

JOINT REPORT BY THE EXPERTS ON THE INCLUSION OF A LICENSED STUDY
PROGRAMME ON THE ACCREDITATION FORM

University of Latvia

STUDY FIELD

“Environmental Protection”

STUDY PROGRAMME

Academic bachelor study programme “Cultural and Environmental Heritage”

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I. Summary of the Assessment

Concise summary of the assessment of the study programme to be included on the accreditation form and its compliance with the requirements set forth, as carried out by the experts. Specify the positive and negative aspects identified.

The bachelor study programme “Cultural and environmental heritage” is unique to the Latvian higher education sector. The combination of environmental heritage studies with cultural perspective is one of the uniqueness and strengths of the study programme. The interdisciplinary perspective upon the heritage is necessary in our days because the cultural heritage cannot be split from the surrounding environment. It could be concluded that the bachelor study programme indicators (study programme code, amount, implementation duration) are fully compliant with the study programme’s learning outcomes.

The study programme is developed based on the tendencies and requirements of the cultural industry and environmental tendencies in Latvia and beyond, and it addresses the needs regarding the intended learning outcomes of the respected sector. The study programme also offers many opportunities for students to engage with the cultural sector and environmental studies (guest lectures, Culture points, study excursions, scientific conferences, etc.).

It could be concluded that the topicality of the study programme is fully compliant with the tendencies of the cultural and environmental studies. Students, professors and study programme management are highly engaged and motivated. The internal quality assurance procedures are well developed, and the quality of the study programme is regularly (each semester) monitored by students, professors, and employers through SWOT analysis. All recommendations that were given by the licensing experts were taken into consideration and have been met till the site visit or has been given the explanation on why some of them have been not taken into consideration. It could be concluded that the university followed recommendations of the licensing experts and introduced necessary changes to the programme, so it can be concluded it is fully compliant.

University’s facilities and material/ digital resources are new and up to date and ensure a high quality of studying, teaching, and researching. It could be concluded that the resources and provisions are fully compliant.

Regardless numerous strengths of the study programme, there are also some opportunities for its improvement, such as: 1) increasing the number of students per study year and 2) increasing the level of international collaboration (teaching & research and international Students’ Scientific Conferences, and a better portfolio for Erasmus+ Student /Teaching Staff Exchanges. It could be concluded that the dynamics of the student number are only partially compliant due to the low number of students. There is a list of recommendations elaborated in section IV. *Recommendations*.

II. Description of the study programme

1. Indicators describing the Study Programme

1.	Name of the higher education institution/college	University of Latvia
2.	Name of the study field corresponding to the study programme	Environmental Protection
3.	Name of the study programme	Academic bachelor's study programme "Cultural and Environmental Heritage"
4.	Code of the study programme in accordance with the Latvian Education Classification	43431
5.	Language of study programme implementation	Latvian, English
6.	Amount, duration, form and type of the study programme (also distance-learning)	4 years, 160 CP (240 ECTS), full time studies
7.	Admission requirements	Secondary education. For studies in English, language skills at least level B2
8.	Address of the study programme implementation, indicating whether the study programme is implemented in the branches of the higher education institution / college	Faculty of Geography and Earth Sciences of the University of Latvia, Jelgavas iela 1, Rīga
9.	Degree, professional qualification or degree and professional qualification to be awarded	Natural Sciences Bachelor's degree in Environmental Science
10.	Date of study programme licensing	24.08.2022.
11.	Date of starting the implementation of the study programme	01.09.2022.
12.	Accreditation term of the study field	31.12.2024.

Analysis

1. Compliance of the study programme with the study field.

The academic bachelor study programme "Cultural and Environmental Heritage" of the University of Latvia (UL) would like to be included in the study field named: Environmental Protection. The main objective of the study field which the proposed study programme would like to be part of is, according to the Self-assessment report (SAR pg.6,7), is environmental sciences interconnectivity with other sciences and understanding of cultural heritage more broadly, including the surrounding area of the sites and objects as well as living space for the community. SAR (pg.7,8) indicates the unsolved problem of classification of Education in Latvia, that cultural heritage or cultural and environmental heritage studies are not defined in Regulations #322 of the Cabinet of Ministers.

