementation of the study process, the study programme has the minimum number of students to ensure the profitability of the study programme and facilitates the development of the study programme.

Strengths:

- 1) Programme is provided by necessary infrastructure and technical equipment required for achieving programme learning outcomes.
- 2) The University has well- equipped simulatory rooms for improving practical skills, working spaces for students, including free access to the library's resources.

Weaknesses:

None

Assessment of the requirement [6]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The study provision, informative provision material and technical provision, financial provision with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and ensuring the achievement of learning outcomes is fully compliant.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1. Qualifications of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme "Dentistry" comply with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements set forth in the regulatory enactments.(6.2_Anx_Biographies_teaching_staff_2LPSP_Dentistry_EN_831pages.pdf) In terms of composition of staff (Annex 24.7. Analysis of the Composition of the Teaching Staff) there are 253 lecturers, 94 of whom have been elected to academic positions at RSU with 11 professors and 13 associate professors. This enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes and the implantation of the study programme - both the compulsory and restricted elective part, as well as the relevant study courses.

2.4.2. According to SAR (p.605), as well as discussions during the on-site visit with various stakeholders involved in the study programme "Dentistry" identified a severe shortage of teaching staff and researchers in dentistry throughout Europe and the USA, as a challenge, in view of the marked difference in income between those in private practice and those in academia. In fact, as shown in Annex 24.7. (Analysis of the Composition of the Teaching Staff), the faculty is involving sub-specialty residents in assisting in the implementation of the study programme and encouraging them to pursue doctoral studies so as to invest in staff through their part-time academic career. Indeed, the Faculty of Dentistry has a large number (68) of invited lecturers, who with the input of part timers ensure sufficient quality of studies across study courses. By including the input of experienced international lecturers ensures that the programme is visible internationally and ensures that the programme is at par with the schools from where the lecturers come.

According to the SAR (p.606) as well as in interviews with management, faculty and graduates showed that the Faculty of Dentistry ensures consistency in the quality of the study programme by briefing invited lecturers on specific requirements of specific courses, as well as encouraging them to attend courses organised by the Centre for Educational Growth.

Annex 16 and Annex 24.7 show that the study programme has 488 students and 253 lecturers. The study programme provides a lecturer:student ratio of 1:8 for clinical study courses and a lecturer:student ratio of 1:8 to 1:16 for pre-clinical study courses. (SAR, p. 607.)

2.4.3. Not applicable.

2.4.4. As identified in Annexes 6.2 and 6.4 6.2_Anx_Biographies_teaching_staff_2LPSP_Dentistry_EN_831pages.pdf and 6.4_Anx_Ac_staff_publications_IF factor_Facult_Dentistry.pdf, each member of the academic staff in has published in peer-reviewed editions over the last six years, including international editions or possess five years of practical experience in dentistry in accordance with the Law on Higher Education Institutions. The Faculty of Dentistry has experienced academic members of staff and with the invitation of international colleagues ensures adequate coverage of the profession from both practical and academic perspective.

2.4.5. Information from SAR (p.607) as well as during on-site visit interviews, showed that cooperation amongst teaching staff members is achieved through department meetings, in which topical issues in specific courses are discussed and debated. Furthermore, there are regular meetings for heads of departments to address interdepartmental cooperation issues, as well as with the Dean and the Vice-Dean of the Faculty with the heads of study courses to raise issues of mutual cooperation. The Dean and the Vice-Dean of the Faculty, as well as the mentor of international students, meet regularly with the study course leaders to seek the students' opinion on current issues related to the study courses. Faculty members also attend international events dedicated to dental education, as well as organizing on-site educational courses, as these provide good opportunities to gain and share experience. Informal conversations are invaluable.

With regard to student feedback, this occurs through student surveys, which are analyzed on a regular basis, with heads of study courses being invited to assess student opinions and provide feedback to students. Student feedback is analyzed both at departmental meetings, as well as in meetings of heads of departments.

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

The qualifications of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme "Dentistry" comply with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements set forth in the regulatory enactments.

Strengths:

- 1) Teaching staff at the Faculty of Dentistry are well motivated and experienced to deliver a high level study programme in "Dentistry".
- 2) Staff is dedicated and there are opportunities for staff to further their studies at doctoral level and become part of faculty.

Weaknesses:

- 1) Shortage of resident academic staff and having to depend on visiting staff.
- 2) Academia does not pay as much as private practice, placing challenges for recruitment of dentists resulting in a number of visiting staff and part-timers.

Assessment of the requirement [7]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

All documentation pertaining to compliance of the qualification of the academic staff and visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting docents, visiting lecturers and visiting assistants presented and verified.

2.5. Assessment of the Compliance

Requirements

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The PHESP Dentistry complies with the Cabinet Regulation No. 305 of "Regulations regarding the State Standard for Professional Higher Education" (Annex

17.1_pielik_2LPSP_atbilstiba_izglitibas_standartam.pdf).

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The PHESP Dentistry complies with the occupational standard "Dentist" (agreed upon at the Tripartite Cooperation Sub-Council of Vocational Education and Employment, meeting of 10 February 2021, minutes No. 2) (Annex 18.2_ Anx_Mapping_prof_standard_dentistry.pdf).

- 3 3 - The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in all languages in which the study programme is implemented, and they comply with the requirements set forth in Section 561 , Paragraph two and Section 562 , Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The RSU has provided the study course descriptions for the PHESP Dentistry in Latvian and English (Annex 20_pielik_Kursu_apr_Zobarstnieciba.pdf; Annex 20_ _Anx_Study_course_description_Dentistry.pdf).

The descriptions of the study courses are fully compliant with the requirements set forth in Section 561, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions. The descriptions of the study courses: define the requirements for the commencement of the acquisition of the study course; determine the aims for the implementation of the study course and the planned learning outcomes; outline the content of the study course necessary for the achievement of learning outcomes, contain the study course topic layout, mandatory and supplementary literature, indicate other sources of information; describe the organization and tasks for students' independent work; determine the criteria for the assessment of learning outcomes; however, the hours distribution of the students' independent work is not reflected in the description.

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

Assessment of compliance: Non-compliant

In the sample Diploma in the Latvian language (Annex 24.1._Diploms_Zobarstnieciba), page 2, the obtained professional qualification level is indicated incorrectly (it is Level 5 rather than Level 6 of professional qualification and according to latest legislation, it is a 7th level qualification in a study programme with a classification code starting with 49); the information about the level of Latvian /European Qualifications Framework (Point 3.1) does not correspond to PHESP Dentistry; it is Level 7 rather than Level 6 of Latvian /European Qualifications Framework; the information in Point 3.2 is indicated incorrectly: "2 years (4 semesters), 80 Latvian credit points /120 ECTS points"; the duration of studies at PHESP Dentistry is 5 study years, 200 Latvian credit points /300 ECTS points;

The information in Point 3.3 is indicated incorrectly: "specialized secondary education (dental assistant, dental nurse, dental technician, nurse or feldsher)"; admission requirements are general secondary education.

In the sample Diploma in English, the information in Point 3.2 is indicated incorrectly: "6 years (12 semesters), 240 Latvian credit points /360 ECTS points"; the duration of studies at PHESP Dentistry is 5 study years, 200 Latvian credit points /300 ECTS points.

- 5 5 - The academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements set forth in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 6 6 - Academic study programmes provided for less than 250 full-time students may be implemented and less than five professors and associated professors of the higher education institution may be involved in the implementation of the mandatory and limited elective part of these study programmes provided that the relevant opinion of the Council for Higher Education has been received in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 7 7 - At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of an academic doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field of science. At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a professional doctoral study programme in arts (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 8 8 - The teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme are proficient in the official language in accordance with the regulations on the level of the official language knowledge and the procedures for testing official language proficiency for performing professional duties and office duties.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The RSU has provided annexes

(24.4_AnxCertification_Regarding_Latvian_Language_of_the_Academic_Staff.pdf and 6.2_AnxBiographies_teaching_staff_2LPSP_Dentistry_EN_831pages.pdf) confirming that the language proficiency of the teaching staff is compliant with the Cabinet Regulation No. 733 "Regulations Regarding the Extent of the Knowledge of the Official Language, the Procedures for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language and the State Fee for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language".

- 9 9 - The teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language, if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The RSU has provided the annexes

(24.5_AnxCertification_Regarding_the_English_Language_Knowledge.pdf and 6.2_AnxBiographies_teaching_staff_2LPSP_Dentistry_EN_831pages.pdf) confirming that the teaching staff to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level of proficiency in the English language.

The members of the teaching staff who participated in the meeting during the on-site visit demonstrated high-level English language skills.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The sample of the study agreement is fully compliant with the Law on Higher Education Institutions Section 46, paragraph 2, and the Cabinet Regulations No 70 of 23.01.2007 "The Mandatory Provisions to be included in the study agreement" (24.8_AnXStudy contract sample_Health Care study direction.pdf).

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

In annex 24.2_pielik_Apliecinajumi_par_parnemsanu_eng.7z, it is indicated, that students of the study programme Dentistry will be provided with the opportunity to continue their education in other study programmes based on the agreement of 30.08.2016 signed between RSU and Lithuanian University of Health Science Kaunas. But the annexes of the programme Dentistry contain the agreement with Lithuanian University of Health Science Kaunas, which was signed in 2006.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

RSU has provided the confirmation that students are guaranteed compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the study programme's license is revoked. It is ensured based on Section 55(8) of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education and Cabinet Regulation No 795 of 11 December 2018 "Regulations on Licensing of Study Programmes", Paragraph 13.4.

The relevant document can be found under Annexes -

24.3_Anx_Certification_of_Compensation_of_Losses_to_Students.pdf.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The PHESP Dentistry complies with: the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 68 "Minimum Requirements of Educational Programmes for the Acquisition of the Professional Qualification of Dentist, Pharmacist, Nurse and Midwife", the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 268 "Regulations on the Therapeutic Expertise of Medical Personnel and Students Acquiring the First- or Second-Level Professional Higher Medical Education and the Extent of Their Theoretical and Practical Knowledge", the Directive 2001/19/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2001, the Law On the Regulated Professions and the Recognition of Professional Qualifications, the Medical Treatment Law.

Assessment of the requirement [8]

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

There are errors in both the Latvian and English languages in the diploma and its annex.

General conclusions about the study programme, indicating the most important strengths

and weaknesses of the study programme

The Second level PHESP “Dentistry” complies with the aim of the study field “Health Care”. The inclusion of the second level PHESP “Dentistry” in the study field “Health Care” is justified and follows from the aim of the given study programme, the learning outcomes to be achieved, the content of the programme and the degree and qualification to be awarded.

The name, code, degree to be obtained (in the Latvian language), aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements of the second level PHESP Dentistry are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation, as well as the languages of implementation are reasonable and justified.

The mapping results demonstrate the evident links between the learning outcomes of the study programme and study courses. The content of the study courses is derived from the aims and learning outcomes of the study course, which in turn are derived from the purpose and outcomes of the programme. Wide variety of the study methods are being applied in the study process of „Dentistry“, different ones depending on the learning phase – preclinical or clinical. Digital instruments used are adding value to the teaching quality and achieving learning outcomes. As far as the aim of the study programme is to train the dentist to be able to work independently, all methods enabling students to take responsibility for their actions, are helpful in achieving the aim and learning outcomes. Updating of study courses is continuous in clinical courses, many of which use a clinical case as an examination, which includes both medical and dental information. State examination cases are updated completely every year. Study placement takes place in the student clinics of RSU Institute of Stomatology under the supervision of experienced specialists. The students’ final topics are adapted to the current scientific innovations of the departments of the Faculty of Dentistry and the scientific projects in which the departments are involved.

Students are having some outside internships in Dentistry, and there is some positive feedback given from the outside units. Teachers are involving students in scientific activity in an interdisciplinary manner.

Study methods fully comply with the aim and learning outcomes of the study programme, added value is provided by the digital instruments. The study methods are enabling the students to take responsibility for their actions, and are helpful in achieving the aim and learning outcomes. Collaboration between two specialties, Dentistry and Dental Hygiene is well developed and maintained, gives the possibility to train the interprofessional communication in the best way. The employers are highly satisfied with the graduates' preparedness, their readiness for the digital solutions and perfect communication skills.

The qualifications of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme “Dentistry” comply with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements set forth in the regulatory enactments.

The infrastructure, informative provision (library resources), financial provision, material and technical fully comply with requirements of the study programme “Dentistry” and demonstrate achievements of programme learning outcomes.

The funding available to the study programme and the use of funding ensures full implementation of the study process, the study programme has the minimum number of students to ensure the profitability of the study programme and facilitates the development of the study programme. Programme is provided by necessary infrastructure and technical equipment required for achieving programme learning outcomes.

Strengths:

- 1) Study methods fully comply with the aim and learning outcomes of the study programme, added value is provided by the digital instruments. The study methods are enabling the students to take responsibility for their actions, and are helpful in achieving the aim and learning outcomes.
- 2) Collaboration between two specialties, Dentistry and Dental Hygiene is well developed and

maintained, it gives the possibility to train the interprofessional communication in the best way.

3) The employers are highly satisfied with the graduates' preparedness, their readiness for the digital solutions and perfect communication skills.

4) Programme is provided by necessary infrastructure and technical equipment required for achieving programme learning outcomes.

5) The teaching staff at the Faculty of Dentistry are well motivated and experienced to deliver a high level study programme in "Dentistry".

6) Staff is dedicated and there are opportunities for staff to further their studies at doctoral level and become part of faculty.

Weaknesses:

1) Lack of elective courses in the study programme "Dentistry".

2) Lack of information in the study course descriptions about the distribution of the students' independent work hours.

3) Some of the literature sources in the study course descriptions are outdated.

4) Lack of Latvian language training for the foreign students, resulting in difficulties in the practical training with the patients.

5) The disbalance of the students' workload in the first year of their studies.

6) Students have a possibility to go on Erasmus+ visits, but they are not using this possibility because of the workload and doubts about having lower study quality.

7) Lack of dental clinic management skills.

8) Lack of skills while working with children.

9) Shortage of resident academic staff and having to depend on visiting staff.

10) Academia does not pay as much as private practice, placing challenges for recruitment of dentists resulting in a number of visiting staff and part-timers.

Evaluation of the study programme "Dentistry"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Dentistry"

Short-term recommendations

To introduce the elective part (C part) of elective courses in the study programme "Dentistry"

To provide the information in the study course descriptions about the distribution of the students' independent work hours.

To update the literature sources in the study course descriptions.

To improve the balance of the students' workload in the first year and later years of the studies.

Students' involvement in the Erasmus+ mobility activities should be facilitated.

To improve the skills of dental clinic management by supplementing existing courses with new topics.

To improve the skills of working with children by introducing new tasks during the practical training.

Long-term recommendations

To improve the Latvian language training for the foreign students by introducing additional training hours to the Latvian language courses.

II - "Pharmacy" ASSESSMENT

II - "Pharmacy" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1. The study programme "Second level professional higher education programme "Pharmacy" (49725)" is included in the study field "Health Care" due to the fact that pharmacy is an integral part of the healthcare system (Public Health Guidelines for 2021-2027).

The study programme is based on European Parliament and Council Directive No. 2013/55/EU, which sets requirements for the education and professional qualification of pharmacists. The document also contains the educational requirements, the achievable study results, the number of credits (CP) and duration of study period.

The study results are derived from the aims and outcomes, which in turn are also closely related to the programme aim and achievable results corresponding to the degree to be obtained. The connection is shown by the mapping of the study programme (SAR, Part II, Study programme Pharmacy, paragraph 3.1.2).

2.1.2. The code of the study programme 49725 corresponds to the classification in CM Regulation 322 "Regulations on Latvian education classification," with "49" indicating second-level professional higher education (fifth-level professional qualification) implemented after general or vocational secondary education with duration of studies in full-time studies is at least five years, "72" indicating Health Care field and "725" indicating specifically pharmacy.

According to the SAR (SAR, Part II, Study programme Pharmacy, paragraph 3.1.2) the content of studies corresponds to the requirements of the Law of the Republic of Latvia "On the Regulated Professions and the Recognition of Professional Qualifications", pharmacist's profession standard and Latvian CM Regulations No. 68 "Minimum Requirements of Educational Programmes for the Acquisition of the Professional Qualification of Dentist, Pharmacist, Nurse and Midwife" and EQF qualification level 7.

The Law of the Republic of Latvia "On the Regulated Professions and the Recognition of Professional Qualifications" provides that the diploma of the education of a pharmacist shall certify that the person has acquired appropriate theoretical and practical knowledge regarding medicinal products and substances which are used in the production of medicinal products, regarding the pharmaceutical technology and control, the use of medicinal products and regarding the laws and regulations in the field of pharmacy.

In accordance with the Professional Standard, a pharmacist is a senior health care professional, who organizes and provides pharmaceutical care; ensures the preparation, standardization, control, supervision, research, examination of documents, informative and advisory activities in the pharmaceutical field, as well as continuous professional improvement.

Therefore the title, code, degree to be obtained, professional qualification or degree and professional qualification of the study programme, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated.

In the experts opinion, the duration (5 study years) and scope (200 CP) of the full-time study programme is sufficient given the amount and variety of its content. As may be expected, the duration for the part-time studies is 5 years and 6 months. This is justified due to different study

schedules - less frequent on-site visits. The implementation language for both full-time and part-time study programme is Latvian which is justified according to the Education Law Section 9. Part time study programme is also a reasonable option for short-cycle higher education (college) level graduates to continue their studies and simultaneously work at the pharmacy.

Additionally, full-time on-site studies in English are available, however, this option is a rare choice among the applicants (4 graduates during the previous accreditation period) (SAR, Part II, study programme Pharmacy, Annex 16).

2.1.3. The supported corrections include:

1. Additional younger academic staff with knowledge of English at level B2 (7 instances).
2. Improvements in the material and technical provisions (Laboratory of Finished Dosage Forms).
3. Improvements in the quality assurance system of the programme - introduction of electronic feedback system.
4. Updates in the mapping of the Study Programme to ensure a consistent and fair approach to granting of credit points.
5. Widening of cooperation with employers of the field (including pharmacy chains, regional hospitals etc.).

The previous expert recommendations were subject to detailed analysis which in turn yielded the aforementioned corrections. In the experts opinion these changes are required for further improvement of the Study Programme and therefore justified (SAR, Part II, Study programme Pharmacy, Annex 11).

2.1.4. The economic and social justification of the Study Programme stems from the following:

1. Latvia has a highly developed pharmaceutical industry and science field that demands trained and competent specialists.
2. The average age of working professionals in the open-type pharmacy sector indicates the need for generational change to maintain access to the particular healthcare area.
3. The Public Health Guidelines 2020-2027 indicates that the availability of pharmaceutical care service is in need of improvement.

The expert believes that the Study Programme contributes positively to this situation as it prepares specialists for both the open-type pharmacy sector and the industry.

The admitted student number dynamics for full-time studies show steady decline in the last 6 year period with a total reduction of $\frac{1}{3}$ of enrolled students.

The graduate number dynamics in the last 6 year period for full-time studies is variable (20-37 graduates per academic year accordingly) with lowest result in 2017/2018 (20 graduates) and highest in 2020/2021 (37 graduates).

The available information indicates a high employment rate for the programme graduates with 97% in 2019 (SAR, Part II, Study programme Pharmacy, Annex 10). More recent data is not provided.

The situation in part time studies is more stable, ranging from 13 to 15 enrolled students in the academic years 2016/2017, 2017/2018 and 2019/2020. However, no students were admitted in other academic years.

Variability is observable in part-time studies for the graduate numbers as well, here the lowest result was recorded in 2016/2017 (1 graduate) and the highest - in 2019/2020 (13 graduates).

The full-time studies in English are available, this, however, is a rare choice among the applicants (4 graduates during the previous accreditation period). This raises the question of the usefulness of the English study programme (SAR, Part II, Study programme Pharmacy, Annex 16).

In the expert's view the decline in admitted student numbers should be given attention, at the same time it is recognized that this can be quite challenging due to general decline in population.

2.1.5. Not applicable.

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

The study programme fully complies with the study field. It has also undergone significant changes compared to the previous assessment period. Additionally, the economic and social justification of the programme is solid due to the fact that it ensures continual supply of high level professionals required in the pharmaceutical field of the state. According to the evaluation of the implementation of the European Parliament and Council Directives 2001/19/EC and 2013/55/EC, the second level professional study programme "Pharmacy" fulfills all requirements set by the laws and regulations of Latvia and the European regulations. Therefore, it can be concluded that the study programme is compliant with the specific regulatory framework in the field of pharmacy. The title, code, degree to be obtained, professional qualification or degree and professional qualification of the study programme, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation, as well as the implementation languages, are reasonable and justified. Economic and / or social justification of the study programme, dynamics of the number of students and employment indicators of the graduates of the study programme are justified as there is demand on the market for this profession.

Strengths:

1) The study programme prepares highly competent specialists who are capable of working in all sectors of the pharmaceutical field (open-type and hospital pharmacies, industry and science).