"The aim of the study field "Environmental Protection" is to contribute to the sustainable development of Latvia, to provide the national economy with academically educated and for

labour market prepared environmental protection specialists not only in Latvia, but also for the labour market and research in the European Union” (SAR pg.3). “The goals of the study field are determined by internationally recognized priorities in the offer of higher education and the actualities of Latvia’s national economy, namely: 1) to ensure the preparation of academically educated specialists in the fields of environmental protection, environmental technologies, cultural environment, emphasizing the natural scientific aspects of environmental science; 2) to improve the environmental education system in Latvia and ensure the development and competitiveness of environmental science internationally; 3) to provide further education opportunities for those working in the environmental protection system. Environmental science is an interdisciplinary science that develops at the mutual interconnection of social and natural sciences.” (SAR pg.3). The aim and objectives of the study field of environmental protection directly have minimal connection with the cultural heritage, for example, goal #3 emphasises working in the environmental protection system, but during the expert meeting was highlighted significance to work in cultural heritage system and institutions as well as the current cooperation with stakeholders mainly in field of culture. At the same time, it is understandable that the study programme has not yet been implemented for as much as 50% of the total amount.

The content of the study programme is interdisciplinary and, according to SAR (pg.24-27) consists of four thematic study modules in Environmental Sciences and Cultural Heritage (part A), Environmental Sciences (part A), Humanities and Arts (part A) and Theory and methods of Environmental and Cultural Heritage (part B) as well as part of general education study courses.

The role and contribution of each science sector to the study programme are described and analysed (SAR pg.20-23) in environmental science, humanities, science subfields such as art history and restoration and visual arts. Fig.1. shows a distribution of 168 CP covering 63 descriptions of the study courses (SAR An. Additional on Study course descriptions), including all three courses for optional choice, according to the sciences sector indicated in the study course descriptions. According to Regulations No.322 (on June 13, 2017) of the Cabinet of Ministers “On the Classification of Education in Latvia”, there are 44% of mentioned CP content under the natural sciences, including cross-sectorial study courses with Earth sciences Bachelor`s thesis (10 CP), Course work: Development of a Bachelor's Thesis topic project (2 CP) and Course work: Development of a bachelor's thesis project 2 CP) are strongly focusing on Natural sciences. The course works and bachelor's thesis must be developed in this study programme next year, so experts cannot judge their content and the science sector to what extent they will reflect environmental science and environmental management solutions. 48% of the study content is identified under Humanities and Art sciences.

Fig.1. Breakdown of CP by science sector according to the science sector indicated in the study course descriptions.

In experts view, the title of the study programme in Latvian partly corresponds to the direction of the study field and does not fully reflect the content of the study programme. The content of the study programme is broader and includes the content of natural science.

The visit of the expert team expresses the necessity to analyse furthermore the title of the study programme. During the meeting with top management and the director of the Department the topic of title was discussed and as was written in the annexes of SAR, the title was approved by three ministries and due to the mandatory regulations of the Ministry of Culture it cannot be changed without some major changes in the laws of the Latvia cultural domain.

3. Compliance of the study programme indicators (study programme code, amount, implementation duration) with the learning outcomes defined for it.

The study programme code is 43431. According to Regulations No.322 (on June 13, 2017) of the Cabinet of Ministers “On the Classification of Education in Latvia”, the first part of code 43 describes that it is an academic bachelor study programme. The following number of code 4 explains that the study programme belongs to the thematic group of Natural sciences, mathematics and information technologies. The part of the code 43 characters to Environmental Sciences and the last number of the code 1 refers to Environmental Sciences and environmental administration (governance).

Experts want to mention that The Regulations No.322 provides two subfields in environmental sciences:

- 431 – Environmental sciences and environmental administration (governance)/ *Vides zinātne un vides pārvalde*
- 432 - Nature conservation (protection)/ *Dabas aizsardzība*.

The academic bachelor study programme “Cultural and environmental heritage” consists of 160 CP/240 ECTS, lasts 4 years and is delivered in Latvian and English language. The admission requirements for the Latvian students are the following: secondary education.

Characteristics of the study programme include a description of the learning outcomes (SAR pp.10-11) that describes knowledge:

1. Understands the basic principles of the environmental sciences’ theories, regularities, types of natural and environmental resources and orientations in the problems of ecology and material science basics.
2. Knows the basic sets of facts, ideas and findings of art history, environmental history and social history in the context of cultural heritage theories.
3. Knows the requirements for evaluating and documenting cultural and environmental heritage and the basic methods of their visualisation.

Skills:

4. Explains the properties and values of objects of environmental science and cultural heritage; defines the main research problems on a global, regional and local scale.
5. Applies stylistically and informatively appropriate forms of substantive and visual expression in solving research questions.
6. Is able to perform a public speech and reasoned discussion on issues of environmental science and the protection of cultural and environmental heritage in an audience of both

specialists and non-specialists and is able to decide on the ways of solving cultural and environmental issues in changing natural and social environment conditions.

Competence:

7. Identifies and critically analyses the issues of sustainability of the resources related to natural, cultural and environmental heritage and environmental monitoring and revitalization questions in the context of natural and urban environment objects, performing a general assessment of the physical condition of natural and cultural and environmental objects.
8. 8. Orients in the national and international regulation of the cultural heritage field and analyses the interrelationships of facts, data and observations by working independently at information repositories, cultural heritage and environmental heritage sites, and social institutions.
9. Initiates and engages in the research-oriented projects using imaging technologies and methods in accordance with the purpose of the research or professional activity.

As well as the learning outcomes of the bachelor study programme described for each thematic module. Learning outcomes include 11 knowledge, 12 skills and 12 competencies according to thematic study modules SAR (pp.25-27).

Conclusions, strengths and weaknesses

Based on the analysis experts conclude that Cultural and Environmental Heritage study programme as an interdisciplinary study programme complies with the study field of Environmental Protection. At the same time, experts want to mention that does not exclude out the possibility that a bachelor's degree could be awarded in another direction of science, because the study programme is interdisciplinary.

The subject of the work of the Bachelor Thesis and the methods used, which are characteristic of the direction of the study of natural sciences, are essential for granting of degree in natural sciences. After the first Bachelor thesis developed, it will be possible to judge their conformity with the natural sciences sector.

The aim and objectives of the Environmental Protection study field would be recommended to be reviewed so that the content of the new study programme is fully reflected in the objectives of the study direction.

Strengths:

1. Innovative approach to cultural heritage studies.
2. Interdisciplinarity is used as the main driving factor to achieve learning outcomes.
3. Smart technologies and techniques are incorporated in the study programme.
4. Students are thrilled with the diversity of content in the curriculum.

Weaknesses:

1. Itself the study field Environmental Protection mainly focuses on natural sciences.

2. The normative framework does not provide for accreditation of interdisciplinary programmes, thus the most relevant scientific sector, study field is sought.
3. The terminology used creates certain ambiguities, for example, natural heritage, environmental heritage.
4. The report contains inaccurate translations and term uses in some places; for example, the title of the study course "Cultural heritage monuments in Latvia" is accurate according to the aim of the study course, but in Latvian, it is inaccurate "*Kultūrvides mantojuma pieminekļi Latvijā*".

Challenges:

1. Environmental sciences are highlighted as a core discipline in the study programme, but the CP distribution by the scientific branches shows different situation.
2. Need to integrate cultural heritage and conservation objectives into the description of the study field.

2. Topicality of the study programme

Analysis

1. The topicality of the study programme and the compliance of the content with the tendencies of the industry (area), the changes made since the licensing of the study programme.

The study programme's content is designed in accordance with the Action Programme's "Growth and Employment" specific support goal 8.2.1. undergone Project "Creation of Internationally Competitive Study Programmes Promoting the Development of the National Economy of Latvia in the University of Latvia", defining the requirements set out in the Law on Higher Education Institutions of the RL4 and Regulations on the Study Programmes and Continuing Education Programmes at the UL (Senate Decision No.102 on April 24, 2017) for academic bachelor's programmes (See SAR, p. 2-13).