Weaknesses:

1) Information on the graduate employment past 2019 is not provided.

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1. According to the mapping of study courses (SAR, Part II, Study programme Pharmacy, Annex 18.1), the content of the Study Programme includes all level 7 requirements of the Latvian Qualifications Framework/European Qualifications Framework, these include:

1. Knowledge of drug acquisition, production, quality control and circulation.
2. Knowledge of the effects of medicines and their rational and safe use, communication skills when explaining the use of medicines
3. Ability to provide pharmaceutical care.
4. The ability to observe current events in the regulatory framework.
5. Ability to obtain and apply evidence-based information.
6. Business and IT skills.
7. Scientific research, research planning and team management.
8. Involvement in industry development and further education.
9. Involvement in improving public health, cooperation in a team of health care specialists.

According to the mapping of study courses (SAR, Part II, Study programme Pharmacy, Annex 17.1), the indicators of the study programme meet the requirements specified in the State Education Standard (CM Regulations No. 305).

Additionally, according to the mapping of study courses (SAR, Part II, Study programme Pharmacy, Annex 18.2) the Study Programme includes knowledge, skills, attitudes and competences specified in the Professional Standard.

The topicality of the study programme is demonstrably shown by the following study course examples: Clinical trials and their analysis, Health economics and pharmacoeconomics, Biostatistics, Biological drugs, Pharmacotherapy in pharmacist practice, Pharmacogenetics, Integrated pharmacy, Specific dosage forms, Nutritional supplements, Dermocosmetics.

The content of the above-mentioned study courses includes the latest trends in the pharmaceutical industry (Clinical trials and their analysis, Health economics and pharmacoeconomics), open-type pharmacy sector (Pharmacotherapy in pharmacist practice, Specific dosage forms, Nutritional supplements, Dermocosmetics) and the scientific field (Biostatistics, Biological drugs, Pharmacogenetics) (SAR, Part II, Study programme Pharmacy, Annex 20.1). However, there is a limited number of courses which students can freely choose and this should be improved.

Based on the content of the above-mentioned appendices, the expert concludes that the study programme offers study courses that are interconnected, complementary and correspond to the objectives and learning outcomes.

In the light of future changes in the credit system to ECTS, planning the study process for the transition from CP to ECTS should make an effort in avoiding the discrepancies regarding the associated credits to courses.

2.2.2. Not applicable.

2.2.3. According to the Self-Assessment Report (SAR, Part II, Study programme Pharmacy, paragraph 3.2.3) the student-centered approach to teaching is implemented by the following means:

- 1) Student involvement in the improvement and management of the study process.
- 2) Student involvement in scientific activity.
- 3) Student involvement in extracurricular activities (scientific groups, student association, etc.).

Both formative and summative assessment methods are used in the study process. The former includes assessment in the daily study process (questions, discussions, individual and group tasks). The latter is organized at the end of the study course (written or oral discussion, mixed form). Information about assessments is available in the RSU E-study platform. Students can access the criteria, conditions and procedures for evaluating success in the Study Regulations. Additionally the study process includes various study tours.

Studies can be organized face-to-face or remotely. No information on the extent of remote studies is provided.

All lectures are available in video format in e-studios. E-studies also include various additional materials - videos of laboratory works, self-tests, interactive tasks.

In order to improve the quality of the study programme, the following mechanisms have been introduced:

- 1) Student survey (coverage 70%). The results are analyzed by the head of the Study Course and the head of the department. Feedback is given through the Student Portal platform.
- 2) Teaching staff survey (coverage 100%). The results are analyzed at departmental meetings.
- 3) Graduate survey (coverage 25%). The results are evaluated at the faculty council meetings.

The main differences between the full-time and part-time studies include study schedule (working days for full-time studies, Fridays and Saturdays for part-time studies) and admission criteria (mandatory short cycle higher professional education for part-time studies).

Experts acknowledge the comprehensive approach to student involvement in various aspects of the study process, spanning improvement initiatives, scientific activities, and extracurricular engagements. The utilization of both formative and summative assessment methods, along with the transparent availability of assessment-related information on the RSU E-study platform, is

acknowledged as a positive practice. The incorporation of versatile study methods, including face-to-face and remote options, coupled with the availability of lectures in video format and supplementary materials on e-studies, is seen as a commendable effort to cater to diverse learning needs. Moreover, the introduced mechanisms for programme improvement, such as the student, teaching staff, and graduate surveys, demonstrate a commitment to feedback-driven enhancements. The structured analysis of survey results by respective heads at different levels of the academic hierarchy, followed by feedback through dedicated platforms, reflects a systematic approach to program evaluation and improvement. Overall, the expert's positive assessment underscores the efficacy of these measures in ensuring the study program's alignment with its intended aims and learning outcomes.

2.2.4. According to the SAR (SAR, Part II, Study Programme Pharmacy, Paragraph 3.2.4) two types of internship are foreseen during the study programme, these are:

1. Propaedeutic (introductory) internship (1st study year (1 CP)).

During the internship the student gets acquainted with the premises, assortment, placement of products and daily work regime of the pharmacy.

2. State internship (5th study year (26 CP)).

The purpose of the state internship is to strengthen students' theoretical knowledge and practical skills. The total internship period is 6 months and it takes place in an open-type or hospital pharmacy.

State internship is divided into 4 sections with different objectives. During the internship period, the student gets involved in the everyday work routine of the pharmacy.

The state internship sections are:

1. Hospital pharmacy section (2 CP) – includes application of competencies acquired during Practical pharmacy, Social pharmacy and pharmaceutical care and Pharmacy dosage form technology study courses.

2. Drug dosage form technology section (4 CP) – includes application of competencies acquired during Laboratory technique, Pharmacy dosage form technology, Industrial dosage form technology and Physical pharmacy.

3. Pharmaceutical analysis section (5 CP) – includes application of competencies acquired during Inorganic and organic chemistry, Qualitative and quantitative analysis, Pharmaceutical chemistry and Physical pharmacy.

4. Social pharmacy section (15 CP) – includes application of competencies acquired during Practical pharmacy and pharmaceutical legislation, social pharmacy and pharmaceutical care, Pharmacology, Pharmacotherapy, Pharmaceutical and medicinal chemistry (SAR, Part II, Annex 9).

Each internship has a separate programme that undergoes approval procedure. This document is available on the E-studies platform. For each section, the student prepares a report according to the programme.

A pre-internship briefing procedure is a mandatory requirement. During the event all necessary information about the course of the internship is provided to the students. Representatives of the labor market also take part in this event, to inform about internship opportunities in the respective companies.

Students are free to do their internship in the pharmacies offered by the University or according to their own criteria (for example distance from residence). The opportunity to do the internship in major university hospitals is also provided.

In the experts opinion the opportunities and provision of internships offered to students are effective. The tasks of the internship are related to the learning outcomes.

While the SAR emphasizes that each internship has a separate programme available on the E-studies platform, undergoing approval procedures, and necessitating a pre-internship briefing, the experts note the absence of information on how the content of the state internship is regularly

updated. This raises concerns about the topicality of the internship content. In the experts' opinion, the opportunities and provisions for internships are deemed effective, with tasks aligned with learning outcomes. However, there is a noteworthy recommendation to expand placement opportunities for students, to offer a more diverse range of experiences, potentially enhancing the programme's overall effectiveness in preparing students for real-world pharmacy practices. The current internship structure is considered comprehensive and compliant with regulatory enactment requirements, specifically CM Regulation No. 305, as the internship scope amounts to 27 CP/39 ECTS. To fortify the internship component of the programme, the experts suggest providing more information on how the state-internship content is regularly updated, ensuring its relevance.

2.2.5. Not applicable.

2.2.6. According to the Self-Assessment Report (SAR, Part II, Study Programme Pharmacy, Paragraph 3.2.6) students develop their research papers under the supervision of lecturers. Often this process is carried out within the framework of various scientific projects.

The main research topic blocks are:

1. Synthesis and mechanisms of action of drugs ("Synthesis and screening of heterocyclic derivatives of curcumin for oncological activity").
2. The influence of pharmacogenetic factors on the effectiveness of therapy ("Association of increased TIMP-1 gene expression with different degrees of traumatic brain injury").
3. Pharmacokinetic studies in human and animal organisms ("Factors affecting long-term buprenorphine pharmacotherapy").
4. Problems of antibacterial drug therapy ("Great consumption of antibiotics leads to inappropriate use").
5. Individualized drug therapy ("Fixed-dose combination drugs in hypertension pharmacotherapy - evaluation of their importance, advantages and disadvantages").
6. Rational use and monitoring of drugs ("The relationship between knowledge about the use of rational antibacterial therapy and the unjustified use of antibiotics in the community and their dispensing in a pharmacy without a doctor's prescription").
7. Instrumental detection of drugs and their metabolites ("Cefazolin and methods of its determination in human plasma").
8. Pharmacological effectiveness of medicinal plants ("Determination of total polyphenol content and antiradical activity in celery, dill and parsley leaves").
9. Development of new drug dosage forms ("Development of recipe and technology of cardiac preparation") (SAR, Study Programme Pharmacy, Part II, Annex 22).

The review of research papers is done by cooperation partners from scientific institutions, labor market representatives, representatives of the Ministry of Health and Pharmacists' Society of Latvia. The experts conclude that the topics of students' final theses are relevant to the field and correspond to the study programme.

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

The content of the study programme is topical, the content of the study courses are interconnected and complementary, corresponds to the objectives of the programme and ensures the achievement of learning outcomes, and in majority meets the needs of the industry, labor market and scientific trends. It complies with state standards. Methods of study implementation help achieve course and

programme goals and learning results. They are various, using modern technologies in the teaching process and student-centered teaching is considered. In summary, the content of the study programme, as evaluated against the given criteria stands out for its topicality, coherence, and relevance to the state standards.

Strengths:

- 1) The 1st year (propaedeutic) internship gives the student an early impression of the work routine in an open-type pharmacy.
- 2) The study programme prepares highly competent specialists who are capable of working in all sectors of the pharmaceutical field (open-type and hospital pharmacies, industry and science).
- 3) The state internship is an excellent addition in the development of competencies for work in the open-type pharmacy sector.

Weaknesses:

- 1) No information on the update process of the state internship programme is provided.

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1. Study work is mainly organized on the basis of the Department of Pharmaceutical Chemistry and Department of Applied Pharmacy. Students master medical courses at clinical departments of the Faculty of Medicine.

Since in recent years, the RSU Faculty of Pharmacy has been developing very rapidly, external funding has been raised, which is intended for the construction of a new faculty building with the Laboratory of Finished Dosage Forms (LFDF) and purchasing of equipment and technologies for study and scientific needs.

Although the laboratories and the new building, started functioning only at the beginning of 2023, new analytical (HPLC – FD/PDA/RI, HPLC – MS/MS, GC/HS – FID, GC – FID, ICP – MS/MS, Calorimeter, Rheometer, Polarimeter, FTIR, TLC/HPTLC, RAMAN, XRD) and technological (High-shear mixer, Fluid bed dryer/processor, Roller compactor, Benchtop tablet press-simulator, Rotary tablet press, Automatic capsule filling machine, Tablet coater, Hot Melt Extrusion, Semi-automatic blister packing machine) equipment has already been purchased, which will ensure a full solid dosage form manufacturing process and research (SAR, page 224).

The RSU Library fully provides students and academic staff with access to scientific databases and study literature.

In the supply of e-resources, five e-book databases and seven full-text databases of journals are available in the pharmaceutical sector. Since 2021, a special database of e-books in the pharmaceutical sector AccessPharmacy is subscribed. E-books in pharmacy are available in subscribed databases AccessPharmacy, ebook Academic Collection (EBSCO), Ebook Central (Proquest), AccessMedicine and ClinicalKey. Subscribed multidisciplinary databases Ebook Central (ProQuest) and EBSCO eBook Academic Collection offer e-books in different fields and from different

publishers that provide selected information results searching by various topics / keywords. The AccessPharmacy database is an interactive, educational platform in pharmacology and pharmacy by McGraw-Hill, which offers internationally recognised textbooks, video materials, images, information on medicines and other electronic resources. The full texts of scientific articles in pharmacy are available in subscribed databases: SAGE Premier 2022, Health Research Premium Collection (Proquest), MEDLINE Complete (EBSCO), BMJ Journals, Wiley Online Journals, Science Direct, Academic Search Complete (EBSCO). The single search Primo shows 593 journal names in "Pharmacy and Pharmacology". Two databases – DynaMed and ClinicalKey – contain information on medicinal products. Section "List of recommended reading e-books" on the website of the library lists the e-books referred to in study programmes – both purchased and from subscribed databases (such sections as "Pharmacology and Toxicology", "Pharmacy, Pharmaceutical Chemistry", "Medical Chemistry", etc. are available) (SAR, page 225).

All resources are available to students and teaching staff. This has been confirmed during the interview with the Directors of the Study programmes, students and teaching staff. During the study programme evaluation it was confirmed that the programme is fully equipped, it has all necessary equipment, modern, technically designed classrooms, and technical provision. Necessary library resources and databases, laboratories and modern equipment for study or scientific activities are available for students.

The experts panel considers that the study financial resources are reasonable; study provision, informative provision, material and technical provision is sufficient and fully comply with specific features and the conditions for the implementation of the study programme, create prerequisites for the achievement of the learning outcomes and indicate the possibility to ensure a high-quality study process.

2.3.2. Not applicable.

2.3.3. The full time study programme in the Latvian flow is financed from state budget funds and the funds of individuals and legal entities setting the tuition fee for the Latvian flow of EUR 5200 per year of studies. The tuition fee can be subject to discounts in accordance with internal norms and regulations (SAR, page 226).

The number of students planned to be achieved in the Latvian flow study programme in five years is 151 students, enrolling 31 students in the first year of studies and planning minimum drop-outs in the following years. Following high inflation and under conditions of a rapid increase in prices of energy sources, the result of the full-time Latvian flow study programme is negative, because there is shortage of funding from state budget funds in accordance with CM Regulations No.994 – study base costs no longer cover infrastructure maintenance costs. The information on additional performance funding was allocated and approved in the budget of the Ministry of Education and Science (SAR, page 226-228).

The part-time Latvian flow study programme is planned to be financed from the funds of individuals and legal entities setting the tuition fee of EUR 5200 per year of studies. The number of students planned to be achieved in the Latvian flow study programme in five years is 66 students. Following high inflation and under conditions of a rapid increase in prices of energy sources, the costs of the part-time Latvian flow study programme exceed income just a little bit (SAR, page 226-228).

The full-time study programme in the English flow, which lasts five years, will be able to cover implementation and development costs, if a total of 74 students are enrolled, who pay a tuition fee of EUR 10,750 per year (SAR, page 226-227).

The part-time study programme in the English flow lasts five years, it will be able to cover implementation and development costs, if a total of 56 students are enrolled, who pay a tuition fee of EUR 7500 per year (SAR, page 226-227).

It is evident that the SAR highlights the financial challenges faced by both the full-time and part-time Latvian flow due to a shortage of funding from state budget sources. The English flow seems more financially viable, requiring higher tuition fees and a larger number of students to cover costs effectively.

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

The infrastructure, including informative resources such as library materials and technical resources, wholly align with the demands of the study programme, showcasing tangible accomplishments in meeting programme learning objectives.

The allocated funding for the English flow study programme is effectively utilized to guarantee the comprehensive execution of the educational process.

It is evident that the SAR highlights the financial challenges faced by both the full-time and part-time Latvian flow study programmes due to a shortage of funding from state budget sources (the costs of the part-time Latvian stream only slightly exceed the income). The information suggests a need for exploring alternative funding sources and additional support from the government.

Strengths:

- 1) Advanced material and technical base for students training, new faculty building with the Laboratory of Finished Dosage Forms (LFDF) and purchasing of equipment and technologies for study and scientific needs.
- 2) The study programme provides students with extensive RSU Library resources and databases, student portal MyRSU, e-studies.

Weaknesses:

- 1) Mainly full-time Latvian stream study programme does not generate sufficient income, because there is shortage of funding from state budget funds in accordance with CM Regulations No.994 – study base costs no longer cover infrastructure maintenance costs.

Assessment of the requirement [6]

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Despite advanced material and modern technical base for student training, and plenty of high-quality library resources, it is detected by experts that study base costs no longer cover maintenance costs and there is insufficient funding from the national budget for the programme to generate sufficient income.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1. The implementation of the compulsory and restricted elective part of the Second level professional study programme “Pharmacy” is carried out by 93 lecturers, 37 of whom have been elected to the academic positions at RSU. Out of 37 elected representatives of the academic staff, 5 are professors and 8 associate professors. Of the 37 academic staff members elected for the implementation of the study programme, the largest proportion of the position is that of lecturer. The Faculty of Pharmacy is one of the smallest at RSU, yet its professors publish research annually in scientific journals with a growing number of Scopus and Web of Science publications. The academic staff involved in the study programme aims to successfully administer the “Pharmacy” programme and collaborate with the pharmaceutical sector. Lecturers participate in national and international research. 50% of StP lecturers have doctorates. The Latvian Council of Science has granted expert status to the majority of StP lecturers (27 lecturers), which calls for three peer-reviewed scientific publications in a Scopus or Web of Science-indexed scientific journal, one of which must be open access, or two such publications and a scientific monograph. As authors and co-authors, FP lecturers published 23 publications in 2019, 30 in 2020, 37 in 2021, and 30 in 2022. Faculty publish their research in top journals like British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology, Basic and Clinical Pharmacology and Toxicology, Toxicology Letters, Pharmacological Research, Biochemical Journal, Nutrients, Journal of Infection and Chemotherapy, Medicina, Molecules, Nanomaterials, Journal of Ethnopharmacology, Plants, BMC Primary Care, BMC Medical Education, BMJ (Online), and Journal of Pharmaceutical Policy (Annex 24.7, SAR p. 227-228;).

Several lecturers join scientific journal editorial boards, participate in financed research projects, and are experts in various projects. They are also members of Latvian and worldwide professional organizations. Lecturers actively participate in educational initiatives, including radio and TV interviews, publishing in popular science journals, and social media. Several COST programmes include lecturers developing new scientific networks to find collaboration partners. Academic projects increase scientific capacity and competitiveness, as shown by the increase in scientific articles in Scopus or Web of Science journals, which strengthens RSU's authority and recognition as a center of study and science (SAR p. 229, Annex 24.7 <https://science.rsu.lv>).

Teaching staff span several pharmacy sub-sectors, including pharmacology, pharmacognosy, dosage form technology, pharmaceutical companies, chemical pharmacy, and social pharmacy. Lecturers communicate scientific findings in their courses. All lecturers make international peer-reviewed papers and assess scientific works. Faculty staff and students are currently involved in several projects: HORIZON (1); Latvian Council of Science FARP (1); European Agricultural Fund (3); RSU grants (6). External lecturers, such as academics and professionals from Italy, Finland, Australia, the US, Estonia, Czechia, and Lithuania, enhance study programmes. 1-2 doctors of pharmacy defend doctoral theses each year, work as lecturers and scientists after graduating, and participate in academic activity. The 13 lecturers, or ~35% of all elected lecturers involved in the implementation of the StP have been employed at least once in RSU research projects since 2017. Whereas, since 2017, 5 or ~ 25% of all acting lecturers involved in the implementation of the StP have been employed in RSU research projects at least once (SAR p. 229 - 230; Annex 24.2).

The RSU offers annual seminars on pedagogy and research techniques to enhance academic staff skills and competences. Lecturers might attend School of Junior Academics and RSU Centre for Educational Growth (PIC) seminars to strengthen their skills. Doctoral students and instructors can attend research competence development seminars and networking activities at the Doctoral School. Between January 2017 and October 2022, 69 professors from the “Pharmacy” study programme attended over 170 continuing education programmes organized by the RSU Centre for Educational Growth. “Pharmacy” lecturers devoted 6569 academic hours on continuing education. The RSU Human Resources Department ensures that academic and scientific staff are hired for new

study programmes in accordance with the Law on Higher Education Institutions (Section 55(1)(3), (28) and (30), etc.) and the Law on Scientific Activity. RSU Human Resources Department examines official language skills when hiring workers and summarizing documents for academic election preparation. Out of 93 lecturers involved in the implementation of the StP, 49 or 53% of lecturers have an English proficiency level determined by RSU between A2.2 and C1. In addition, 4 of these lecturers have acquired the English language by taking language courses. (SAR p. 230; Annex 24.7).

From the arguments listed above and site visit, it is clear that qualification of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements set forth in the regulatory enactments. The teaching staff qualifications, professional activities and scientific research enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses. Professional development, regarding the teaching skills is high and represents a very positive impact on the teaching process. The criteria is well met.

2.4.2. While the teaching personnel involved in the study programme has not changed significantly, the academic team has proven to be strong. Changes for objective reasons (workplace, retirement) have not harmed study quality. RSU takes steps to ensure that changes in teaching staff do not influence study programme quality or compliance with regulatory standards. RSU Centre for Educational Growth offers free topic cycles, seminars, guest lectures, conferences, discussions, and more to the RSU academic family. The academic staff's interdisciplinary research on current field topics contributes to the field's development, the study programme's development, and the study content's improvement. Through research, instructors bring field innovations to their classes. Faculty write scholarly publications, attend conferences and practical seminars, and create textbooks and methods.

The faculty is changing due to retiring academics and the influx of new assistants and lecturers. Many assistants are RSU PhD students who want to work in science and academia. Some new colleagues have left RSU for higher-paying clinical research or drug authorization businesses. RSU, with Boris and Inara Teterev Foundation support, offers targeted scholarships to young and experienced professors to modernize study curricula. In 2021/2022, seven FP lectures received subsidies and modernized study courses, including "Pharmaceutical Pharmacology", "Inorganic Chemistry", "Qualitative Analysis", "Pharmacotherapy in Pharmacists Practice" and "Quantitative Analysis".

Even though there is a positive move, from the last assessment period, 1 doctoral student and 1 doctoral candidate will be employed as permanent teaching staff at the Department of Dosage Form Technology, At the Department of Pharmacology, it is not clear what the sustainability strategy is for long term human resources management. It seems that RSU FP purposefully takes measures so that changes in the composition of the teaching staff do not negatively affect the quality of the implementation of the study programme and the compliance of the study programme with the requirements specified in regulatory enactments. The conclusion is made on the data presented in SAR and Annexes, even though there is no evident written strategy for this topic.

2.4.3. Not applicable.

2.4.4. With regard to the status of an expert of the Latvian Council of Science (LCS), 51% of the elected lecturers involved in the implementation of the study programme has the status of an expert of the LCS (SAR p. 231, Annex 24.6.).

On March 26, 2023, the RSU Current Research Information System (ZDIS) Pure was used to retrieve

the publications of teaching staff in the "Health Care" study field from January 1, 2017 to March 25, 2023. ZDIS Pure is used to extract the list of publications since it contains the most comprehensive information about RSU academic staff's scientific activity—publications, projects, awards, research, datasets, presentations, press and media communication, etc. Since 2017, ZDIS Pure has recorded 1242 publications for 151 lecturers in three Faculty of Pharmacy study programmes in the study field "Health Care": The Professional Master's study programme "Clinical Pharmacy" (47725) The Second level professional study programme "Pharmacy" (49725), and The Second level professional study programme "Industrial Pharmacy" (47725). 113/113 professors have publication data. These years produced the most publications: 2021 (395), 2020 (238), and 2022 (227) (6.4_Anx_Ac_staff_publications_IF_factor_Facult_Pharmacy.pdf).

Even though some of the teaching staff on the list, have not shown CV and references provided in the SAR, and for some members it is not clear if they are fulfill the criteria, all other members of the academic staff in the last six years has published in peer-reviewed editions, including international editions, or has five years of practical experience in accordance with the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

2.4.5. The study process is explicable and reasonable. A well-functioning quality management system ensures transparency in the research process, enabling stable progress towards the objective and success. From the third year onward, pharmacy-specific study courses are sequentially and connected. Basic disciplines including anatomy, biology, genetics, physics, and mathematics are taught in the first years. For instance, lecturers visit each other's lectures and classes (observation of teaching) to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses, prepare annual reports on academic, scientific, and creative activities, publications, participation in scientific research and conferences, and promote international lecturer exchange (SAR p. 233). The Baltic Biomaterials Centre of Excellence (BBCE) project brought visiting researchers to the Faculty of Pharmacy, where they participated in the student research interest group, student research papers, and LFDF. Visiting lecturers from Estonia, Lithuania, Finland, Czechia, US, Australia, and others provide lectures (SAR p. 233).

Multiple lecturers conduct diverse study curricula, ensuring equal requirements for pupils. Teaching personnel are routinely invited to address study process difficulties and improvement. Their commitment to their tasks demonstrates the potential for sustainable development of the StP. Lecturers collaborate on topical subjects at RSU Centre for Educational Growth seminars to gather input. Several lecturers collaborate on study courses, research projects, and student work. Post-business trip and experience exchange lectures are shared at Faculty of Pharmacy science seminars. Lecturers attend RSU Research Breakfasts to network, discover collaboration partners, and learn about scientific work organization. Teaching is a collaborative effort where everyone knows their role. Teacher qualifications and enthusiasm to provide study and research are strong. Humane, open relationships with students are maintained along with severe study task requirements. Students can get help, consultations, and support from lecturers and the head of StP or dean in case of questions to implement the study process individually and collectively as much as possible. Students are encouraged to regularly discuss study quality with lecturers and faculty council members to improve and control the StP. Thus, weaknesses are identified and solutions are devised to motivate students to study. The study curriculum has 176 students and 93 teachers. Students to teachers ratio is 1.9 (SAR p. 233).

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

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

The qualification of the teaching staff involved in the study programme matches the requirements for its implementation and the regulatory enactments, enabling the study programme's aims and learning outcomes and the relevant study courses to be met. The RSU takes steps to ensure that changes in the teaching staff do not impair the quality of the study programme or its compliance with regulatory requirements. In the last six years, the academic staff members, whose CV's are presented, have written in peer-reviewed journals, including international editions or five years of practical experience per the Law on Higher Education Institutions. A framework for teaching staff cooperation in implementing the study programme promotes its success and the interconnectedness of study courses.

Strengths:

The University has a stable and highly qualified teaching and academic staff capable of conducting both national and international level scientific research

Weaknesses:

Very small number of young assistants.

Assessment of the requirement [7]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

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

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6.2. pielikums

Annex 6.2.

Mācībspēku biogrāfijas (Curriculum Vitae Europass formātā)

Biographies of the teaching staff members (in Europass Curriculum Vitae format)

2. līmeņa profesionālā studiju programma "Farmācija" 2nd level Professional study programme "Pharmacy"

2.5. Assessment of the Compliance

Requirements

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Annex - 17.1_Anx_National_educ_standard_Pharmacy.pdf confirms that the study programme complies with National Education Standard corresponding to Cabinet Regulations No 305 of 13 June 2023 "Regulations on National Standard for Professional Higher Education"

<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/342818-noteikumi-par-valsts-profesionalas-augstakas-izglitiba-standartu>.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The study programme complies with the valid professional standard specified in the Annex 18.2_Anx_Mapping_prof_standard_Pharmacy.pdf and is in accordance with the occupational standard "Pharmacist", which was approved by the Tripartite Cooperation Sub-Council for Professional Education and Employment at the meeting of 25 October 2006, minutes No 6. Available online: <https://registri.visc.gov.lv/profizglitiba/dokumenti/standarti/ps0381.pdf>
https://registri.visc.gov.lv/profizglitiba/stand_registrs_2008_2016.shtml

- 3 3 - The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in all languages in which the study programme is implemented, and they comply with the requirements set forth in Section 561, Paragraph two and Section 562, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The study course descriptions are prepared in English and Latvian and are adapted for both - full-time and part-time studies that can be accessed under annexes - 20_Anx_Study_course_description_Pharmacy.pdf and 20_pielik_Kursu_apr_Farmacija.pdf. Descriptions comply with regulations set forth in Law on Higher Education Institutions. The study materials can be accessed and are prepared in both implemented languages. The study base, including accessible literature for qualitative studies is relevant.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The provided Diploma sample - 24.1._Diploms_Farmaceits_eng.pdf complies with the procedure by which state-recognised documents of higher education are issued according to Cabinet Regulation No. 202 "Kārtība, kādā izsniedz valsts atzītus augstāko izglītību apliecinošus dokumentus"

- 5 5 - The academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements set forth in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 6 6 - Academic study programmes provided for less than 250 full-time students may be implemented and less than five professors and associated professors of the higher education institution may be involved in the implementation of the mandatory and limited elective part of these study programmes provided that the relevant opinion of the Council for Higher Education has been received in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 7 7 - At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of an academic doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field of science. At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a professional doctoral study programme in arts (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 8 8 - The teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme are proficient in the official language in accordance with the regulations on the level of the official language knowledge and the procedures for testing official language proficiency for performing professional duties and office duties.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Based on the acquired information onsite as well as relevant annexes:

24.4_Anx_Certification_Regarding_Latvian_Language_of_the_Academic_Staff.pdf and 6.2_Anx_CV_ENG_visas_programmas.7z, it can be evaluated that the language proficiency of teaching staff is compliant with Cabinet Regulation. Nr. 733 " Regulations Regarding the Extent of the Knowledge of the Official Language, the Procedures for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language and the State Fee for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language".

- 9 9 - The teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language, if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

As one of the implementing languages of this programme is English, it is required for the teaching staff to have at least B2 level English. The attached documents:

6.2_Anx_CV_ENG_visas_programmas.7z and

24.5_Anx_Certification_Regarding_the_English_Language_Knowledge.pdf confirm the English language skills of the teaching staff members. Their skills were also assessed during onsite visits and the expert group confirms that they are at least on B2 level.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Sample of attached study agreement 24.8_Anx_Study contract sample_Health Care study direction.pdf complies with Cabinet Regulation. Nr. 70 "Studiju līgumā obligāti ietveramie noteikumi"

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

RSU has provided confirmation that students will be provided with opportunities to continue their education in another higher education institution if the implementation of the study programme is terminated. The agreements are specified in the annexes under "24.2_pielik_Apliecinajumi_par_parnemsanu_eng.7z" and agreement signed 3-L-11-62-2023 RSU Medicina - LU Arstnieciba. It is specified that in case of discontinuation of this study programme, students can continue their studies at University of Latvia Academic Bachelor's study programme "Pharmacy".

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

RSU has provided confirmation that students are guaranteed compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the study programme's license is revoked. It is ensured based on the Section 55(8) of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education and Cabinet of Ministers No 795 of 11 December 2018 "Regulations on Licensing of study programmes", Paragraph 13.4. The relevant document can be found under Annexes - 24.3_Anx_Certification_of_Compensation_of_Losses_to_Students.pdf.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The study programme complies with the The Cabinet Regulations No 68 Minimum Requirements for Education Programmes for Obtaining Professional Qualifications of Dentist, Pharmacist, Nurse and Midwife based on the analysis provided in the Annex - 17.2_Anx_Compliance_with_Field-Specific_Regulations_Pharmacy.pdf.

Assessment of the requirement [8]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Study programme fully complies with regulatory enactments.

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

The study programme descriptive indicators comply with the external regulatory framework. The title, code, degree to be obtained, professional qualification or degree and professional qualification of the study programme, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated. The duration and scope of the full time study programme implementation, as well as the implementation language in English and Latvian, are reasonable and justified and can be evaluated as equal. There needs to be further improvement of the study process and promotion of acquisition of practical skills in clinical placement sites. Economic and / or social justification of the study programme, dynamics of the number of students and employment indicators of the graduates of the study programme are justified as there is demand on the market for this profession. The content of the study programme is topical, the content of the study courses / modules is interconnected and complementary, corresponds to the objectives of the programme and ensures the achievement of learning outcomes, and in majority meets the needs of the industry, labor market and scientific trends. It complies with national regulations standards. Methods of study implementation help achieve course and program goals and learning results. They are various, using modern technologies in the teaching process and student-centered teaching is considered. In summary, the content of the study programme, as evaluated against the given criteria stands out for its topicality, coherence, and relevance to the academic standards. The infrastructure, including informative resources such as library materials and technical resources, wholly align with the demands of the study programme, showcasing tangible accomplishments in meeting programme

learning objectives. The allocated funding for the English flow study programme is effectively utilized to guarantee the comprehensive execution of the educational process. It is evident that the SAR highlights the financial challenges faced by both the full-time and part-time Latvian flow study programmes due to a shortage of funding from state budget sources (the costs of the part-time Latvian stream only slightly exceed the income). The information suggests a need for exploring alternative funding sources and additional support from the government. The Faculty of Pharmacy is one of the smallest at RSU, yet its professors publish research annually in scientific journals with a growing number of Scopus and Web of Science publications. The academic staff involved in the study programme aims to successfully administer the “Pharmacy” programme and collaborate with the pharmaceutical sector. Lecturers participate in national and international research.

Despite the identified weaknesses, the experts likely consider the programme to be good due to several key strengths and positive aspects, the programme aligns with external regulatory frameworks, ensuring that it meets the necessary standards and requirements. This indicates a commitment to maintaining quality and relevance in education. The content of the study programme is described as topical, coherent, and relevant to academic standards. The interconnected and complementary nature of study courses/modules suggests a comprehensive and well-structured curriculum. Despite being one of the smallest faculties, the Faculty of Pharmacy has professors who publish research annually in scientific journals. The growing number of publications in reputable databases like Scopus and Web of Science reflects the faculty's commitment to advancing knowledge in the field. The report transparently acknowledges financial challenges faced by both full-time and part-time programmes and expresses a need for exploring alternative funding sources. This shows a proactive approach to addressing issues and seeking solutions, thus, it is believed that the programme implemented can be evaluated as good.

Strengths:

1. The University has a stable and highly qualified teaching and academic staff capable of conducting both national and international level scientific research.
2. Emphasis is placed on humane relationships between students, lecturers and administration.
3. The Study Programme prepares highly competent specialists who are capable of working in all sectors of the pharmaceutical field (open-type and hospital pharmacies, industry and science).
4. Advanced material and technical base for students training, new faculty building with the Laboratory of Finished Dosage Forms (LFDF) and purchasing of equipment and technologies for study and scientific needs.
5. The robust utilization of RSU Library resources and databases, coupled with the effective integration of the student portal MyRSU and e-studies, collectively forms a potent strength of the study programme.
6. The 1st year (propaedeutic) internship gives the student an early impression of the work routine in an open-type pharmacy.
7. The state internship is an excellent addition in the development of competencies for work in the open-type pharmacy sector.

Weaknesses:

1. Mainly full-time Latvian stream study programme does not generate sufficient income, because there is shortage of funding from state budget funds in accordance with CM Regulations No.994 – study base costs no longer cover infrastructure maintenance costs.
2. Very small number of young assistants.
3. No information on the update process of the state internship programme is provided.
4. Information on the graduate employment past 2019 is not provided.

Evaluation of the study programme "Pharmacy"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Pharmacy"

Short-term recommendations

It is advisable to develop a mechanism for updating the content of the state internship programme, this procedure should involve all parties (students, teaching staff, representatives of labor market etc.).

Long-term recommendations

Develop a comprehensive financial plan that recommends budgetary financial support to bridge the gap between study base costs and infrastructure maintenance costs. Implement necessary adjustments within the next assessment period to secure adequate budgetary support, ensuring the sustainability of infrastructure maintenance and overall effectiveness of the study programme.

Address the limited number of young assistants, aiming to attract and nurture emerging talent within the institution. Implement targeted initiatives and support programmes within the next assessment period to enhance the recruitment and professional development of young assistants, contributing to the growth and diversity of the academic team.

II - "Residency in Medicine" ASSESSMENT

II - "Residency in Medicine" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1. In the SAR, paragraph 3.1.2. the links between the study programme "Residency in Medicine" (50721)" and the study field are discussed. The linkage between the study programme and the study field is reflected in the aim of the study field, which is to ensure all levels of up-to-date health care education necessary for the Latvian state and in the international environment. It is clear that the study programme is an integral part of the study field and fully integrates in the study field, ensuring achievement of the aim defined for it, because it is a continuation of the previous level studies and ensures the preparation of certified specialists for work in the health care system. The study programme is a successive follow-up to the second level higher professional education programme "Medicine" (49721) or the second level higher professional education programme "Dentistry" (49724), in which students obtain a physician's or dentist's degree. After obtaining a physician's or dentist's degree, students commence studies in one of the specialties of the residency study programme, acquiring the knowledge, skills and competences necessary for certification and independent professional activity in the specialty. This is a clear conformity of the title of the study programme and professional qualification to be obtained to the purpose, tasks and results of the study programme, because physicians and dentists are prepared in the study programme for professional work in specialty and the health care system. During the on-site visit it was noticed that the academic staff was highly satisfied with the high level of the previous education of the students.

2.1.2. The title of the programme – second level professional higher education programme "Residency in Medicine" (according to new amendments in the regulatory framework: third cycle

professional higher education programme) (50721) reflects the logical follow-up process when the second level higher professional education programme "Medicine" (49721) or the second level higher professional education programme "Dentistry" (49724) is obtained after obtaining the second level professional higher education in medicine, degree of a physician or dentist (applying for the principal specialty or subspecialty in dentistry) or physician's degree and a specialist's qualification in the principal specialty, what is described as the admission requirement. Logically, upon the graduation from the study programme "Residency in Medicine", qualification in a specific principal specialty, sub-specialty or additional specialty of a physician, which corresponds to the fifth level of professional qualification (according to new amendments in the regulatory framework: eighth professional qualification level), is awarded. Interlinks between aims, objectives, learning outcomes and the title, code and professional qualification to be obtained of the study programme are based on the different learning outcomes of each specialty and its implementation duration. The duration of the implementation is 1-6 years depending on the duration of implementation of the specialty, which is defined in 24.03.2009 Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 268 "Regulations on the Therapeutic Expertise of Medical Personnel and Students Acquiring the First- Or Second-Level Professional Higher Medical Education and the Extent of Their Theoretical and Practical Knowledge". The yearly scope of the study programme is 72 ECTS credits during 11 months of study work.

2.1.3. In the SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.1.1. it is stated there have been no significant changes in the content of the study programme since the previous accreditation, except the clarification of the aim and learning outcomes of the study programme. The aim of the study programme has not changed, it has been updated, taking into account the need to emphasize progress towards professional competitiveness of students in the international aspect. Learning outcomes have been updated emphasizing the aspects significant for mastering a specialized physician or dentist's profession, understanding of the healthcare system, the area of research and continuing education, business and innovation, as well as independent improvement of competences in further professional activity. The additional specialty programme "Homeopath" is not submitted for accreditation, as it can be developed as a continuing education programme when the regulatory framework is in place. There are 4 graduates in the additional specialty programme, the fifth (last) graduate will be in summer 2023.

There are some plans about the re-accreditation, it is planned to approve the change of the total number of credit points of the programme from 44 Latvian credit points (hereinafter referred to as "CP") to 48 CP or 72 points according to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (hereinafter referred to as "ECTS") per year, without changing the actual duration of studies. This change has been implemented in the light of amendments to the regulatory framework (the Law on Higher Education Institutions and the Cabinet Regulations issued in accordance with it), as well as by adjusting the number of credit points more precisely to the actual workload of the resident during the study period and ensuring an unambiguous understanding of the scope of residency studies on a monthly and annual basis, it should be emphasized that the actual workload of the resident during the study period remains unchanged. However, according to the Law on Higher Education Institutions, the length of the academic year would be 60 ECTS CP, for 11 months it could be 66 ECTS CP. In the opinion of an expert group, the shift from 48 CP to 72 ECTS CP could not be supported, because it does not comply with the requirements. In the opinion of experts, the residents should be informed how their hours are calculated against the credits obtained.

2.1.4. As it is stated in the SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.1.3. the preparation of qualified certified specialist physicians and dentists implemented in the study programme is with significant economic and social return and conforms to both the aim and outcomes specified in the National Development Plan of Latvia for 2021-2027 and the Public Health Guidelines of the Ministry of Health for 2017-2027.

RSU implements residency training according to the number of residency places defined by the state - Ministry of Health - by specialty (state budget studies), as well as according to the needs of

employers – medical treatment institutions (state budget and tuition fee studies). Resident studies are provided in 77 specialties: 46 principal specialties (studies should be carried out immediately after graduation of undergraduate medical studies), 18 sub-specialties and 13 additional specialties (studies after graduation from principal specialty).

In the dynamics of the number of students admitted to study programme, there has been a positive increase since the last stage of reaccreditation. The number of students has increased by a total of 18% since the academic year 2016/2017. It should be noted that the number of students admitted depends significantly on the decision of the Ministry of Health regarding the state-funded study places in a particular academic year. That number has risen slightly in recent years.

In the academic year 2015/2016, the Faculty of Residency was studied by four residents (~0.5% of the total number) who had an agreement with the regional medical treatment institution regarding the continuation of employment relations in the specialty after the completion of the residency studies. In the academic year 2022/2023, 175 such residents study in the Faculty of Residency (~20% of the total).

2.1.5. Not applicable.

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

The compliance of the study programme with the study field is well substantiated, it is based on the relations of the aim of the study field and the aim of the study programme, continuation context, which ensures fluent preparation of certified specialists for work in the healthcare system. The title, code and professional qualification to be obtained of the study programme are related with the aim, objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme, it logically correlates with the admission requirements. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation are justified and dependent on the duration of the speciality, which is defined by the Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 268. The yearly scope of the study programme is 72 ECTS credits during 11 months of study work. However, according to the Law on Higher Education Institutions, the length of the academic year would be 60 ECTS CP, for 11 months it could be 66 ECTS CP. In the opinion of an expert group, the shift from 48 CP to 72 ECTS CP could not be supported, because it does not comply with the requirements.