The mandatory part of the study programme includes 43 study courses (including a Bachelor's thesis, two course works and a practice course) with 116 CP in total, including study courses in accordance with the requirements of Civil Protection and Disaster Management Law and Environmental Protection Law. The number of CP of the limited optional part is 38, this part contains 15 study courses. In addition, the study programme has a free elective part of 6 CP. At the end of the study programme, students work on a Bachelor's thesis corresponding to 10 CP.

The model of interdisciplinary content of the study programme has no direct analogues either in Latvia or in the higher education space of the Baltic region. The interdisciplinary orientation of the study programme is characterised by the name of the study programme, which includes the key word 'environment' characteristic to environmental sciences and the words 'culture' and 'heritage' characterising humanities and arts. All of this creates the framework for preparing a very good specialist with a holistic approach for cultural and natural heritage. During the

meeting with the teaching staff, all participants emphasise the need for the specialists in understanding, analysis and heritage management which is not just from a cultural point of view or just from environmentalists either.

The content's analysis of the study programme was carried out by UL (see SAR, p.12-14), firstly, by identifying the study opportunities in Latvia in the field of cultural heritage, secondly, by identifying the possibilities of learning cultural heritage study content in the countries of the European Union and, thirdly, by comparing the content of the study programme with three other foreign study programmes.

In the HEI area in Europe, not just in Latvia, the need for interdisciplinary study programs must be fulfilled. The SAR, pg. 12 says that the need to create this study programme was caused by the lack of interdisciplinary study programmes rooted in the ideas and processes of the cultural and environmental heritage field in the higher education of Latvia and an insufficiently developed interdisciplinary research environment. The argument is true not just for Latvia but for a lot of other countries from EU. And also true is the necessity to have good specialists in this domain. From this point of view, the initiative of UL to develop such study programme must be saluted.

The initiators of the study programme made an analysis of the domain not just at the national level, but they took into consideration the situation in 3 other countries (Finland, Estonia and Lithuania) with similar cultural backgrounds (see *SAR, p. 12-19 and Table 3. Comparison of other universities' programmes*) and it is very clear that in all countries the cultural heritage field is in great need of the specialists.

So, from the point of view of the topicality of the study programme and the compliance of the content with the tendencies of the cultural heritage area the Cultural and Environmental Heritage study programme represents a very good initiative.

UL made some changes after the licensing of the study programme, changes named in the SAR, pg. 27 and they were made because of the objective causes:

1. at the level of staff because some of the lecturers didn't want or at the present moment cannot be involved in the study programme;
2. at the level of study programme were made some corrections due to the recommendation of the licensing commission or because of the necessity to comply to the transition to the ECTS system;
3. at the level of the English text of the study programme description.

In conclusion, the changes to the study programme made after the licensing were necessary in order to comply with some recommendations of the licensing commission and they do not affect the goal and the substance of the study programme.

2. Dynamics of the student number and prospects of employment for graduates.

The dynamics of the student number cannot be fully analysed because the study programme is in the first year of existence. At the time of the report's preparation, only the 1st semester (autumn) of this study programme's academic year has finished.

The first students were enrolled in autumn of 2022 and it was planned to be 35 students but due to the late approval to start the study programme (in August 2022) just 8 students showed the interest to enrol and 7 of them passed with good and very good results the first year. One student decided for unknown reasons to drop off from the study programme (SAR, pg.28). In autumn 2023 11 students were enrolled which represent a positive sign that the interest in the study programme is growing. During the meeting with the students all of them mentioned the interdisciplinarity of the study programme as one of the most important arguments to choose to study in this programme.

The UL started in the autumn of 2022 to broadcast the new opportunity and to create a marketing project in order to promote the new educational offer.