Aim and learning outcomes of the study programme were clarified aiming to emphasize the aspects significant for mastering a specialized physician or dentist's profession, understanding of the healthcare system, the area of research and continuing education, business and innovation, as well as independent improvement of competences in further professional activity. The dynamic of the number of students is positive, showing a significant increase by a total of 18% since academic year 2016/2017, it could be partly influenced by the increase of state-funded study places. The number of residents having the agreements with the regional medical treatment institutions regarding the continuation of employment relations in the specialty after the completion of the residency studies is increasing from ~0.5% of the total number in academic year 2015/2016 to ~20% in the academic year 2022/2023. In the opinion of residency graduates, collaboration with larger centers in the residency of pediatric oncohematology would be useful, also more ability to work in the different hospitals is needed.

Strengths:

1. The preparation of qualified certified specialist physicians implemented in the study programme is with significant economic and social return and conforms to both the aim and outcomes specified in the National Development Plan of Latvia for 2021-2027 and the Public Health Guidelines of the Ministry of Health for 2017-2027;
2. During the on-site visit it was noticed that the academic staff was satisfied with the high level of the previous education of the students.

Weaknesses:

1. The shift from 48 CP to 72 ECTS CP could not be supported, because it does not comply with the requirements. According to the Law on Higher Education Institutions, the length of the academic year would be 60 ECTS CP, for 11 months it could be 66 ECTS CP.

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1. Study programme "Residency in Medicine" (50721) is full-time intramural studies, providing for a resident's study work in the amount of the full-time equivalent.

The goals and objectives of the residency programme, as well as speciality programmes in different medical specialties, correspond to learning outcomes of the programme. The same can be mentioned about particular study courses included in the speciality programmes. The specialty study courses are logically combined in the educational programme. Certain programmes in various medical specialties are relevant and comply with modern requirements in the relevant fields of medicine. The speciality programmes are aimed at developing practical skills that allow graduates to be competitive in the labor market. The content of specialty study courses is constantly updated in accordance with developments in the relevant field of medicine.

The number of credit points for the programme "Residency in Medicine" is 48/72 CP/ECTS per year. The total amount of a resident specialty is from 48/72 CP/ECTS to 288/432 CP/ECTS depending on the duration of studies of the specialty. However, according to the Law on Higher Education Institutions, the length of the academic year would be 60 ECTS CP, for 11 months it could be 66 ECTS CP.

The volume of studies in credit points per year is planned as follows: one year of studies of a resident is 12 months, 11 months of which is study work, while 1 month – annual leave; one study week of a resident is 1/1,5 CP/ECTS; for study courses with an odd number of weeks, the number of CP/ECTS in full numbers is determined taking into account the importance of the study course in the acquisition of the specialty programme.

Study programme "Residency in Medicine" includes 77 different specialties. Each specialty programme consists of specialty study courses, which include practical and theoretical studying processes. Practical training includes simulation-based, manipulation and duty shifts. Each specialty programme involves non-medical study courses, such as - "Pedagogical Work", "Theoretical Education Provided by RSU", "Scientific Research Paper" and "State Examination". Because the study programme includes the specialties with different duration of studying (1-6 years), the distribution of practical and theoretical training, research study vary according to the number of years of studies.

The principle of the organization of studies, are the same for all specialties across one year:

- Practical training comprises 93%, 85% or 80% (depends on the year of study) and lasts all studying years. Practical trainings include:
 - Placement (manipulation, simulation study, duty shifts) is 44CP/66ECTS (2280 ac.hours) during first years of studies, 40CP/60 ECTS (2067 ac.hours) during penultimate year of studies, and 38CP/57ECTS (1960 ac.hours) during final year of studies. According to the Law on higher education institutions, the maximum number of hours for 1 ECTS CP is 30 academic hours, so, for example, 66 ECTS would have a maximum number of academic hours of 1980. If RSU is calculating 2280 ac. hours for 66 ECTS CP (first year of studies), it means 34,5 academic hours for 1 ECTS CP, 34,5 hours for 1 ECTS CP during the penultimate year of studies, and 34,4 academic hours for 1 ECTS CP during the final year of studies. In the opinion of the expert group, having 34,4-34,5 hours for 1 ECTS CT does not comply with the requirements of the Law on higher education institutions.
 - Pedagogical work is 2CP/3ECTS (90 ac.hours) during each year of studies.
 - Theoretical training – 7% each year:

- Seminars – 33 seminars every year – 66 ac.hours;
- Theoretical education provided by RSU - 2CP/3ECTS (107 ac.hours) during each year of studies. However, according to the requirements of the Law on Higher Education Institutions, the maximum number of academic hours for 3 ECTS would be 90. In the case there are 107 academic hours for 3 ECTS CP, there are 35,7 hours for 1 ECTS CP, and it exceeds the maximum of 30 hours for 1 ECTS CP.
- Scientific research work and national degree examination in Residency 0%, 8% or 13% (depends on the year of study).

The content of studies in each specialty allows students to gradually develop the knowledge, skills and competences of residents and prepare them for independent work in the specialty as a certified specialist, ensuring achievement of learning outcomes of the study programme. The study content is designed and complies with the needs of the sector and current scientific trends.

Study programme “Residency in Medicine” has been created in accordance with the laws and regulations of the Republic of Latvia – Medical Treatment Law, Law on Higher Education Institutions (except the requirement for the maximum number of hours for 1 ECTS CP (30 hours) and the requirement to have 60 ECTS CP per one year), binding regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers. The content of specialty programmes conforms to the requirements defined for each specialty in Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 268 issued on 24 March 2009 “Regulations on Therapeutic Expertise of Medical Personnel and Students Acquiring the First- or Second-Level Higher Professional Medical Education and the Extent of their Theoretical and Practical Knowledge”.

The content of specialty programmes is consistent with modern international trends in the field of medicine. It is regularly reviewed with the European Standards in Medical Training recommended by the European Union of Medical Specialists or recommendations in the specific specialty of the European Union of Professional Associations.

A high level of competence in the development of specialty study content (including based on current scientific developments) was confirmed during interviews with the Dean of the Faculty of Residency and Heads of Specialty programmes). The study content of each specialty is developed by the head of the specialty programme. Often they are the head of the professional association of the specialty or a member of the board of the association at the same time. All heads of specialty programmes work in research and are authors of many international scientific publications, participate in local and international conferences, and international training.

The practical training of residents takes place in full or in part in a medical treatment institution, which is a university hospital clinic or a leading clinic in the sector. Patient-safe teaching methods are important. CPR and emergency simulation training is required on an annual basis for all specialty programmes.

Some specialties (anaesthesiologist, reanimatologist, paediatric surgeon, general practitioner, gynaecologist, obstetrician, invasive radiologist, surgeon, paediatrician, ophthalmologist, trauma doctor, orthopaedist and urologist) include a separate study course consisting of simulation training, playing out different simulation scenarios at the RSU Medical Education Technology Centre or performing manipulations and surgeries on living tissue in the Doctors Safe Train center.

Very important point is provision of regular surveys of residents, graduates and employers that allow constant monitoring of programme quality and compliance with modern trends in medicine.

Theoretical and practical training of residents is organized in accordance with Rīga Stradiņš University Academic Regulations II - Regulations for Residency Studies [5]. During practical training at a medical institution, a resident performs professional activities under the direct supervision or guidance of a trained physician in accordance with Section 28 of the Medical Treatment Law and Paragraph 2 of the Cabinet Regulations No 268 of 24 March 2009 "Regulations Regarding Competence of Medical Practitioners and Students Studying First- or Second-level Professional Higher Medical Education Programmes in Medical Treatment and the Amount of Theoretical and Practical Knowledge of Such Persons”.

During the on-site visit, the students expressed their opinion that the workload of the studies is not well managed. The experts' panel agrees there is a need to reduce the workload by the students. The expert panel agrees with the opinion of the graduates, collaboration with larger centers in the residency of pediatric oncohematology would be useful, also more ability to work in the different hospitals is needed. The graduates were satisfied with the theoretical training and mental health education.

Theoretical knowledge was balanced with the clinical practice, however, the graduates experienced the shocking beginning of an independent working career. The communication between the University and hospital sometimes was problematic.

Employers mentioned that the leadership, project application preparation skills are lacking, as well as additional communication, finance management courses would be beneficial. The employers emphasized the importance of the knowledge in the area of establishment of a new health care institution, etc.

More experience in a simulated environment is needed in family medicine studies. More workplaces in the university hospital are required, they are more popular than regional hospitals. More work with ambulatory patients in family medicine is needed. Gastroenterology studies cooperation with neighboring countries, to have more conferences, with Baltic colleagues, in case of liver transplants. In Pediatric studies the meetings with the lawyer should be regular, to know more about the patients rights and other aspects.

It was mentioned by the graduates during the on-site visit that the basics about scientific paper preparation should be included in the study programme. The expert panel agrees there is a need to include the basic information about the scientific preparation in the study programme.

The length of the academic year, 72 ECTS CP is too high (should be a maximum of 66 ECTS CP), and the number of hours for 1 ECTS credit is also too high (34,4-34,5), it should not exceed 30 hours for 1 ECTS CP.

2.2.2. Not applicable

2.2.3. The study implementation methods in the Second level higher education study programme "Residency in Medicine" (50721) for obtaining the qualification of a medical specialist and for obtaining the qualification of a dental specialist, such as lectures (problem lectures) and theoretical practical classes are helpful in achievement of the learning outcomes, for example, learning outcome number one, as it is listed in the Parameters of the study programme: „according to the specialty, sub-specialty or additional specialty, the student is able to: demonstrate a thorough knowledge and understanding of the regularities of the structure and functionality of a healthy and sick person“.

The study implementation methods, such as mastering of practical manipulation, including the use of simulators, clinical problem analysis, clinical case presentation, patient education, independent specialty literature studies, discussions and clinical case discussions with physicians entitled to train and other colleagues, including residents, e-learning, are really helpful in achieving the learning outcome number three: „According to the specialty, sub-specialty or additional specialty, the student is able to: independently apply theory and problem-solving skills to assess the health of the patient in general, as well as the state of each system; in case of health disorders, able to identify the nature and causes thereof, explain the circumstances of the occurrence thereof, to differentiate and explain differences among diseases; integrate the knowledge of medical branches into a unified vision of the modern possibilities of the sector, diagnosis group or patient's health care“.

All the study implementation methods are related with the aim of the study programme "Residency in Medicine", which is described in the parameters of the study programme, i.e. to ensure the acquisition and development of theoretical knowledge and practical skills for the training of high quality and internationally competitive doctors for specialty certification, in accordance with the regulatory documents of the Republic of Latvia and the European Union, using an approach consistent with international standards of medical education. The coherence between the study

methods and the course learning outcomes is illustrated in the study course descriptions (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.1., Annex 20. Description of Study Courses).

The residents in the study process have clear learning outcomes and aims to be achieved by his/her studies. The study content is interconnected, the study tasks are complex, interacting with each other and ensuring deep learning.

During the on-site visit it was noted that in the study programme a competence-based, problem-based and decision making based learning is being implemented in a very good simulation center. Challenges identified by the academic staff – improvement of the personal development of the students, to form their values and increase their motivation.

Each specialty programme contains specialty study courses. Any specialty study course has a description of the manipulations to be mastered, minimum number of performance, methods of examination.

Essential method of studying for a residence programme is practical training. Duration and content of practical study depends on the specialty programme. During practical training, a resident does professional activities under direct supervision or guidance of a trained physician or dentist..

Theoretical and practical training of residents is organized in accordance with RSU Academic Regulations II – Regulation for residence studies.

All studying processes are organized by the student-centered educational principle: for example, a resident studies primarily independently, establishing discussion with the professional. A lecturer-supervisor conducts the theoretical and practical training by progressively reducing monitoring and control. The resident always receives feedback from teaching staff. During the interview, residents mentioned that they have close communication with their supervisors, and permanent meetings with programme directors. However, some of the residents noted that it would be better to have more communication with University staff.

Each specialty programme includes different methods of teaching, like interactive lectures, theoretical practical classes, seminars, individual practical and scientific research papers, mastering of practical manipulation (including simulators), clinical case study, method of discussion. The study implementation methods contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study courses and the study programme.

2.2.4. The internship is not foreseen in the second level higher higher education study programme for obtaining the qualification of a medical specialist and for obtaining the qualification of a dental specialist, because in accordance with the Medical Treatment Law, a resident is a working student who, while undertaking the professional activity of a doctor, acquires the knowledge, skills and competences specified in an accredited study programme. Namely, the practical part is implemented within the framework of the employment relationship as work-based training. A resident's book is used to record and assess the knowledge, skills and competences of residents. The e-book was introduced in the academic year 2023/2024, since partial digitization has been started.

2.2.5. Not applicable.

2.2.6. The topics of students' final theses are compliant with the learning outcome number 8, part B - According to the specialty, sub-specialty or additional specialty, the student is able to carry out scientific research or the development of methods appropriate to the sector, producing a product of value to society, the sector or the profile, demonstrating understanding and ethical responsibility for the results of one's activities. The topics of scientific research of medical residents correspond to both the current problems of each specialty and public health in general and contribute to their resolution by providing scientific knowledge. For example, in both academic year 2020/2021 and academic year 2021/2022, residents actively focused on research into the effects of overcoming COVID-19 virus infection in patients of the particular specialty. Medical residents of dental sub-specialties focus on research into various modern technologies in orthodontics, dental prosthetics, etc. (SAR, Part II, paragraph 3.2.6., Annex 22. Topics of students' final papers).

Difficulties in finding supervisors for the resident research studies were identified during the on-site visit. More shared responsibility between the University and Hospital, some financial funds are needed for researchers, however it's a problem for the whole country. It would be helpful for the students to spend some time abroad, exchange among Baltic countries could be helpful. Heads of specialty programmes could control more the process of choosing a supervisor for the students, because the different attitude could influence different number of manipulations appointed, etc. More interdisciplinary meetings could be beneficial, they should be mandatory.

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

The goals and objectives of the study programme "Residency in Medicine" as well as specialty programmes in different medical specialties, correspond to learning outcomes of the programme. The same can be mentioned about particular study courses included in the specialty programmes. The specialty study courses are logically combined in the educational programme. Certain programmes in various medical specialties are relevant and comply with modern requirements in the relevant fields of medicine. The specialty programmes are aimed at developing practical skills that allow graduates to be competitive in the labor market. The content of specialty study courses is constantly updated in accordance with developments in the relevant field of medicine. The content of studies in each specialty allows students to gradually develop the knowledge, skills and competences of residents and prepare them for independent work in the specialty as a certified specialist, ensuring achievement of learning outcomes of the study programme. The study content is designed and complies with the needs of the sector and current scientific trends. The content of specialty programmes is consistent with modern international trends in the field of medicine. It is regularly reviewed with the European Standards in Medical Training recommended by the European Union of Medical Specialists or recommendations in the specific specialty of the European Union of Professional Associations.

Study programme "Residency in Medicine" has been created in accordance with the laws and regulations of the Republic of Latvia – Medical Treatment Law, Law on Higher Education Institutions, binding regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers. The content of specialty programmes conforms to the requirements defined for each specialty in Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 268 issued on 24 March 2009 "Regulations on Therapeutic Expertise of Medical Personnel and Students Acquiring the First- or Second-Level Higher Professional Medical Education and the Extent of their Theoretical and Practical Knowledge".

However, the expert panel agrees with the students' opinion that there is a need to reduce the workload by the students. The expert panel considers the collaboration with larger centers in the residency of pediatric oncohematology would be useful. The communication between the University and hospital should be improved. Expert panel agrees there should be more attention paid to leadership, project application, communication, finance management skill development.

The expert panel agrees that more experience in a simulated environment is needed in family medicine studies. More workplaces in the university hospital are required, they are more popular than regional hospitals. More work with ambulatory patients in family medicine is needed. Gastroenterology studies cooperation with neighboring countries, to have more conferences, with The expert panel agrees there is a need to include the basic information about the scientific preparation in the study programme.

All the study implementation methods are related with the aim of the study programme "Residency in Medicine", which is described in the parameters of the study programme, i.e. to ensure the acquisition and development of theoretical knowledge and practical skills for the training of high quality and internationally competitive doctors for specialty certification, in accordance with the regulatory documents of the Republic of Latvia and the European Union, using an approach consistent with international standards of medical education. The coherence between the study

methods and the course learning outcomes is illustrated in the study course descriptions.

All studying processes are organized by the student-centered educational principle: for example, a resident studies primarily independently, establishing discussion with the professional. A lecturer-supervisor conducts the theoretical and practical training by progressively reducing monitoring and control. The resident always receives feedback from teaching staff. During the interview, residents mentioned that they have close communication with their supervisors, and permanent meetings with programme directors. However, some of the residents noted that it would be better to have more communication with University staff.

The internship is not foreseen in the second level higher education study programme for obtaining the qualification of a medical specialist and for obtaining the qualification of a dental specialist, because in accordance with the Medical Treatment Law, a resident is a working student who, while undertaking the professional activity of a doctor, acquires the knowledge, skills and competences specified in an accredited study programme.

The topics of students' final theses are compliant with the learning outcome number 8, part B - According to the specialty, sub-specialty or additional specialty, the student is able to carry out scientific research or the development of methods appropriate to the sector, producing a product of value to society, the sector or the profile, demonstrating understanding and ethical responsibility for the results of one's activities. The topics of scientific research of medical residents correspond to both the current problems of each specialty and public health in general and contribute to their resolution by providing scientific knowledge.

The length of the academic year, 72 ECTS CP is too high (should be a maximum of 66 ECTS CP), and the number of hours for 1 ECTS credit is also too high (34,4-34,5), it should not exceed 30 hours for 1 ECTS CP.

Strengths:

1. Competence-based, problem-based and decision making based learning is being implemented in a very good simulation center.

Weaknesses:

1. Insufficient international collaboration with Baltic countries for scientific purposes.

2. Insufficient experience in a simulated environment and lack of interdisciplinary training.

3. Lack of training about scientific paper preparation.

4. Lack of leadership, project application preparation, communication, finance, health care management skills.

5. Students' workload is too high, according to the students' opinion.

6. The length of the academic year, 72 ECTS CP is too high (should be a maximum of 66 ECTS CP), and the number of hours for 1 ECTS credit is also too high (34,4-34,5), it should not exceed 30 hours for 1 ECTS CP.

7. Lack of students' preparation for an independent career.

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1. Based on the information available from the SAR and obtained during the visit to RSU, it is

possible to conclude that the provision of the study programme “Residency in Medicine” can be conditionally divided into two parts: the base of implementation of studies at RSU (1) and in medical institutions (2).

The material and technical base provided by RSU has been developed according to the standards of modern medical education. The infrastructure of the RSU Medical Education Technology Centre has been developed and the simulation-based resident training process has been improved (26_Anx_Information_Medical_Education_Technology_Centre.pdf). Every year, residents of all specialties participate in a seminar – simulation training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation and acute situations.

Simulation training was introduced as a pilot project in the academic year 2021/2022, but since the academic year 2022/2023, it has been included in the programmes of a number of specialties; during this training students act out various simulation scenarios. With the academic year 2022/2023, in some specialties, residents are trained on living tissues at the Doctors Safe Train Centre, which is a joint foundation of Riga Stradins University and Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies (SAR, p. 374 – 376).

For the advancement of theoretical knowledge in the process of practical training, as well as for the development of scientific research work, residents use the resources and databases provided by the RSU Library (23.2_Anx_Evaluation of the Library Resources_Residency in Medicine). The RSU Library provides wholesome support for the implementation of a modern residency study process, both by providing study materials in person and online, and in case of necessity, by quickly ordering new study materials depending on the needs of RSU lecturers.

Several evidence-based medicine databases provided by the RSU Library should be mentioned as support for the residents’ practical training: UpToDate, DynaMed and Cochrane Library. From the e-platforms provided by RSU, RSU residents mainly use two websites: the student portal MyRSU and e-studies (23.3_Anx_Inform_methodol_provision_regarding IT infrastructure).

The training of residents in a specific medical institution depends on the speciality and a specific study course within the speciality and takes place both in medical institutions that are leading centres of excellence in the relevant field, in clinics of the relevant specialization in clinical university hospitals, specialized hospitals, outpatient medical institutions, and family doctors’ practices.

Practical (including duty on-call) and theoretical training of residents takes place in medical institutions, as also partially does the development of scientific research work. All in all, RSU has concluded contracts for the implementation of resident training with 108 medical institutions (09_Anx_Student_placement_Residency).

2.3.2. Not applicable

2.3.3. According to the Cabinet Regulations No 685 “Procedure for Admission and Posting of Residents and Financing of Residency” (hereinafter – the Cabinet Regulations), the Ministry of Health administers the financial resources allocated for the training of residents. Every year, the Ministry of Health concludes a contract with RSU on training of medical residents and the allocation of financial resources for the training (the average number of budget residents is 550 residents per year). To cover the expenses related to the theoretical and practical training of a resident, medical institutions are allocated EUR 3,807.60 per year per resident; the sum is envisaged for the remuneration of medical doctors and other teaching staff and to cover the expenses related to the organization of residency. On the other hand, RSU receives EUR 1297.68 from the state budget for one resident per year, which RSU uses to pay expenses related to resident training (SAR, p. 377).