The labour market of graduates of the study programme is still made up of companies related to culture and cultural heritage field, real estate management enterprises, including the direction of property development, sectors of tourism and hospitality, environmental and cultural protection, and scientific research of cultural heritage. The main area of competencies - as is written in SAR, pg. 28 - that determines the competitiveness of graduates of the study programme in the labour market is the knowledge, skills and competencies required to manage and protect tangible cultural heritage, ensuring its sustainable and economically justified maintenance. It is necessary to emphasise that such a set of competencies is not provided by any other study programme offered in Latvia, which critically affects the existing practice in tangible cultural heritage management, resulting in degraded cultural monuments and sites. According to the opinion of the National Heritage Board of Latvia (further in the text – the NHBL), the range of specialists involved in cultural and environmental heritage should be expanded, which is also confirmed by the letters of support from municipalities and regions sent to the UL.

At the site visit, the management of the university recognised that the number of students could be bigger, and it connects the reasons for the low number of students to the late approval and start of the study programme (just in August 2022). On the other hand, the study programme management during the site visit emphasised that the goal of the study programme is to enrol 20-25 students per year to guarantee individual approach and to ensure that students have relevant practice throughout the study programme and find their jobs after they finish the study programme.

During the first year of the implementation of the study programme, was develop cooperation with foreign universities (for example, the Estonian Academy of Arts (EAA), with which a Memorandum of Understanding has already been concluded and students from the study programme participated in a summer school organise by EAA), and they will plan similar cooperation with Aalto University (Finland) and other universities, which implement similar study programmes, possibly by introducing joint study courses, cooperating in matters of faculty staff and student mobility.

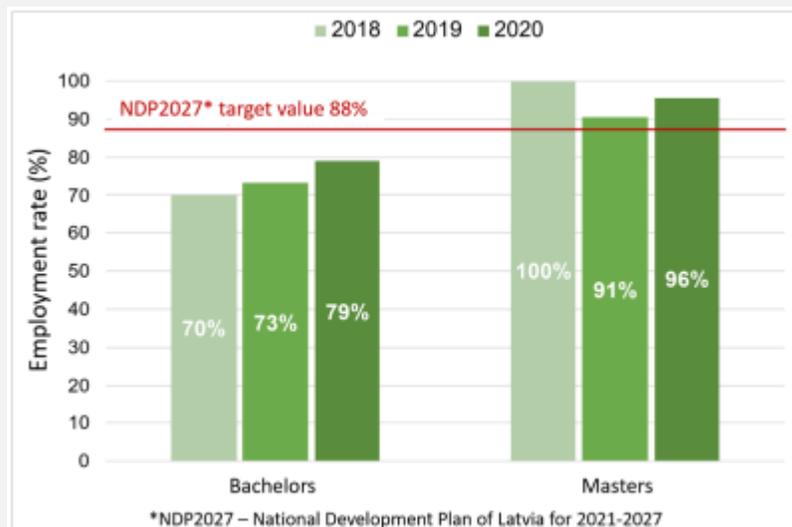
The main areas in which the employment of graduates of the study programme is possible:

- 1) Management of municipal and privately owned cultural heritage objects, development and implementation of projects for their restoration and development of new fields of application.
- 2) Management of cultural and historical centres of cities, development and implementation of projects for their renovation and development of new fields of application, and support of the tourism sector.

- 3) Management of parks, culture, landscape and other objects, development and implementation of projects for their restoration and development of new fields of application, and attraction of tourism.
- 4) Management of churches and other important cultural and historical buildings.
- 5) Development of new objects in the historical centres of cities.
- 6) Scientific research.
- 7) Development of the direction of cultural historical tourism, linking it with the hospitality field.

The future of the graduates to be employed after the graduation has a good perspective as is shown in the below Figure 2 (see SAR, p. 30) which analyse the situation of the graduates from the study field *Environmental protection* in the last 3 years before submitting the SAR for licensing of the study program:

Fig.2. Characteristics of graduates of the study field 2018-2020



Source: SAR pg.30

With regards to the quality assurance perspective, experts have to acknowledge that the internal quality assurance procedures are well developed, and the quality of the study programme is regularly (each semester) monitored by students, professors, and employers through SWOT analysis. This was confirmed by all representatives of the management, the teaching staff and students that participated at the site visit and the presentation of the internal Moodle system where all QA guidelines, strategies and documents are stored.

Experts can conclude that the topicality of the study programme is fully compliant with the tendencies of the cultural industry.