Taking into account the fact that the number of resident students with state budget funding is determined by the decision of the Ministry of Health on places financed by the state budget (the Cabinet Regulations No 685 “Procedure for Admission and Posting of Residents and Financing of Residency”) and the fact that in the last six years this number has grown slightly (the average number of budget residents is 550 residents per year), expert group can conclude that the

programme has sufficient number of students to generate sufficient income.

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

The training of residents takes place in RSU (Medical Education Technology Centre, Doctors Safe Train Centre) and medical institutions that are leading centers of excellence in the relevant field, in clinics of the relevant specialization in clinical university hospitals, specialized hospitals, outpatient medical institutions, and family doctors' practices. University centers and clinics and the main specialized medical institutions are a logical choice, as they are able to provide both the required amount of treatment and highly developed medical technologies, as well as highly qualified specialists who carry out academic work and research.

Taking into account the fact that the number of resident students with state budget funding is determined by the decision of the Ministry of Health on places financed by the state budget (the Cabinet Regulations No 685 "Procedure for Admission and Posting of Residents and Financing of Residency") and the fact that in the last six years this number has grown slightly (the average number of budget residents is 550 residents per year), expert group can conclude that the programme has sufficient number of students to generate sufficient income.

Strengths:

1. Programme is provided with advanced material and a technical base for resident training at RSU and the clinics for achieving programme learning outcomes.
2. The RSU has library resources, advanced databases, and student portal MyRSU and e-studies.

Weaknesses:

1. None.

Assessment of the requirement [6]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Advanced material and technical base for resident training at RSU and the clinics; plenty of high-quality library resources.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1. The study programme "Residency in Medicine" is ensured both by RSU lecturers (heads of specialty programmes and lecturers of theoretical education activities) and doctors from the medical institution who are entitled to provide training. The head of each specialty programme, who is a high-level professional in the relevant field, is most often the head or a board member of the specialty's professional association and is thus involved in supervising the management and further education content of the specialty at a national or international level (24.7_pielikums_2LPSP_Rezidentūra_medicīnā). Lecturers of theoretical education activities are experts in the relevant fields. The heads of specialty programmes and lecturers of theoretical education activities actively participate in the training implemented by RSU for the improvement of professional skills (SAR, p. 378).

Medical doctors eligible for training from the medical institution are selected by the head of the specialty programme, in agreement with the employee of the relevant medical institution responsible for the residency study process, and the doctor him/herself. For this work, the head of

the specialty programme selects highly qualified professionals in the relevant field, if possible – the ones having previous experience in student training (those having pedagogical skills). In certain specialties, taking into account the specifics of the field and the programme, the head of the specialty programme also determines additional quality requirements. The list of medical doctors who are involved in training residents is defined in the cooperation agreements on resident training signed between RSU and medical institutions as an annex, stipulating that the mentioned professionals meet the requirements of the existing regulatory acts, which have been established for a person to be eligible for training residents – they are doctors recertified in the relevant specialty. The qualification of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programme “Residency in Medicine” meets the conditions of the study programme implementation and the requirements of regulatory acts, and the qualification of the teaching staff helps to achieve the learning outcomes.

2.4.2. SAR (p. 380) provides information on changes in the composition of RSU teaching staff (heads of specialty programmes and lecturers of theoretical education activities) involved in the implementation of the PHESP “Residency in Medicine”. Since the previous reaccreditation, there are only minor changes in the composition of the staff of the heads of specialty programmes. If a head of a specialty programme has left the position, another suitably qualified head of the specialty programme has been nominated in his/her place, maintaining the quality management of the specialty programme.

Likewise, in order to gradually ensure the replacement of generations in the management of the programme or to attract a head of the specialty programme from a medical treatment institution, one more head of the specialty programme is recruited.

The changes in the composition of the staff of instructors of the theoretical education provided by RSU are minor and are basically related to the thematic change of the theoretical education activities included in this study course and thus to the change of lecturers in order to ensure a high-level lecturer for the relevant theoretical seminar /class, the inclusion of which contributes to the quality of the programme.

The changes in the composition of the teaching staff are not drastic, they are purposeful and justified.

2.4.3. Not applicable.

2.4.4. There are 2 groups of teaching staff involved in the studying process of the study programme “Residency in Medicine”:

1. Teaching staff provided by RSU (Heads of the specialty programmes, academic staff) and
2. Teaching staff provided by a medical treatment institution (physicians or dentists) – who are professionals in the relevant field of medicine.

17 lecturers, or 33% of all elected lecturers involved in the implementation of the study programme “Residency in Medicine” have been employed at least once in RSU research projects since 2017 (Annex 24.7). Since 2017, data on 1251 publications have been entered in ZDIS Pure (RSU Current Research Information System) for 83 lecturers involved in the study programme “Residency in Medicine”. 71 lecturers have data on one or more publications. The most publications were prepared in 2021 (367), 2020 (250) and 2022 (196) (Annex 6.4). Of the 1251 publications, 599 were published in journals for which the journal impact factor was calculated in 2021; the list includes 100 publications with the highest journal impact factors.

Each member of Academic staff has publications in peer-reviewed national and international journals during the last six years. Each member of the teaching staff who provides practical training in the clinics has at least 5 years of practical experience in accordance with the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

2.4.5. Mutual cooperation of the teaching staff in the implementation of the study programme has been established, this was proven by the interview with teaching staff, heads of the specialty programmes and the director of the study programme “Residency in Medicine”. RSU organizes

meetings of the Heads of the specialty programmes, where any issues related to the implementation of the programme and the organization of training (theoretical and practical classes) are discussed in detail. A very important fact is that during these meetings there is an exchange of views and an exchange of best practices.

One example of good cooperation are the so-called "discussion days" organized by the RSU. "Discussion days" are a theoretical educational event during which residents of different specialties, under the guidance of the director of the specialty programmes, present clinical cases on a specific topic.

Meetings of heads of specialty programmes are organized 2-3 times a year, at which any issues of the educational process, changes in programmes, teaching methods, and evaluation methods are discussed. The entire described process proves the achievement of the goals of the educational programme and the interrelation of training courses within the educational programme.

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

The qualification of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programme "Residency in Medicine" meets the conditions of the study programme implementation and the requirements of regulatory acts, and the qualification of the teaching staff ensures the achievement of the learning outcomes.

The changes in the composition of the teaching staff are purposeful and justified.

Each member of Academic staff has publications in peer-reviewed national and international journals during the last six years. Each member of the teaching staff who provides practical training in the clinics has at least 5 years of practical experience.

Mutual cooperation of the teaching staff in the implementation of the study programme has been established.

Strengths:

None.

Weaknesses:

None.

Assessment of the requirement [7]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The qualification of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programme "Residency in medicine" meets the conditions of the study programme implementation and the requirements of regulatory acts, and the qualification of the teaching staff ensures the achievement of the learning outcomes.

The changes in the composition of the teaching staff are purposeful and justified.

Each member of Academic staff has publications in peer-reviewed national and international journals during the last six years. Each member of the teaching staff who provides practical training in the clinics has at least 5 years of practical experience.

Mutual cooperation of the teaching staff in the implementation of the study programme has been established.

2.5. Assessment of the Compliance

Requirements

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

The second level professional higher education study programme “Residency in Medicine” complies with the State Professional Higher Education Standard – Cabinet of Ministers’ Regulations No. 305 “Regulations on the State Standard of the Second Level Professional Higher Education” (13 June, 2023) (17.1_Anx_National_educ_standard_Residency). However, the length of the academic year, 72 ECTS CP is too high (should be a maximum of 66 ECTS CP), and the number of hours for 1 ECTS credit is also too high (34,4-34,5), it should not exceed 30 hours for 1 ECTS CP.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 3 3 - The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in all languages in which the study programme is implemented, and they comply with the requirements set forth in Section 561, Paragraph two and Section 562, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The RSU has submitted the study course descriptions for the study programme “Residency in Medicine” both in Latvian and English

(20_Anx_Residency_All_Programms_Study_course_description_4436_pages).

The descriptions of the study courses are compliant with the regulations set forth in the Law on Higher Education Institutions. The descriptions of the study courses: define the requirements for the commencement of the acquisition of the study course; determine the aims for the implementation of the study course and the planned learning outcomes; outline the content of the study course necessary for the achievement of learning outcomes, contain the study course topic layout, mandatory and supplementary literature, indicate other sources of information; describe the organization and tasks for students’ independent work; determine the assessment criteria of learning outcomes.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The sample of the diploma and its supplement (24.1_Annex_Diploma_sample) are issued for completing the study programme in accordance with the Cabinet of Ministers’ Regulation No. 202 of 16.04.2013 “Procedures for Issuing State-Recognized Higher Education Certificates”

- 5 5 - The academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements set forth in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 6 6 - Academic study programmes provided for less than 250 full-time students may be implemented and less than five professors and associated professors of the higher education institution may be involved in the implementation of the mandatory and limited elective part of these study programmes provided that the relevant opinion of the Council for Higher Education has been received in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 7 7 - At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of an academic doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field of science. At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a professional doctoral study programme in arts (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 8 8 - The teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme are proficient in the official language in accordance with the regulations on the level of the official language knowledge and the procedures for testing official language proficiency for performing professional duties and office duties.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The RSU has provided annexes

(24.4_AnxCertification_Regarding_Latvian_Language_of_the_Academic_Staff.pdf and 6.2_AnxBiographies_teaching_staff_2LSP_Residency_in_Medicine_EN_507pages) confirming that the language proficiency of the teaching staff is compliant with the Cabinet Regulation No. 733 "Regulations Regarding the Extent of the Knowledge of the Official Language, the Procedures for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language and the State Fee for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language"

- 9 9 - The teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language, if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The sample of the study agreement is fully compliant with the Law on Higher Education Institutions Section 46, paragraph 2, and the Cabinet Regulations No 70 of 23.01.2007 "The Mandatory Provisions to be included in the study agreement" (24.8_AnxCStudy contract sample_Health Care study direction.pdf).

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

In Annex 24.2. (24.2_pielik_Apliecinajumi_par_parnemsanu_eng.7z) it is indicated that students of the study programme "Residency in Medicine" will be provided with the opportunity to continue their education at University of Latvia Professional Higher Education Study Programme "Residency in Medicine" (LU Vienošānās 20.04.2021. Nr. 59-22/E/356/2021).

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

RSU has provided the confirmation that students are guaranteed compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the study programme's license is revoked. It is ensured based on the Section 55(8) of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education and Cabinet of Ministers' regulations No 795 of 11 December 2018 "Regulations on Licensing of Study Programmes", Paragraph 13.4. The relevant document can be found under Annex 24.3_Anx_Certification_of_Compensation_of_Losses_to_Students.pdf.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Second level higher higher education for obtaining the qualification of a medical specialist and for obtaining the qualification of a dental specialist "Residency in Medicine" (50721) (complies with Cabinet of Ministers' Regulation No 268 "Regulations on the medical personnel and students who acquire the first or second level professional higher education programs for medical, therapeutic expertise and their theoretical and practical knowledge content" (17.2_Anx_MK268_mapping_Residency.pdf), the Law On the Regulated Professions and the Recognition of Professional Qualifications, the Medical Treatment Law.

Assessment of the requirement [8]

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Professional Higher Education Study Programme "Residency in Medicine" partially complies with the requirements set forth in the Law on Higher Education Institutions and other regulatory enactments. The length of the academic year and the number of hours for 1 ECTS credit should be reviewed.

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

The study programme is competence-based. Problem-based and decision making based learning is being implemented in a very good simulation center. Challenges identified by the academic staff – improvement of the personal development of the students, to form their values and increase their motivation. Leadership, project application preparation, communication, finance, management, economics skill training should be improved, as well the students' workload should be revised and reduced.

The study programme implementers should focus more on the expansion of the students' experience in a simulated environment, as well as more extensive interdisciplinary training. On the long-term basis there should be developed international collaboration among Baltic countries for scientific purposes. The training of residents takes place in RSU (Medical Education Technology Centre, Doctors Safe Train Centre) and medical institutions that are leading centers of excellence in the relevant field, in clinics of the relevant specialization in clinical university hospitals, specialized hospitals, outpatient medical institutions, and family doctors' practices. Taking into account the fact

that the number of resident students with state budget funding is determined by the decision of the Ministry of Health on places financed by the state budget (the Cabinet Regulations No 685 "Procedure for Admission and Posting of Residents and Financing of Residency") and the fact that in the last six years this number has grown slightly (the average number of budget residents is 550 residents per year), we can conclude that the programme has sufficient number of students to generate sufficient income. Mutual cooperation of the teaching staff in the implementation of the study programme has been established, this was proven by the interview with teaching staff, heads of specialty programmes and the director of the programme "Residency in Medicine". RSU organizes meetings of programme managers, where any issues related to the implementation of the programme and the organization of training (theoretical and practical classes) are discussed in detail. "Second level professional higher education for obtaining the qualification of a medical specialist and for obtaining the qualification of a dental specialist "Residency in Medicine" (50721)" fully complies with the requirements set forth in the Law on Higher Education Institutions and other regulatory enactments. However, the study programme does not comply with the requirements of the Law on higher education institutions regarding the maximum number of hours for 1 ECTS CP (it should not exceed 30, but now it is 34.4-34.5), and the length of the academic year (it should be 60-66 ECTS CP, now it is 72 ECTS CP).

Evaluation of the study programme "Residency in Medicine"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Residency in Medicine"

Short-term recommendations

- | |
|--|
| 1) More experience in a simulated environment is needed, as well as interdisciplinary training should be expanded. |
| 2) The basics about scientific paper preparation should be included in the study programme. |
| 3) Leadership, project application preparation, communication, finance, management, economics skill training should be improved. |
| 4) Students' workload should be revised and reduced. |
| 5) The maximum number of hours for 1 ECTS CP should be reduced to 25-30 hours per 1 ECTS CP, and the length of the academic year should be reduced to 60-66 ECTS CP instead of 72 ECTS CP, or RSU should look for another solution, which in the external regulatory framework provides exception in determining the amount of work hours of residency students. |
| 6) Additional training for the students' preparation for independent work could be beneficial. |

Long-term recommendations

- | |
|---|
| 1) International collaboration among Baltic countries should be more developed for scientific purposes. |
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II - "Health Care " ASSESSMENT

II - "Health Care " ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1. The doctoral study programme “Health Care” complies with indicators, conditions and criteria of the study field of “Health Care”. The length of the implementation of the study programme, which is 4 years, is evaluated as sufficient for acquiring the necessary skills and conduct extensive research, publish necessary amounts of articles, acquire presenting skills and fulfill all the substantial preconditions prior to receiving a PhD level degree. This programme is unique as it consists of 3 sub-programmes: 1. “Medicine” (51 721), “Pharmacy” (51 725) and “Psychology” (51 313). The study programme is implemented in two languages - English and Latvian.

2.1.2. According to the SAR p.876, the title of the study programme is “Health Care” in the study field of “Health Care” with education classification code 51721, however, as it combines 3 sub-programmes, there are different education classification codes for each one of them: 1. “Medicine” (51 721), “Pharmacy” (51 725) and “Psychology” (51 313). Based on the Latvian education classification codes that can be accessed here: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/291524-noteikumi-par-latvijas-izglitiba-klasifikaciju>, each of the sub-programmes classify in a different group of education programmes, while remaining in the same group of thematic area - “Health Care”. Sub-programme “Medicine” (51 721) belongs to the group of education programmes entitled “Medicine”, sub-programme “Pharmacy” (51 725) belongs to the group of education programmes entitled “Pharmacy” and sub-programme “Psychology” (51 313) corresponds to the thematic area Social and Human Sciences and belongs to the group of education programmes entitled “Psychology”.

According to SAR p.876, the aim of the programme is to apply an integrated and complementary approach that enables addressing current challenges related to human health, to prepare highly qualified scientists and teaching staff in the fields of health care in medicine, pharmacy and psychology in order to realize and independently manage research projects both in Latvia and internationally, as well as develop academic competence for ensuring the continuity and sustainability of education.

Each of the sub-programs has a specific goal, tasks and learning outcomes, which are generally aligned with the goals, tasks and learning outcomes of the entire programme. This approach also helps to meet the requirements regarding sub-programmes stated in the Law on Higher education institutions.

According to the information provided in the SAR p. 877 - 878, the admission requirements of this programme differ based on the sub-programme. In the “Medicine” sub-programme, the admission requirement is a Master's degree in health care or an equivalent degree in medicine, dentistry, biology, biomedicine or pharmacy. For the “Pharmacy” sub-programme the requirement is a Master's degree in health care or an equivalent degree in pharmacy, chemistry, medicine, stomatology or biology, or a Master's degree of engineering in materials sciences. For “Psychology” sub-programme the requirement is a Master's degree in psychology or a corresponding higher education diploma in social and human action sciences or health care, or social welfare, or in pedagogy education and education sciences or in humanities. For this sub-programme, there is a possibility that an applicant who has not obtained a Master's or Bachelor's degree in psychology must additionally pass an entrance examination in the basic branches of psychology: general (cognitive) psychology; developmental psychology; personality psychology; social psychology; clinical psychology; health psychology. When asked during an on-site visit about the entrance exam, it was stated that the entrance exam is complicated and could be evaluated to a level of knowledge that is acquired by students that graduate their Masters in Psychology. As stated in the analysis before, the programme is implemented in two languages - Latvian and English. For the English programme, an additional requirement is knowledge of English at least on a B2 level.

It has been stated in the SAR p.878, that after successful completion of the studies, students are awarded with a Doctor of Science (PhD) in Medicine and Health Sciences or Doctor of Science (PhD) in Social Sciences. The study programme is a full-time study programme with 176 CP to be gathered during the study process of 4 years.

The title, code, degree to be obtained of the study programme, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation as well as the implementation languages, are reasonable and justified. It is seen as a benefit and considered justified that the programme is offered in English and Latvian as it allows for foreign students to study in Latvia on a doctoral level.

2.1.3. According to SAR p.880, there are no changes to the study programme at the moment.

2.1.4. In general, as in all doctoral programmes, the main focus of the programme is to conduct research and involve in scientific activity bringing an economic and social benefit to the society, transferring knowledge and do more extensive analysis in a topic and field of interest.

Based on the information provided in the SAR p.891, RSU provides various research platforms for doctoral students that ensures possibilities to conduct qualitative research. One of such platforms mentioned is Medical Platform, which is a knowledge center for the RIS3 (Smart Specialisation Strategy) ecosystem in biomedicine, biopharmacy, medical technologies and biotechnologies. It provides the knowledge base for the ecosystem.

According to SAR p.892, the implementation of the doctoral programme started very recently - on 3 October 2022 with the enrolment of students for the 1st year of study of the academic year 2022/2023 in both English and Latvian language streams. 39 students were enrolled in the Latvian stream (31 in the sub-programme "Medicine", 4 in the sub-programme "Pharmacy", 4 in the sub-programme "Psychology") and 1 in the English stream (in the field of Medicine). There are no international students in the sub-programmes "Pharmacy" and "Psychology". As the programme was recently licensed, the English stream had not been announced yet, but there are plans to announce it in the future. According to the SAR p.893, students from the previous programmes "Medicine" and "Pharmacy" were transferred to the doctoral study programme "Health Care". A total of 84 students were transferred (5 in the sub-programme "Pharmacy", 79 in the sub-programme "Medicine"). The students (4 students in total) "Psychology" were not transferred to the "Health Care" programme but continued their studies in their previous programme. No new students are admitted to the three-year doctoral programme "Psychology" from the academic year 2022/2023.

Based on the information and data provided in the SAR p.893, the dynamics of the number of students enrolled in the previously implemented sub-programmes as programmes, it can be seen that in the period from the academic year 2016/2017 to the academic year 2020/2021 the overall enrolment can be assessed as stable: the number of students enrolled in the sub-programme "Medicine" was between 30 and 34 throughout the reporting period, in the sub-programme "Pharmacy" between 3 and 4 and in the sub-programme "Psychology" (starting with the implementation of the programme in the academic year 2017/2018) between 2 and 8. In the sub-programme "Medicine", one international student from Lithuania studied full-time (non-exchange) in the period from the academic year 2016/2017 to the academic year 2018/2019.

Expert group wishes to raise a concern that the sub-programme "Psychology" compared to other two sub-programmes has way lower number of doctoral students that enroll every year. It can be possibly explained by the fact that there are a comparably lower number of state - funded places, thus, the attractiveness can be seen as lower, but it would be highly advisable to review the situation and promote the sub-programme.

According to SAR p.894, drop-out rate analysis shows that the majority of students leave their studies in the 3rd or final year of study. The majority of students leave their studies of their own free will and do not resume their studies after an academic leave. In rare cases, the reason for dropping

out is failure to succeed. Socio-economic conditions and financial burden are the most common reasons for dropping out for fee-paying students.

Based on the information provided in the SAR p.894, there are various opportunities for doctoral students to participate in mobility activities as well as research and other skill development. doctoral students have the opportunity to further their knowledge with foreign visiting professors; doctoral study grants provide funding for mobility. In addition to these activities, doctoral students are involved in research projects and networks implemented by RSU and cooperation partners. , Erasmus+ cooperation agreements for the exchange of students and staff have been concluded with 45 universities in various European countries (Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, France, Lithuania, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, etc.) until the end of 2027.

However, the incoming mobility is comparably low. It has been stated in the SAR p.895 that international mobility has increased by 100% over three years and mentioned that in the academic year 2019/2020, one student from Klaipeda University in Lithuania participated in the Erasmus placement mobility. At least one doctoral student per year in the sub-programme "Psychology" has the opportunity for international mobility. In the opinion of the expert group, that is not a sufficient amount and it would be highly advisable to build a stronger partnership with other universities and encourage students to participate in exchange from abroad.

Based on the information gathered and provided in the SAR analysis, it is clear that the main focus of RSU on a doctoral level is on sub-programme "Medicine", which creates an imbalance and results in a lack of attention to the other two sub-programmes. Based on the information accessible on RSU webpage, there are 25 budget places in sub-programme "Medicine" and 10 self-financed places with a discount. For the "Pharmacy" sub-programme, there are 3 budget places, 4 self-financed and 2 self-financed with a discount. For the "Psychology" sub-programme, there is only 1 budget place, 3 self-financed and 3 self-financed with a discount. Expert group believes that this has to be changed in the future with an implementation of more budget places or at least discounted places for the other two sub-programmes.

2.1.5. Not applicable.

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

All of the indicators of the study programme are in compliance with the existing preconditions of the implementation of the study programme. The Doctoral study programme "Health Care" complies with the study field indicators, conditions and criteria. In the opinion of the experts, the title, codes, degrees to be obtained of the study programme, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation as well as the implementation languages, are reasonable and justified. The study programme is implemented in Latvian and English. Incoming mobility is comparably low. The main focus of doctoral studies is on sub-programme "Medicine" which creates an imbalance and results in a lack of attention to the other two sub-programmes.

Strengths:

1.None.

Weaknesses:

1.Incoming mobility is comparably low.

2. Lack of focus and budget places for the two sub-programmes of "Pharmacy" and "Psychology", which results in low enrollment of students in these two sub-programmes compared to sub-programme "Medicine".

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1. The goal of the study programme is applying an integrated and complementary approach that enables addressing current challenges related to human health, to prepare highly qualified scientists and teaching staff in the fields of health care in medicine, pharmacy and psychology in order to realize and independently manage research projects both in Latvia and internationally, as well as develop academic competence for ensuring the continuity and sustainability of education. The 4-year study programme includes 78% (138 CP/207 ECTS) research and 22% (38 CP/57 ECTS) study courses, knowledge dissemination, pedagogy, and research mobility. This is according to Cabinet of Ministers Order No. 345 "On the Conceptual Report "On the Introduction of a New Doctoral Education Model in Latvia" (SAR p. 896; <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/315685-par-konceptualo-zinojumu-par-jauna-doktoranturas-modela-ieviesanu-latvija>).

Implementation of the doctoral study programme relies on programme management and organizational structures for study programme delivery. During their studies, doctorate students can discuss topics with instructors and peers in person and remotely utilizing technology. The study curriculum emphasizes the necessity for each student to exhibit his/her creative and innovative potential, which is invaluable for future researchers and professionals. The didactic concept of the study programme promotes individual and group performance of doctoral students by organizing conferences, presenting and discussing current research and theory issues of the doctoral thesis topic, attending seminars for doctoral students, and participating in conferences and pre-conferences (SAR p. 897).

Doctoral studies at RSU follow the Academic Regulations for Doctoral Studies, which require students to work independently under the supervision of a thesis supervisor and academic staff to earn a doctorate. By creating an intellectually stimulating research environment, organizing study courses and other events (conferences, symposia) with RSU and other higher education staff, providing doctoral students with access to literature and methodological materials, offering research programmes, and facilitating student cooperation, learning outcomes are achieved. Mobility and internationalization will be supported via a visiting lecturer course. Participation in local and international research initiatives will earn credit points for elective study courses, acquiring experience and networking for a successful science career (SAR p. 897).

Scientific research, compulsory study, and voluntary study courses comprise the study plan. The scientific research component, which includes doctoral thesis writing, pedagogical work, knowledge dissemination, and seminars for students, is the most crucial part of the study process (78%). The mandatory Part A study courses include five core courses ('Methodology of Scientific Activity', 'Health Care and Research Ethics', 'Learning and Teaching in Higher Education and Science Area', 'Philosophy and Logic of Science', and 'Scientific Writing and Scientific Communication') and two dissertation exams—in the field and in a foreign language. In contrast, Part B and Part C electives offer restricted and elective courses (7% of the programme). Study courses correspond to the topics and specifics of the field of science and implement doctoral theses, ensuring mastering of widely used skills, as well as academic/scientific/professional ethics studies (Annex 17.1)

During the development of a study programme, the first step in the mapping process was to assess the developed learning outcomes of the study programme. During the mapping process, the initial outcomes were assessed against the requirements of the respective level of the Latvian Qualifications CoFramework (LQF/EQF) (Annex 18.1).

The mapping of PhD study programme and study courses indicates that they meet EQF/LQF level 8 and legislative requirements; and are maintaining a student-centered approach. The mapping results indicate the relationship between study course information, the stated objective and expected outcomes, and the study programme's aim and expected outcomes. Each study course

seeks to attain 2-4 study programme results, completing the programme's goal.

The study course content is based on the course aims, learning results, and programme goals and outcomes. The study programme mapping shows the connection. Several study courses align with each learning outcome in the curriculum. The LQF/EQF level 8 knowledge, abilities, and competencies were considered when mapping the learning level. Since the doctoral study programme's learning outcomes follow level 8's three dimensions, the mapping was successful (Annex 18.1).

Study courses are ordered to enable continuous learning and application. The study courses aim to prepare doctorate candidates for independent research, the doctoral exam, and to enhance their teaching and learning skills. The study curriculum has three parts: compulsory scientific research, compulsory study (Part A courses), and restricted electives (Part B and C courses). Doctoral students must complete compulsory courses such as "Learning and teaching in the higher Education and Science", "Philosophy of Science and Logic", and "Health Care and Research Ethics". They must also conduct independent scientific research, prepare and publish publications, and disseminate knowledge. The doctoral student works with the thesis supervisor to perform scientific research. This work follows the plan created by the doctorate student and thesis supervisor for each year of study. The student gets the most credit for scientific research. Academic success is ensured by active scientific activity, including scientific conferences, abstract preparation, research initiatives, and worldwide peer-reviewed publications. All RSU doctoral programmes provide scientific research credit points the same way. Doctoral students' workplaces or RSU departments may host undergraduate study programmes. The study curriculum includes two "Doctoral Seminars" ("Doctoral Seminar: Methodology and Techniques for Writing Doctoral Thesis" in the first semester and "Doctoral Seminar: Writing Doctoral Thesis" in the sixth semester) to support research. The mandatory section comprises courses that improve research methods and promote scientific writing and research. The compulsory study part for doctoral students includes courses such as "Learning and teaching in the higher Education and Science", "Philosophy of Science and Logic", and "Health Care and Research Ethics". It also requires independent scientific research, publication preparation, and knowledge dissemination. The study curriculum supports research with two "Doctoral Seminars" (in the first semester, "Doctoral communication skills"). ("Research Methodology", "Scientific Writing and Communication"). The "Pedagogical Work" course helps doctoral candidates strengthen their instructional skills. Doctoral students select restricted electives to develop abilities in scientific writing or project management related to their thesis topic. Doctoral students can swap limited electives with Part C electives, and not exceed four credit points. Seminar on Methodology and Techniques for Writing Doctoral Theses" and "Doctoral Seminar: Writing Doctoral Theses" in the sixth semester. Study courses that enhance research methods and improve scientific writing and communication are required. ("Research Methodology", "Scientific Writing and Communication"). Doctoral students learn pedagogy in "Pedagogical Work". Doctoral students select restricted electives to develop abilities in scientific writing or project management related to their thesis topic (Annex 18.1).

From the listed arguments and site visit observations, it is clear that the content of the study programme is topical; the content of the study courses / modules is interconnected and complementary, corresponds to the objectives of the program, ensures the achievement of learning outcomes, and meets the needs of the industry, labor market, and scientific trends. It also complies with national regulations and state education standards. The study programme meets the requirements of the level 8 of LQF/EQF (knowledge, skills and competences); the study courses included in the study programme ensure the achievement of the goal of the programme and the achievement of all the learning outcomes. Each of the included study courses is designed to achieve a number of learning outcomes of the study programme (except for "Civil Defence and Environmental Protection", which primarily supports the achievement of one learning outcome). The number of credit points of the study courses corresponds to the level and requirements for the

achievement of the learning outcomes of the study programme. The study programme trains qualified specialists in medicine, pharmacy, and psychology to meet EU requirements and foster lifelong learning and training based on complexity. The study programme is aligned with Latvia's priorities in implementing EU strategies, as its courses align with the main elements of the strategy and make the doctoral programme competitive.

However, there is some space for improvement. The study programme exhibits several deficiencies that warrant attention for improvement. There is a notable lack of emphasis on interdisciplinarity, hindering the programme's ability to provide a holistic educational experience. Additionally, the failure to integrate the study plan, learning outcomes, and content with other established doctoral programmes diminishes the overall coherence of the curriculum. The programme's insufficiently embrace new study formats, particularly remote learning facilitated by international teaching staff, which represents a missed opportunity for enriching the academic experience. Furthermore, the programme falls short in capitalizing on opportunities to address complex societal issues through collaborative, interdisciplinary projects. The programme also underutilized collaborations with other higher education institutions, professional organizations, and employers, limiting joint research initiatives and the improvement of the study process. Lastly, the integration of modern technologies for innovative teaching methods, such as simulation-based learning, is inadequately implemented, hindering the programme's adaptability to contemporary educational practices. Addressing these deficiencies is essential for enhancing the overall quality and relevance of the doctoral study programme.

The only 4 points of courses in elective part C, does not give students an opportunity to choose topics of their personal interests. Giving students more opportunities for elective courses will give DSP a closer to student - centered approach and give them the opportunity to develop some expertise that will contribute to the development of the economy of Latvia. The main goal of the DSP study programme is to develop highly skilled professionals who will be driving forces for the economy of Latvia and EU, based on innovation and sustainability. Therefore it is suggested to give more credits to elective part C of the programme and offer students topics related to the topic in the area of business, management, entrepreneurship and sustainability. It is also highly recommended to attend some of the international courses to spread a professional network and obtain new knowledge and skills. It is strongly encouraged to motivate students to attend joint guest lectures organized for different doctoral study programmes and consolidated doctoral study programmes; Joint study courses have been implemented in doctoral study programmes, e.g. within the Baltic Biomaterials Centre of Excellence (BBCE) project it is possible for doctoral students to share scientific equipment between Riga Technical University (RTU) and Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis (OSI). No modules are defined for the PhD study programme "Health Care" to allow students to customize their study path based on their thesis topic. In order to help young scientists choose a research field, 8 CP / 12 ECTS elective courses in Medicine, Pharmacy, and Psychology have been designed (see Table 5). However, in accordance with the principle of individual planning, the programme material is decided based on the doctoral thesis topic. Taking into account the Salzburg Principles and Recommendations, research excellence implies an individual path for the doctoral student in an open research environment and mobility, so the doctoral study programme "Health Care" requires a clearly defined individual study plan developed by the student, thesis supervisor, and RSU Department of Doctoral Studies. The development plan also suggests offering A and B courses in the doctoral study programme Psychology PhD, as C courses to other doctoral students, which is a good approach and highly recommended.

2.2.2. The assessment process shall take into account the assessment requirements set out in the academic education standard and RSU internal regulations (Doctoral Studies Academic Regulations III). The primary research fields of the Doctoral StP 'Health Care' include clinical medicine, basic medical sciences (such as pharmacy and medical biotechnology), health and sports sciences,

forensic medicine, and psychology. All PhD research areas align with the science field categories outlined by the Cabinet of Ministers. The doctoral study program focuses on scientific research and contributions in the field of science. To begin the doctoral dissertation process, two international publications are necessary to fulfill the program's requirements. The prerequisites are outlined in both the Academic Regulations for Doctoral Studies and the Regulations on the Operation of Promotion Councils and Promotion Procedures. The Academic Regulations for Doctoral Studies, approved by RSU Senate on 20.09.2022, Minutes No 2-S-1/7/2022, contains the following requirements for doctoral students regarding publications:

In order to recognise the four-year doctoral study programme as successfully completed, the doctoral student must have completed all the courses required for the doctoral study programme and must have carried out research activity during the doctoral studies (related to the topic of the doctoral thesis), which meets at least one of the following criteria: Two double-blind peer-reviewed scientific publications in scholarly journals or conference proceedings indexed in SCOPUS or Web of Science database, or included in the ERIH PLUS; One double-blind peer-reviewed scientific publication in a scholarly journal or conference proceedings indexed in SCOPUS or Web of Science database, or included in the ERIH PLUS and a peer-reviewed scientific monograph on one research topic or problem, and containing a bibliography.

In expert opinion, the assessment process for the doctoral study programme in the field of Health Care adheres to rigorous academic standards and internal regulations. By emphasizing scientific research, publication in scientific journals, the programme ensures that a degree is awarded based on achievements and significant contributions to the respective study field.

The criteria is well met.

2.2.3. Doctoral studies at RSU follow the Academic Regulations for Doctoral Studies, which require students to work independently under the supervision of a thesis supervisor and academic staff to earn a doctorate. By creating an intellectually stimulating research environment, organizing study courses and other events (conferences, symposia) with RSU and other higher education staff, providing doctoral students with access to literature and methodological materials, offering research programmes, and facilitating student cooperation, learning outcomes are achieved. To promote a student-centered approach, the study programme was mapped during creation as part of the management process. Needs-based course sequencing ensures sequential learning, peer interaction, and practical application. Each study course includes explicit goals and learning outcomes based on complexity and LQF level 8 (; SAR p. 897; p. 901; Annex 18.1).

Doctoral students must submit a progress report on scientific work at the conclusion of each academic year as part of their study programme. The RSU Department of Doctoral Studies' Committee for Research Progress Review typically includes the Dean, field managers, and active researchers from numerous subfields. RSU Rector's Decree determines Committee composition. The scientific activity progress report develops debate, argument, focus, and the ability to recognize research process shortcomings and make targeted design adjustments. A pass or fail is used to evaluate progress indicators. If the doctorate thesis supervisor is also a Committee member, he/she does not review work (SAR p. 900).

Mobility and internationalization will be supported via a visiting lecturer course. Participation in local and international research initiatives will earn credit points for elective study courses, acquiring experience and networking for a successful science career (SAR p.897).

The diversity of doctoral students' needs is taken into account and respected by designing appropriate learning pathways. For example, each study course comprises the information a doctoral student needs to produce research for the doctoral thesis, compose the doctoral thesis, and generate a scientific article on the research topic of the doctoral thesis. Each course includes active learning with the lecturer in lectures and classes, peer discussion, and information exchange, as well as a reading list with in-depth information on course topics. The doctoral programme is taught

exclusively by experienced, highly competent faculty and top experts in their fields on specific topics of interest to doctoral students, both in doctoral seminars (e.g., "Predatory journals", how to write a perfect abstract, how to write a successful scientific project proposal, etc.) where subject matter and lecturer inspiration are crucial (SAR p. 903).

Programme delivery methods are considered and utilized based on available options. In mathematical statistics, PhD candidates are grouped by knowledge and usage of more difficult statistical procedures via questionnaire. In the spring semester of 2023, Latvian and English language students took the study course "Big Data in Biomedicine" together to enhance integrity. Taking into account the recommendation of doctoral students to implement courses remotely, as many doctoral students live or work in different towns of Latvia or abroad, are abroad within the framework of cooperation projects, study courses are implemented remotely or in a hybrid way, giving the possibility to attend a course remotely if it is not possible to attend the course in person. Part A study courses are implemented for all sub-programs, allowing doctoral students to learn about research methods in other fields, share experience, listen to suggestions, and promote interdisciplinary cooperation (SAR p. 903).

As needed, several instructional methods are applied. Examples include lectures, classes, video lectures, discussion groups, individual topic research using course-appropriate bibliography, and post-study discussion. Regarding the aim and assessment criteria of each study course, most require doctoral students to actively participate in lectures and classes and present their knowledge at the end of the course in a way that is relevant to their doctoral thesis research. In other courses, the end-of-course exam is a test or exam where the doctoral student answers a certain number of questions related to the course content and is assessed on higher-level thinking skills. (like "Epidemiology" and "Civil Defence and Environmental Protection") (SAR p. 903).

The Part A courses aim to enhance the research and academic skills of doctorate candidates and promote interdisciplinary discussion, aligning with the study programme's objectives and outcomes. The variable sub-programme element of the study programme (element B courses) is implemented through restricted optional courses. More attention is paid to particular research projects. Participation in national or international research initiatives might earn credit points for restricted elective courses, strengthening networking and collaborative skills for a successful science career (SAR p. 898).

Elective study courses (Part C) include narrow sub-field specializations, Vertically Integrated Projects, and courses at an accredited Latvian higher education institution with a license for doctoral StP, focusing on labor market skills, entrepreneurship, communication psychology, and more. These courses include visiting lecturer courses for mobility and internationalization. The elective courses help doctoral students improve the knowledge, skills, and competences needed to work independently and with their supervisors on the PhD thesis. The doctoral student must complete 12 CP / 18 ECTS, with a maximum of 4 CP / 6 ECTS being electives (SAR p. 890).

Doctoral seminars are crucial for students who spend time independently researching, preparing presentations, and participating in discussions with peers. These sessions foster cooperation, communication, reflection, and other skills that require interaction and socialization. Doctoral seminars will include Latvian professors, opinion leaders, and international specialists (SAR p. 898).

The student earns the most credit points (138 CP / 207 ECTS) for their scientific research. This course involves independent scientific investigation by the doctoral student under the supervision of the thesis supervisor. This course follows the doctoral study programme, which the student and thesis supervisor create each academic year. The course "Dissemination of Knowledge and Pedagogical Work" trains doctoral candidates to teach Bachelor's and Master's students, local and foreign colleagues. The doctoral student might teach at work or at the RSU department where the thesis supervisor works. Teaching by RSU PhD students will also transform teaching staff generations. The Doctoral Student's Book records completed instructional work and awards credit points. A Committee created by RSU Rector's Decree awards credit points for scientific research,

knowledge dissemination, and teaching (SAR p. 898).

Students are encouraged to pursue independence while giving guidance and support from the teaching team. Doctoral students acquire a concentrated set of material for developing their theses and writing papers. The study programme supports young scientists from a wide range of RSU departments: Research Department, Department for Doctoral Studies, Doctoral School, Statistics Unit, networking events, Library, etc., as well as the PhD student's individual work on the thesis under the supervision of the thesis supervisor. Support possibilities are listed on the RSU website: <https://www.rsu.lv/en/research> (SAR p. 903).

The doctorate study grant supports scientific activity, research, and publication for doctoral students. Grants received in 2020/2021: In 2021/2022, 59 doctoral students in the sub-programme "Medicine," seven in "Pharmacy," and three in "Psychology" received grants (SAR p. 901; <https://www.rsu.lv/en/study-here/doctoral-studies/doctoral-study-grants>).

It is important to mention that not all scientific disciplines require a large investment of money. For example, DSP sub-programme pharmacy students might require much higher funding to acquire excellence in science compared to other DSP sub-programmes. Therefore, it is highly recommended to develop clear criteria and take into consideration the specificities of each scientific discipline when doctoral student grants are granted. Even though there might be inequality in funding, this could lead to excellence in specific disciplines of science, which is one of the strategic goals of RSU.