Conclusions, strengths and weaknesses

The content of the study programme is well balanced between cultural and environmental courses and the management of the department need to pay attention to maintain this balance. The uniqueness of the study programme not just for Latvian higher education area but for at least Scandinavian region is a strong point. From this perspective the future of the graduates to be employed after their graduation has a very good perspective. The labour market need good specialists in management of the cultural and environmental heritage. Because the study programme started just in august 2022 and the number of the students is low (11 in first year and 7 in second year) it can be a good thing because they all have great chance to found a job in the institutions dealing with cultural and environmental heritage.

Strengths:

1. Study programmes uniqueness in the HEI area not just in Latvia but in the region of NE Europe, too.
2. The interconnections between humanities and sciences provides an excellent platform to prepare and to have outstanding specialists in the Latvian cultural and environmental heritage.
3. The Cultural and Environmental Heritage (CEH) study programme can provide an additional value for the UL because it offers a very specific and in some perspective very necessary study programme.
4. Cultural heritage and environmental heritage represent a very valuable humankind heritage and must be managed, promoted and passed down to the future generations in the best conditions.
5. UL has the advantage to be the first HEI not just from Latvia, but from almost all the NE region of the UE to start a bachelor program in these domains.

Weakness:

1. The small number of the students enrolled because of the newness of the study programme (8+11) which creates some financial issue;
2. The necessity to have a very good and close relations between different departments from UL in order to provide well prepared lecturers and practitioners in the cultural heritage and environmental sciences;

3. Resources and provision

Requirement [R1]: Compliance of the study base, science base (if applicable), information base (including library), material and technical base and financial base with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and for ensuring the achievement of learning outcomes.

Analysis

The study programme is implemented at the Faculty of Geography and Earth Sciences (FGES) of the UL. Teaching staff for the specific field courses are attracted from the Faculty of Biology,

the Faculty of Chemistry, the Faculty of History and Philosophy (FHP), the Faculty of Humanities (FH), and the Art Academy of Latvia (AAL). (see SAR, p. 35).

The UL possesses a comprehensive and organised electronic and e-environmental system that is well-maintained and structured, as indicated by the observations made during the onsite visit.

The library of UL is available to students, as well as all students are informed about the possibilities of using the Latvian National Library. Working hours are planned taking into account student visits and demand (according to survey data and individual requests) as was presented by the head of the Library during the site visit. The standard working hours are as follows: on Tuesdays –Fridays from 9:00 to 17:30, on Saturdays from 9:00 to 19:00. (see SAR, pg.19). The library offers a large range of the services, from assistance in searching for bibliographical sources to scanning.

Compared to the data provided in the licensing report (regarding printed editions until December 31, 2019), during the last three years, the collection of printed editions at the UL Library has been supplemented with 364 copies of 214 titles, which corresponds to the implementation of the study programme (Table 5 in SAR, p. 35-36). The summarised information on e-resources is available on the UL Library website [https://www.bibli\[1\]oteka.lu.lv/](https://www.bibli[1]oteka.lu.lv/) in the sections E-resources from A to Z and E-resources by Branches and in the Databases section at My Portal.

During the site visit the experts ask about the electronic versions of the basic literature for the courses and the head of the Library underline the existence of free access for the students of the E-resources from UL Library, but there are some basic literature which exists in other libraries which can be accessed just in print format using the interlibrary loan.

It can be concluded that printed information resources in the UL Library's collection generally correspond to the implementation of the study programme in terms of their content and number but, as an improvement, it can be built an electronic resource for some printed literature which can be added to the E-resources sector of UL Library.

Following the UL Strategic Plan, the UL Library continues to increase its share of e-resources and develops remote access to e-resources. By modernising the availability of electronic resources, the latest technology web services, Primo Discovery and SFX, are operating in the UL Library.

In total, 42 e-resource platforms were available at the UL in 2022 (e-book platforms, e-journal databases and separately purchased e-journals, reference resources and tools, and mixed-format databases). 183 verified open-access databases with multi-format materials are available at the UL.

Beside the library a number of databases are available for students and teachers as well as free access to electronic resources (see SAR p. 38-39).