Doctoral students not only create new knowledge but also apply it to society's development and education. Three sub-programme "Psychology" doctoral students are acting research assistants in the Department of Health Psychology and Pedagogy, contributing to RSU research directions by writing relevant doctoral theses and scientific publications. Doctoral students of the Pharmacy sub-programme are involved in the Baltic Biomaterials Centre of Excellence (BBCE) project, the Latvian Council of Science and Fundamental and Applied Research and the Rural Support Service project. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Medicine sub-programme doctoral students provided evidence-based material to the media on adolescent mental health, medical staff mental health, and public health indicators. Doctoral students have proposed several new projects. Doctoral students work on their own thesis based on Cabinet Regulations No 595 (27.09.2022) "Regulations on the Groups, Branches, and Sub-Branched of Latvian Science" and must publish their thesis in an international database (ERIH+, Scopus, or Web of Science) as required by the Academic Regulations for Doctoral Studies. During their studies, doctoral students participate in pedagogical work in RSU departments or other Latvian higher education institutions, such as assisting Bachelor students with lectures, classes, and labs, supervising theses, and developing course descriptions. The study course "Pedagogical Work" outlines the assessment standards doctorate students must follow to legitimize their teaching activity within the study. For instance, in the sub-programme "Psychology," a working group of two Master's students and the doctoral thesis supervisor develops research issues on professional identity development, which the doctoral student also covers in his/her professional activity course. Doctoral students in the sub-programme "Pharmacy" teach Inorganic Chemistry, Pharmacogenetics, Medicinal Chemistry, Practical Pharmacy, Clinical Pharmacy, Pharmacology, Analysis of Clinical Trials, and supervise undergraduate research. In the sub-programme "Medicine", 49% of doctoral students enrolled in 2021 work as teaching staff: two in the Department of Otorhinolaryngology, five in the Department of Internal Medicine, two in the Department of Paediatrics, one in the Department of Neurology, three in the Department of Biology and Microbiology, and one in the Faculty of Rehabilitation (SAR p. 901).

Faculty members in the study programme assist doctoral candidates with course completion and research. Doctoral students participate in pedagogical work to improve their teaching skills, understand course design and implementation, and experience the teaching-learning relationship, which fosters mutual respect between student and lecturer (SAR p. 903).

Doctoral candidates can participate in mobility programmes to gather information for their theses (see Section 3.1.4). Doctoral students organize RSU conferences, a biennial international conference

at RSU features PhD students' posters or oral presentations on their research. RSU held the 8th international scientific practical conference "Health and Personal Development: an Interdisciplinary Approach". Doctoral students participate in the annual international conference Society, Integration, Education and in the compilation of "Psychology" cab publication, which is indexed in Web of Science (SAR p. 901; <https://www.rsu.lv/en/events>). International mobility (Erasmus + and other forms of).

The DPS programme offers a unique combination of scientific disciplines that are a nice base for interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach. It is therefore highly recommended to give students opportunities to work in solving complex problems in society by using methods of collaborative work in interdisciplinary projects. There are some of the good examples of this approach, and this should be stimulated more in the future. Cooperation with the Latvian Academy of Sport Education, Riga Technical University and the Art Academy of Latvia are great opportunities for complementary and interdisciplinary research collaborations. Winter and summer doctoral schools could be set up in cooperation with other universities to foster interdisciplinarity.

The study implementation methods contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study courses and the study programme. The aim of the Doctoral StP is to create a close synergy between research and studies, allowing to involve students not only in research but also in the work of a scientific organization, thereby developing the ability to contribute to the development of healthcare sectors by conducting substantial original research, also at the level of international peer-reviewed publications. Student-centered learning and teaching principles are considered. The criteria is well met.

2.2.4. Not applicable.

2.2.5. Information on the doctoral promotion is available on RSU website in (<https://www.rsu.lv/en/research/dissertation-defence>). The current Regulations on the Operation of Promotion Councils and on the Procedure for Doctoral Promotion (https://www.rsu.lv/sites/default/files/imce/Dokumenti/Doktorantura/promocijas_padomju_darbibas_un_promocijas_kartibas_nolikums_2022.pdf).

The Regulations on the Operation of Promotion Councils and on the Procedure for Doctoral Promotion set publishing and doctoral promotion requirements for the degree.

To begin the doctorate promotion procedure, student must submit the following to the RSU Department of doctorate Studies: 1) certificate from the higher education institution upon completion of the doctoral study programme or, if not, upon passing examinations in the chosen field, sub-field, and foreign language; 2) List of scientific papers highlighting development and results of the doctoral thesis, including copies of pertinent articles; 3) At least two anonymous peer-reviewed international publications are required for dissertations, four for thematically coherent scientific publications, and one for scientific monographs. Publishing in a scientific journal or conference proceedings indexed in SCOPUS, Web of Science, or ERIH+ database requires anonymous peer-review (SAR p. 904).

The criteria is well met.

2.2.6. In each field of science awarding a Ph.D., contributions and achievements include innovative research (doctoral thesis), publications (e.g. scientific articles, monographs), and patents related to the thesis research. A suitable doctoral study programme and publications are prerequisites for doctoral advancement. Some of the topics of the doctoral thesis are: "Analysis of lipids containing polyunsaturated fatty acids and therapeutic effect in models of cardiometabolic diseases"; "Burnout and its influencing factors in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic"; "Cervical recovery after loop electrosurgical excision and its impact on the outcome of pregnancy", and many others (Annex 22.1, SAR p.904).

Doctoral research topics, such as "Spiritual practices and experiences as resources or threats for self-help for oncology patients during chemotherapy" (Psychology/Medicine), demonstrate the interrelationship and interaction of medicine and psychology in a multidisciplinary approach. Theses are often supervised by representatives of both disciplines. This helps with research processes and labor market implementation (SAR p. 905).

The topics of students' final theses are relevant to the field and correspond to the study programme. The criteria is well met.

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

The content of the study programme is topical; the content of the study courses / modules is interconnected and complementary, corresponds to the objectives of the programme, ensures the achievement of learning outcomes, and meets the needs of the industry, labor market, and scientific trends. It also complies with national regulations and state education standards. The study programme meets the requirements of the level 8 of LQF/EQF (knowledge, skills and competences); the study courses included in the study programme ensure the achievement of the goal of the programme and the achievement of all the learning outcomes. Each of the included study courses is designed to achieve a number of learning outcomes of the study programme (except for "Civil Defence and Environmental Protection", which primarily supports the achievement of one learning outcome). The number of credit points of the study courses corresponds to the level and requirements for the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study programme. The study programme trains qualified specialists in medicine, pharmacy, and psychology to meet EU requirements and foster lifelong learning and training based on complexity. The study programme is aligned with Latvia's priorities in implementing EU strategies, as its courses align with the main elements of the strategy and make the doctoral programme competitive. However there is some space for improvement. The only 4 points of courses in elective part C, does not give students an opportunity to choose topics of their personal interests. The DPS programme offers a unique combination of scientific disciplines that are a nice base for interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches. It is therefore highly recommended to give students opportunities to work in solving complex problems in society by using methods of collaborative work in interdisciplinary projects. There are some of the good examples of this approach, and this should be stimulated more in the future. The study implementation methods contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study courses and the study programme. The aim of the Doctoral study programme is to create a close synergy between research and studies, allowing to involve students not only in research but also in the work of a scientific organization, thereby developing the ability to contribute to the development of healthcare sectors by conducting substantial original research, also at the level of international peer-reviewed publications and innovative and interdisciplinary solutions for the complex real-life problems.

Strengths:

1. The DPS programme offers a unique combination of scientific disciplines that provide a nice base for interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach.
2. The study implementation methods are very diverse and contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study courses and the study programme using student-centered learning and teaching principles.
3. Topics of the doctoral thesis are very accurate and on topic.

Weaknesses:

1. List of elective part C courses is very limited and reduced to only 4 CP.
2. Changes in the study programme plan, mapping and content is necessary.

3. Interdisciplinarity is not utilized enough
4. Lack of linking the study plan, mapping of learning outcomes and content with other consolidated doctoral study programmes.
5. Lack of use of new study forms/types - remote learning involving teaching staff from abroad.
6. Opportunities to work in solving complex problems in society by using methods of collaborative work in interdisciplinary projects is not seized enough.
7. Cooperation with other higher education institutions in joint research, joint training, and cooperation with professional organizations and employers, involvement in the implementation and improvement of the study process, and developing research projects is underused.
8. Use of modern technologies is not implemented enough to introduce innovative teaching methods, such as simulation-based learning.

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The study programme for obtaining a doctoral degree is based on the achievements and findings of the respective field of science

22.1_Anx_Doctoral_thesis_topics_DSP_VA.pdf

13.2.1_Anx_Acad_staff_involvement_projects.pdf

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1. The infrastructure, informative provision (library resources), financial, material and technical provision fully comply with requirements of the Doctoral study programme "Health care" (51721; 51725; 51313) and demonstrate achievements of programme learning outcomes.

The implementation of the doctoral study programme is supervised by the RSU Department of Doctoral Studies, managed by the Dean. The administrative work of the Department of Doctoral Studies is carried out by the Office manager, two records managers responsible for the implementation of the doctoral study process, the coordinator of the promotion procedure, the records manager of the doctoral promotion process and the editor responsible for the organization of all stages of the promotion process and compliance with the Regulations and the Cabinet Regulations.

The Department of Doctoral Studies organizes the entire study and doctoral promotion process. RSU has already merged both doctoral and doctoral promotion processes in one unit, as foreseen by the new doctoral model, in line with the European Doctorate Concept. Doctoral studies are carried out in a full-time doctoral study programme in which a doctoral student with or without prior research experience studies certain theoretical courses, acquires practical skills and independently develops doctoral thesis. The studies are supported by the state budget subsidy for doctoral studies, scholarships (grants) awarded by the Latvian Council of Science or other institutions, or using the resources of personal or legal persons.

The Department of Doctoral Studies and the Doctoral School are part of RSU Board of Science, headed by the Vice-Rector for Science (information on RSU management and structure www.rsu.lv). The Department of Doctoral Studies coordinates the implementation of the doctoral StPs in cooperation with RSU faculties and other departments, including ensuring cooperation for the

development of doctoral study programmes. Directors of doctoral study programmes and doctoral theses supervisors are lecturers of RSU faculties, as well as researchers of cooperation partners. A consensus on the organizational structure will be established in the process of development of the RSU strategy, which in addition to the directors of doctoral study programmes and the teaching staffs of RSU faculties involved in the implementation of doctoral study programmes will ensure development of doctoral study programmes, involving faculties, institutes and laboratories forming the platform, as well as other RSU structural units, research institutions and sectoral partners.

All RSU doctoral students have the opportunity to obtain funding for their doctoral thesis research, publications and mobility during their studies. Since January 2019, RSU provides 0.25 load for doctoral student-assistant jobs, awarded on a competitive basis to doctoral students who are employed in research projects.

RSU launched the Doctoral School at the end of 2019 as a collaborative research competence development and networking platform for prospective and current doctoral students, doctoral degree candidates, as well as researchers and teaching staff. The Doctoral School provides the following activities: information exchange on competence development opportunities in a One-Stop-Agency format; advice on research design, data processing and interpretation, writing, publication strategy and project preparation (individual and group); research competence development workshops and events; and networking events for doctoral students and researchers. From the spring semester 2020, the Doctoral School organizes digital competences development courses, including Introduction to Bioinformatics, Foundations of Machine Learning, Basic Visualisation and Data Administration.

Four e-book databases and seven full-text journal databases are available within e-resource provision in the field of medicine. E-books in medicine are available in the subscribed databases eBook Academic Collection (EBSCO), eBook Central (ProQuest), AccessMedicine and ClinicalKey. For example, the database eBook Academic Collection (EBSCO) offers 27333 e-books under the section "Health and Medicine", but eBook Central (ProQuest) - 19108 e-books. The subscribed multidisciplinary databases eBook Central (ProQuest) and EBSCO eBook Academic Collection offer e-books from different publishers in different disciplines, providing results of the selected information when searching by various topics/keywords.

The full texts of scientific articles in medicine are available in the subscribed databases: SAGE Premier 2022, Health Research Premium Collection (ProQuest), MEDLINE Complete (EBSCO), BMJ Journals, Wiley Online Journals, Science Direct, Academic Search Complete (EBSCO). The Primo unified search engine lists 6914 journal titles in the field "Health Sciences", and 1722 journal titles in the sub-field "Clinical Medicine".

There are also four evidence-based medical databases ClinicalKey Clinical Overviews (Elsevier), The Cochrane Library (Wiley), DynaMed (EBSCO), UpToDate (Wolters Kluwer).

The "List of recommended e-books" section on the Library's website contains e-books for the study programmes, both purchased and from subscribed databases (sections for medical specialities, as well as sections on "Biostatistics", "Research methods", "Education and pedagogy", etc.).

Since 2019, a new system of elective courses has been in operation. Students apply for elective courses through the Student portal (MyRSU) rather than through the e-studies. Teaching staff and administrative staff have access to the Course Dashboard, which provides information about the e-study courses under their responsibility, such as whether the lecturer has made editorial changes, whether the materials have been imported from the previous semester course, and other useful features. For academic staff, the e-learning environment serves not only as a place to upload learning materials and organize examinations related to their study course, but also as a place to improve their own knowledge. The e-learning environment provides access not only to manuals on how to do various things on the Moodle platform, but also makes it possible to apply for various training and career development courses organized by the Centre for Educational Growth (PIC). The range of offered courses is broad, allowing to improve both the digital, communication and speaking

skills. Ways to use Moodle are expanding, for example, for the development of various projects by publishing public materials; there are also videos and other materials from the scientific conference. The experts panel considers that the study provision, scientific provision, informative provision, material and technical provision and financial provision comply with specific features and the conditions for the implementation of the study programme, create prerequisites for the achievement of the learning outcomes and indicate the possibility to ensure a high-quality study process.

2.3.2. In recent years, RSU has effectively developed its medical research infrastructure, which provides doctoral students with modern research equipment for use in their research (SAR, page 913-915). For example:

Institute of Oncology, including Laboratory of Molecular Genetics; Science Hub “Kleisti”, comprising the Institute of Microbiology and Virology, the Institute of Occupational Safety and Environmental Health, the Biochemistry Laboratory, the Interdepartmental Laboratory of Clinical Immunology and Immunogenetics and the Biomechanics Laboratory; Institute of Public Health.

Whereas, the aim of the Technology Transfer Office is to establish and maintain external relations with the private sector and to promote RSU research capacity, in which RSU doctoral students can obtain practical information about contact bourses, expanding scientific networking.

RSU is a leading partner of the National Research Centre for Public Health and Clinical Medicine (Centre). The Centre serves as a cooperation framework for concentrating of scientific resources for research at European level. The partners of the Centre are Rīga Stradiņš University, the University of Latvia and Pauls Stradiņš Clinical University Hospital. The partners of the Centre have established mutually complementary research infrastructures, the use of which is stipulated in the Cooperation Agreement, in line with their research aims and objectives.

Baltic Biomaterials Centre of Excellence (BBCE): The BBCE project aims to establish a cooperation-based Baltic Biomaterials Centre of Excellence, bringing together outstanding research institutions from abroad: AO Research Institute Davos (Switzerland), the Biomaterials Centre of Friedrich-Alexander Erlangen-Nuremberg University (Germany) and from Latvia: RTU Rudolfs Cimdins Riga Biomaterials Innovation and Development Centre, the Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis and Rīga Stradiņš University.

The research infrastructure of RSU include: Branch of Medical sciences. Branch of Pharmaceutical sciences, Branch of psychology.

The experts panel considers that the study and science provision, including resources provided within the framework of cooperation with other scientific institutions and higher education institutions, meets the conditions for the implementation of the doctoral study programme, and creates preconditions for achieving learning and research outcomes.

2.3.3. The study programme in Latvian in the sub-programmes "Medicine", "Pharmacy" and "Psychology" is financed from the state budget funds for higher education, as well as financing of private and legal persons is possible. The tuition fees are equal to the State budget funding (SAR, page 913).

The number of students in the sub-programme "Medicine" is 128 for all years of study and 33 for the first year. The number of students in the sub-programme "Pharmacy" in all years of study is 13, in the first year - 5. The planned number of students in the sub-programme "Psychology" in all years of study is 12, in the first year - 4.

Expert group wishes to raise a concern that the sub-programme "Psychology" compared to other two sub-programmes has way lower number of doctoral students that enroll every year (SAR, page 893). It can be possibly explained by the fact that there were no state-funded study places till 2024 (Annex 16).

The study programme in English is planned to be financed from the funds of private and legal

entities, with a tuition fee of EUR 20 000 per year. The minimum number of students per group is 12. The study programme will be implemented by RSU Department of Doctoral Studies, Language Centre, Department of Clinical Skills and Medical Technologies, Department of Health Psychology and Pedagogy, Department of Public Health and Epidemiology, Department of Humanities and the Statistics Unit. The total annual budget of these departments is EUR 3.0 million.

Remuneration of academic staff in the first year of the study programme is planned at EUR 182 thousand. For 4 years of study, the doctoral study grant funding is possible up to EUR 12 thousand per 1 student in the sub-programme "Medicine", up to EUR 8 thousand per 1 student in the sub-programme "Pharmacy".

A wide range of RSU facilities is available for the implementation of the study courses, allowing for the reservation of study rooms and computer rooms in a common system. (SAR, page 915-916).

However, there is a space for improvement regarding the funding, which is still low, especially for the scientific disciplines that require scientific laboratory work and expensive equipment and chemicals, such as Pharmacy. The low financial support for the doctoral programme raises concerns about its long-term excellence and sustainability, leading to instability in the enrollment of doctoral students.

Based on the information gathered and provided in the SAR analysis, it is clear that the main focus of RSU on a doctoral level is on sub-programme "Medicine", which creates an imbalance and results in a lack of attention to the other two sub-programmes. Expert group believes that this has to be changed in the future with an implementation of more budget places or at least discounted places for the other two sub-programmes.

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

In general, it can be assessed that the study base, research base, information base, material and technical base and financial base for the study programme are optimal, meet the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and ensure the achievement of learning outcomes. There have been no changes in this provision since the beginning of the study programme, as it is adequate and provides all the possibilities to maintain the quality of studies.

Strengths:

1. Advanced material and technical base for student training; plenty of high-quality library resources.

Weaknesses:

1. Lack of financial resources to attain long-term excellence and sustainability, leading to stability in the enrollment of doctoral students.
2. Lack of focus and budget places for the two sub-programmes of "Pharmacy" and "Psychology", which results in low enrollment of students in these two sub-programmes compared to sub-programme "Medicine".

Assessment of the requirement [6]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Advanced material and technical base for student training; plenty of high-quality library resources. Financial resources are currently sufficient, however, additional solutions for

attracting funding should be sought in the future.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1. Annex 24.7 and SAR (p.917- 922) demonstrate that there are highly qualified full professors (8-Medicine, 8-Pharmacy, 7-Psychology), associate professors (5-Medicine, 6-Pharmacy, 5-Psychology), and assistant professors (2-Medicine, 3-Pharmacy, 4-Psychology), but also lecturers (8) who are specialists with the highest professional expertise, thereby providing the required human resources for successful running of the doctoral study programme "Health Care" and supervision of doctoral theses. A number of the staff are full members and correspondent members of the Latvian Academy of Sciences. There are 25 lecturers involved in the implementation of the doctoral programme, 23 of whom have a doctoral degree, whereas 19 of the 25 lecturers are experts approved by the Latvian Academy of Science. There is also the input of specialists working in the healthcare industry as well as with representatives of the various professions – an approach that not only assures the achievement of the study aims but also monitors that the study aims are continuously improved, updated and timely in-keeping with best in class international standards.

SAR (p. 917) states that the qualification requirements for the selection of teaching staff in the doctoral programme are doctoral degree (Ph D) in medicine and health sciences or social sciences; teaching staff in medicine, pharmacy and psychology are active researchers and experts of the Latvian Council of Science; previous teaching experience; participation in research projects, being part of working groups and science dissemination; at least B2 knowledge of English; and appropriate digital skills. Nevertheless, the doctoral study programme may involve teaching staff with valuable competencies and skills, as well as experience in the implementation of study courses, but who may not meet one or more of the criteria above.

2.4.2. According to the SAR (p. 918) and Annex 24.7 "Analysis of the composition of teaching staff" identify 25 lecturers that are involved in the implementation of the doctoral programme, 23 of whom have a doctoral degree, 19 are experts approved by the Latvian Council of Science. SAR (p. 922-923) as well as several interviews during the on-site visit demonstrated that there is stability in the composition of the teaching staff in the doctoral programme, managing to establish themselves into a strong team. Indeed, the changes that have been made were for infrastructure reasons – for the better as the site visit to the new premises show state-of-the art work places that are ideal for the smooth running of the study programme as well as for motivation to do research.

By organizing several educational activities in the form of thematic cycles, seminars, guest lectures, conferences, discussions and which are available free of charge to every member of the academic staff and student body, RSU ensures a high level of interest in the fields of research and in keeping with state-of-the art levels and standards.

Several examples of sessions by visiting lecturers are also listed in SAR (p. 923-924). Examples include: Dr. Angelos Kassianos (Cyprus University of Technology) and Dr. Daiga Kamerāde (University of Salford) in the academic year 2022 / 2023;

Dr. Angelos Kassianos was invited to give a lecture in the study course DN_178 "Doctoral Seminar 'Methodology and Methods of Doctoral Thesis Development'" in the autumn semester of 2022, whereas Dr. Daiga Kamerāde was invited to give a lecture in the study course DN_205 "Scientific Writing and Scientific Communication", in the spring semester of 2023.

2.4.3. Annex 13.2.1. Information on the doctoral study programme's academic staff involvement in research projects (2020-2023) demonstrates that RSU has a strong scientific output in "Biomedicine, Medical Technologies, Biopharmaceuticals and Biotechnologies". In addition, more researchers are

now engaging in personalized medicine for international projects. As stated in SAR, chapter 2.4.1, the requirements for teaching staff in the doctoral study programme is the active involvement of lecturers in both Latvian Research Council-funded research and international projects. This also ensures doctoral students' active participation enabling them to gain experience in project implementation, by way of planning, discussion of pilot results and preparation of publications, as well as garnering an international/European perspective. SAR (p. 924) provides several examples of active project participation by staff and doctoral students as early career researchers. An overview of the most important projects of the lecturers involved in the implementation of the doctoral programme is given in Annex 13.2.1. Examples include: "Alliance for Life Sciences: From Strategies to Actions in Central and Eastern Europe, WP4 Competences in Innovation for Human Health" that was led by Prof. Dambrova, whereas the doctoral student Melita Ozola led the young scientists' section and actively mastered knowledge dissemination by repeatedly presenting the results to an international audience. Similarly, Prof. Konrāde has led the project "Interplay of Environmental and Genetic Factors in the Immunologic Mechanisms of Thyroid Autoimmune Diseases" that has enabled the completion of 3 PhD theses on thyroid health.

The proportion of doctoral students participating in internationally funded projects is on the rise providing an opportunity to attract international doctoral students. Annex 13.2.1 <https://eplatforma.aika.lv/index.php?r=expert%2Fhei-file%2Fdownload&id=1767&key=8778>

provides an overview of projects that lecturers are involved in, as part of the implementation of the doctoral programme. Examples include: National research programme project - 'Research of life-threatening and socially significant infectious diseases in children, involving development of new scientifically substantiated action algorithms to reduce child mortality in Latvia' (BIOMEDICINE), 2014-2018, 20,2164 EUR; National research programme project - 'Complex research of acute and chronic diseases in children for diagnostics and development of treatment algorithms for reduced mortality, extended life expectancy, improved quality of life and public health' (BIOMEDICINE), 2014-2018, 178,456 EUR; and National research programme project - 'Molecular mechanisms of diabetes and cardiovascular complications, pharmacogenetics and new means of treatment' (BIOMEDICINE), 2014-2017, 30,168 EUR.

This contributes to the development of research capacity and competitiveness both on a local as well as international level, as well contributing to visibility of RSU scholars in a number of scientific outlets like Web of Science databases and Scopus journals, thereby strengthening the recognition of RSU as an academic and research center of repute.

2.4.4. Annex 6.4 [Results of the scientific activity of the academic staff of RSU Faculty of Medicine and a list of publications by Journal Impact Factor (IF)] demonstrates a good research publication activity with 38 members having at least 30 publications over the period 01.01.2017. -25.03.2023. with 3 members having more than 100. There has been a steady rise over the years with the peak reached in 2021, followed by a decline in 2022 the major reason being the physical distancing required during the pandemic. The Faculty of Medicine academic members of staff scientific publications are diverse and the involvement in research-related projects of the academic staff involved in the implementation of the doctoral study programmes contribute to the implementation of a high-quality doctoral study programme.

Therefore each member of the academic staff in the last six years has published in peer-reviewed editions, including international editions in accordance with the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

2.4.5. SAR (p. 924-925) and confirmed by the site visit confirms that there is a mechanism of within Faculty cooperation, with SAR explaining the high level of mutual cooperation of the teaching staff in the implementation of the study programme that is established primarily through regular meetings

that are held with lecturers of the study courses in order to obtain their opinion for the successful implementation of the study courses, as well as keep up to date on suggestions for the study programme's improvement and comprehensiveness. Suggestions included timing of study course SVUEK_061 "Methodology of Scientific Activity" to enable doctoral students to develop their understanding and skills in research methodology at the beginning of their studies, as well as to consolidate their knowledge and skills necessary to support the research process in the field of medicine and health care. Both RSU teaching staff and visiting lecturers of high quality are involved in the implementation of doctoral seminars. Meetings are also organized with doctoral students from all sub-programmes to gather their views as well as to gather their suggestions for improving the study programme. For example, one of the recommendations of the doctoral students was to invite international well-known lecturers on certain specific topics. There are 189 students and 25 lecturers with a student-teaching staff ratio of 7.6:1.

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

The criterion 2.4 Teaching Staff is fully compliant in terms of the qualifications and scientific publications of the teaching staff members. The qualification of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements set forth in the regulatory enactments. It enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses. There is mutual intra-Faculty cooperation amongst staff members and the Faculty takes adequate measures in the composition of the teaching staff to not negatively affect the quality of the implementation of the study programme and the compliance of the study programme with the requirements specified in regulatory enactments. The scientific publications and the involvement in research- related projects of the academic staff involved in the implementation of the doctoral study programmes, contributes to the implementation of a high-quality doctoral study programme. Each member of the academic staff in the last six years has published in peer-reviewed editions, including international editions.

Strengths:

1. Teaching staff's qualifications and publication profile are adequate.
2. There is substantial scientific research activity in which staff and doctoral students are actively involved both nationally and internationally.

Weaknesses:

None.

Assessment of the requirement [7]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The academic staff and visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting docents, visiting lecturers and visiting assistants possess the required qualifications that satisfy the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements set out in the respective regulatory enactments, as evidenced in the documentation (SAR) and Annexes, as well as during interviews as part of the site visit)

2.5. Assessment of the Compliance

Requirements

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 3 - The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in all languages in which the study programme is implemented, and they comply with the requirements set forth in Section 561, Paragraph two and Section 562, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The study course descriptions are prepared in English and Latvian that can be accessed under annexes -

20.1_Anx_Study_course_descrip_Doctoral_StP_HealthCare.pdf and

20.1_pielik_Kursu_apr_DSP_VA.pdf. Descriptions comply with regulations set forth in Law on Higher Education Institutions. The study materials can be accessed and are prepared in both implemented languages.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The provided Diploma sample in the annex Annex_24_Sample_Diploma_ar_starpliku-.pdf complies with the procedure by which state-recognised documents of higher education are issued according to Cabinet Regulation No. 202 "Kārtība, kādā izsniedz valsts atzītus augstāko izglītību.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The annex provided - Annex 24.6_24.7_Analysis of the academic staff_DSP Health Care.pdf certifies that the academic staff of the academic study programme meet the requirements set out in the Section 55, Paragraph One, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions. Out of 21 representatives of the academic staff, there are 9 professors and 7 associate professors (see Table 1, Figure 1; information as of 04.11.2022), corresponding to Section 55, Paragraph One, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions and AIKA Guidelines.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 7 7 - At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of an academic doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field of science. At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a professional doctoral study programme in arts (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The annex provided - Annex 24.6_24.7_Analysis of the academic staff_DSP Health Care.pdf certifies that the implementation of the compulsory and restricted elective part of the doctoral study programme "Health Care" is ensured by 25 lecturers, 21 of whom have been elected to academic positions, including five lecturers who also hold an elected research position, and there is one lecturer who holds only an elected research position. Out of 21 representatives of the academic staff, there are 9 professors and 7 associate professors.

- 8 8 - The teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme are proficient in the official language in accordance with the regulations on the level of the official language knowledge and the procedures for testing official language proficiency for performing professional duties and office duties.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Based on the acquired information onsite as well as relevant annexes:

24.4_AnxCertification_Regarding_Latvian_Language_of_the_Academic_Staff.pdf and 6.2_AnxCV_ENG_visas_programmas.7z, it can be evaluated that the language proficiency of teaching staff is compliant with Cabinet Regulation. Nr. 733 "Regulations Regarding the Extent of the Knowledge of the Official Language, the Procedures for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language and the State Fee for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language".

- 9 9 - The teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language, if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

As one of the implementing languages of this programme is English, it is required for the teaching staff to have at least B2 level English. The attached documents:

6.2_AnxCV_ENG_visas_programmas.7z and

24.5_AnxCertification_Regarding_the_English_Language_Knowledge.pdf confirm the English language skills of the teaching staff members. Their skills were also assessed during onsite visits and the expert group confirms that they are at least on B2 level.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Sample of attached study agreement 24.8_AnxCStudy contract sample_Health Care study direction.pdf complies with Cabinet Regulation. Nr. 70 "Studiju līgumā obligāti ietveramie noteikumi".

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

RSU has provided information that students will be provided with opportunities to continue their education in another higher education institution if the implementation of the study programme is terminated based on the sub-programme in a different HEI. The agreements are specified in the annexes under "24.2_pielik_Apliecinajumi_par_parnemsanu_eng.7z". However, the information is not completely clear. It is specified that in case of discontinuation of this study programme, students are planned to be able to continue their studies at UL in sub-programmes of "Medicine" and "Pharmacy". Although, it is also stated that the agreement is being suspended, and not clear which HEI would provide continuation for students of the sub-programmes „Medicine" or „Pharmacy" to continue studies at the doctoral study programme.

2. 11.05.2020. agreement between RSU and Daugavpils University on the basis of the cooperation between the Parties in the field of studies and scientific research, in case of suspension of implementation of the sub-programme "Psychology" (51313) of the RSU Doctoral study programme "Healthcare", DU undertakes to provide students to continue studies at the doctoral study programme "Psychology" (51313).

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

RSU has provided confirmation that students are guaranteed compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the study programme's license is revoked. It is ensured based on the Section 55(8) of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education and Cabinet of Ministers No 795 of 11 December 2018 "Regulations on Licensing of study programmes", Paragraph 13.4. The relevant document can be found under Annexes - 24.3_Anx_Certification_of_Compensation_of_Losses_to_Students.pdf.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Assessment of the requirement [8]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Study programme fully complies with regulatory enactments. However, there is an existing inclarity in regards to continuation of studies for sub-programmes "Pharmacy" and "Medicine". Experts presume that the cooperation agreement regards these two-sub programmes.

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

The study programme is aligned with Latvia's priorities in implementing EU strategies, as its courses align with the main elements of the strategy and make the doctoral programme competitive. The

doctoral study programme "Health Care" complies with the study field indicators, conditions, and criteria. There are three sub-programmes: Pharmacy, Medicine and Psychology. There are 3 different classification codes, Sub-programme "Medicine" (51 721), Sub-programme "Pharmacy" (51 725), Sub-programme "Psychology" (51 313) and two different degrees to be obtained, Doctoral degree Doctor of Science (PhD) in Medicine and Health Sciences and Doctoral degree Doctor of Science (PhD) in Social Sciences, in the study programme. In the opinion of the experts, the title, code, degree to be obtained of the study programme, aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and admission requirements are interrelated. The programme is implemented in Latvian and English, with low incoming mobility. The main focus of doctoral studies is on sub-programme "Medicine" which creates an imbalance and results in a lack of attention to the other two sub-programmes. The content of DSP is topical, interconnected, and meets industry, labor market, and scientific trends. The program trains qualified specialists in medicine, pharmacy, and psychology to meet EU requirements and foster lifelong learning. The Doctoral study programme offers a unique combination of scientific disciplines, allowing students to work on complex problems in society through collaborative work. The study implementation methods contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the courses and the programme. The study base, research base, information base, material and technical base, and financial base are optimal, meeting the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and ensuring learning outcomes. The teaching staff members meet the qualifications required by the program and regulatory enactments, contributing to the development of a high-quality doctoral study program. An operational framework facilitates collaboration among teaching staff to effectively implement the study programme. However there is some space for improvement. The doctoral study programme offers a unique combination of scientific disciplines that are a nice base for interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches. It is therefore highly recommended to give students opportunities to work in solving complex problems in society by using methods of collaborative work in interdisciplinary projects. The aim of the Doctoral study programme is to create a close synergy between research and studies, allowing to involve students not only in research but also in the work of a scientific organization, thereby developing the ability to contribute to the development of healthcare sectors by conducting substantial original research, also at the level of international peer-reviewed publications and innovative and interdisciplinary solutions for the complex real-life problems. In general, it can be assessed that the study base, research base, information base, material and technical base and financial base for the study programme are optimal, meet the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and ensure the achievement of learning outcomes. The academic staff's scientific publications and participation in research initiatives contribute to the development of a high-quality doctoral study programme. This enhances the growth of research capabilities and competitiveness at both local and international levels. It also increases the visibility of RSU scholars in various scientific platforms such as Web of Science databases and Scopus journals, thereby reinforcing the reputation of RSU as a distinguished academic and research institution. Strengths of the programme are in its distinctive blend of scientific disciplines, forming a solid foundation for an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach. This uniqueness recommends providing students with opportunities to engage in solving complex societal issues through collaborative work in interdisciplinary projects. Additionally strength is that the diverse range of study implementation methods significantly contributes to the attainment of the study courses' aims and learning outcomes, as well as the broader objectives of the study program. The programme employs student-centered learning and teaching principles, enhancing the overall educational experience. Finally the precision and relevance of the doctoral thesis topics demonstrate a high level of accuracy and alignment with the focus of the programme. The doctoral study programme exhibits several weaknesses that hinder its overall effectiveness and long-term sustainability. Notably, there is low incoming mobility, a lack of focused budget allocation for the "Pharmacy" and "Psychology" sub-programmes, resulting in diminished student enrollment

compared to "Medicine".

The elective course offerings in Part C are limited, and there is a pressing need for a comprehensive overhaul in the programme plan, mapping, and content. Interdisciplinarity is underutilized, and there's a lack of integration with other doctoral programmes. The programme inadequately embraces remote learning and international teaching staff, while financial constraints impact its ability to ensure excellence, sustainability, and stability in doctoral student numbers. Opportunities for collaborative interdisciplinary projects remain underexplored, and the potential of collaborative networks with other institutions and the use of modern technologies for innovative teaching methods are not fully realized. Addressing these weaknesses is crucial for enhancing the programme's overall quality and impact.

Despite the identified weaknesses, experts consider the doctoral study programme good for several reasons. As already mentioned the programme is well-aligned with Latvia's priorities in implementing EU strategies, it meets indicators, conditions, and criteria relevant to the study field, reflecting a strong alignment with established standards. The content of the programme is acknowledged as topical, interconnected, and aligned with industry, labor market, and scientific trends. The programme's unique combination of scientific disciplines; the study implementation methods, research, information, material and technical, and financial bases, the qualifications of the teaching staff and their commitment to collaborative efforts within an operational framework contribute to the high quality of the doctoral study programme. Despite acknowledged weaknesses, the programme's strengths and alignment with strategic goals position it positively within the academic landscape.

Evaluation of the study programme "Health Care "

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Health Care "

Short-term recommendations

None.

Long-term recommendations

Create and implement targeted strategies and forge partnerships to increase incoming mobility by 20% within the next assessment period, aligning with the institution's global goals and values, and regularly reviewing progress to make necessary adjustments.

Refine the focus and allocate a specific budget for the "Pharmacy" and "Psychology" sub-programmes to enhance enrollment, aiming to achieve a measurable increase comparable to the more successful "Medicine" sub-programme within the next assessment period.

Enhance the financing structure for the doctoral study programme to ensure sustained excellence, long-term sustainability, and stability in the number of doctoral students, aligning with strategic goals and implementing improvements within the next assessment period.

Establish clear criteria for giving doctoral student grants that take into account the unique aspects of each scientific field and the fact that unequal funding may help certain fields achieve excellence. These criteria should also be in line with RSU's strategic goal of promoting excellence and must be put into place within a certain timeframe.

Expand the elective Part C course offerings by diversifying the selection and increasing credit points to provide students with a more comprehensive and enriching academic experience, aiming for implementation within the upcoming assessment period.

Revise and update the study programme plan, mapping, and content to ensure relevancy and alignment with educational objectives, with a goal to implement these changes in a timely manner to enhance the overall quality and effectiveness of the programme.

Integrate a more robust application of interdisciplinary approaches into the curriculum to enhance the overall educational experience, to foster a holistic and interconnected learning environment, in the following assessment period.

Establish a systematic linking mechanism between the study plan, mapping of learning outcomes, and content, ensuring alignment with other consolidated doctoral study programmes to enhance cohesion and collaboration, within the next assessment period, to strengthen the overall effectiveness of the doctoral study programmes.

Maximize opportunities for addressing complex societal issues through collaborative work in interdisciplinary projects by actively implementing and fostering interdisciplinary cooperation, within the next assessment period.

Within the next assessment period, introduce more use of innovative study forms, particularly remote learning involving teaching staff from abroad, to enrich the learning experience, educational methodologies and global perspectives.

Broaden collaboration with other higher education institutions by actively engaging in joint research, training, and partnerships with professional organizations and employers, facilitating active involvement in the implementation and improvement of the study process, and promoting the development of research projects to fully leverage these opportunities within the next assessment period. e.g. within the Baltic Biomaterials Centre of Excellence (BBCE) project at Riga Technical University (RTU) and Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis (OSI). Offer A and B courses in the doctoral study programme Psychology PhD as C courses to other doctoral students.

Enhance the implementation of modern technologies to effectively introduce innovative teaching methods, such as simulation-based learning, ensuring a more dynamic and engaging educational experience, and aiming for a comprehensive integration within the next assessment period.

III - Assessment of the Requirements for the Study Field and the Relevant Study Programmes

III - Assessment of the Requirements for the Study Field and the Relevant Study Programmes

Assessment of the Requirements for the Study Field

Requirements	Requirement Evaluation	Comment
R1 - Pursuant to Section 5, Paragraph 2.1 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions, the higher education institution/ college shall ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study field whilst implementing its internal quality assurance system:	Fully compliant	The efficient performance is ensured by the supervision of the processes taking place at the University. The analysis of the fulfillment of process quality criteria is carried out once a year. The results are reported at the management meeting – the Rectorate, where decisions are made regarding future activities.
R2 - Compliance of scientific research and artistic creation with the level of development of scientific research and artistic creation (if applicable)	Fully compliant	<p>The directions of scientific research correspond to the development goals of the RSU and are relevant for the study field and industry. The connection of scientific research of the study field with the study process is logical and justified. International cooperation in the field of scientific research within the study field and the relevant study programmes is ensured and it is being purposefully developed. The higher education institution has developed mechanisms for the involvement of the teaching staff in scientific research. They are well-functioning and efficient.</p> <p>The higher education institution has developed mechanisms to promote the involvement of the students in scientific research. They are well-functioning and efficient. Innovative solutions are applied in the study field, which have a significant positive impact on the study process.</p>
R3 - The cooperation implemented within the study field with various Latvian and foreign organizations ensures the achievement of the aims of the study field.	Fully compliant	Official documents on cooperation agreements with Latvian and foreign organizations, including on placement assurance agreements of students as in Annex 9 of each study programme as well as analyses provided in experts joint opinion, section 1.5. shows that the implemented cooperation provides a precondition for achieving the aims of the study field.

Requirements	Requirement Evaluation			Comment
R4 - Elimination of deficiencies and shortcomings identified in the previous assessment of the study field, if any, or implementation of the recommendations provided.	Fully compliant			The majority of the previous recommendations were implemented, but some of the issues still need attention and further improvement but as clarified and believed by the expert group by applying the principle of proportionality, the fully-implemented recommendations substantially outweigh the ones in the process and those that are partially-implemented.

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

No.	Study programme	R5	R6	R7	R8	Evaluation of the study programme (excellent, good, average, poor)
1	Physician's Assistant (41721)	Not relevant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Good
2	Medical Massage (41722)	Not relevant	Partially compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Excellent
3	Dental Hygiene (41724)	Not relevant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Good
4	Medical Engineering and Physics (42527)	Not relevant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Good
5	Audiology and Speech Therapy (42722)	Not relevant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Good
6	Occupational Therapy (42722)	Not relevant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Good
7	Physiotherapy (42722)	Not relevant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Good

No.	Study programme	R5	R6	R7	R8	Evaluation of the study programme (excellent, good, average, poor)
8	Orthotics and Prosthetics (42722)	Not relevant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Good
9	Nutrition (42722)	Not relevant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Good
10	Nursing (42723)	Not relevant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Good
11	Midwife (42723)	Not relevant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Good
12	Public Health (42726)	Not relevant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Good
13	Health Management (45345)	Partially compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Good
14	Rehabilitation (45722)	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Good
15	Nutrition Studies (45722)	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Excellent
16	Nursing Studies (45723)	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Good
17	Public Health (45726)	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Good
18	Supervision (47142)	Partially compliant	Partially compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Average
19	Art Therapy (47722)	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Good
20	Clinical Pharmacy (47725)	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Good

No.	Study programme	R5	R6	R7	R8	Evaluation of the study programme (excellent, good, average, poor)
21	Industrial Pharmacy (47725)	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Good
22	Medicine (49721)	Not relevant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Good
23	Dentistry (49724)	Not relevant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Good
24	Pharmacy (49725)	Not relevant	Partially compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Good
25	Residency in Medicine (50721)	Not relevant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Good
26	Health Care (51721)	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Good

The Dissenting Opinions of the Experts

None