Material and technical base. The study programme, as it was planned, is implemented at the UL FGES in the “Dabas māja” (“House of Nature”) of the UL Academic Centre (further in the text – the UL-AC), which is located in Tornakalns’, neighbourhood of Riga. During the site visit, experts were able to see the labs used for practical activities of the students. Experts visited 4 labs well equipped just for the courses related to chemistry, GIS studies, environmental studies and IT. Other facilities are in the University of Arts, the valuable partner in developing this programme.

Also, for this purpose, on September 23, 2022, the UL concluded a Cooperation Agreement (Annex 13 in SAR) with the Jana Rozentala Art School - Vocational Education Competence Centre “The National High School of Arts” (further in the text – the NHSA), intending to strengthen the development, excellence and quality of cultural education and higher education in Latvia, including promoting the succession of education. According to the lecturers’ suggestions and the students’ wishes, in some cases, the study process is carried out in restoration workshops or laboratories. The study of arts disciplines at a strategic level is planned in the “Rakstu māja” (“House of Letters”) of the UL-AC, but until the building is put into operation, the opportunities mentioned in the cooperation agreements also provide the use of the AAL and the NHSA premises to ensure the study process

Regarding the financial issues: revenues from the provision of all study programmes are used jointly to finance the costs of academic, scientific and administrative processes of the entire university. In accordance with the approved budget, a breakdown of costs is carried out in the main lines of expenses. According to the official financial statements, the university has sufficient financial resources and a stable financial situation to provide the study programme. In the calculation of the costs of a student place, the accounting data of the university and the cost assessment were used in accordance with Cabinet Regulation No. 994 “Procedure for financing universities and colleges from state budget resources” as of 12 December 2006. In the SAR is presented a calculation of the costs for the study programme (see SAR, p. 41, figure 7) and according to this analysis the calculations reveal that the costs of teaching staff have decreased slightly, resulting in a reduction of total costs and an increase in the actual profitability of the study programme (with the condition to enrol at least 25 students and this number must be constant each year).

Conclusions, strengths and weaknesses

The study field provides ample resources and support that enhance the learning process. The material and technical infrastructure is updated, maintained, and enhanced. Moreover, students receive satisfactory support to access scientific materials in the Department Library or using the facilities of the University Library to access the scientific materials from other libraries from Riga or even from abroad.

Based on the analysis experts conclude that this standard is fully compliant.

Strengths:

1. The library resources (printed literature, international databases and work spaces in the Departmental library) are very good.
2. The labs used by the student from study programme are well equipped.
3. The cooperation with other departments or institutions from Riga (AAL or Jana Rozentala Art School) increase the value of the educational infrastructure.
4. The strong commitment of upper management of the UL to sustain the study programme.

Weaknesses:

1. Low number of students enrolled in the study programme per study year.
2. The level of electronic versions from mandatory scientific literature is low.

Evaluation of the requirement [R1]:

Requirement	Compliance			Justification
Compliance of the study provision, science provision (if applicable), information provision (including library), material and technical provision and financial provision with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and for ensuring the achievement of learning outcomes.	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Non-compliant	The study base, science base, information base, material and technical base and financial base are sufficient for implementation of the study programme and ensuring the achievement of learning outcomes.
	X			

Requirement [R2]: 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 of the laws and regulations.

Analysis

The academic staff involved in teaching for CEH study programme, even with some changes which occur after the licensing, fulfil all legal and scientific criteria of the qualifications standard. There are 49 teaching staff from which 15 have geology and geography backgrounds, 10 art, 7 philology, 6 chemistry, 4 philosophy, 3 biology, 2 history, 2 archaeology. From all 49 member of teaching staff, 33 of them has PhD degree. The level of English proficiency is good and very good (13 of teaching staff has C level and with few exceptions the others have B2 level).

Also, from total number of member of the teaching staff 3 are professors in philol., 1 asoc.professor philol., 1 asoc.professor hist., 1 asoc.professor geogr., 1 assoc.prof. geol., the 3 professional professors in arts (2 with master degree and 1 PhD), 1 lead researcher in geogr.

On December 19, 2022, the director of the study programme and the study programme’s concept developer and lecturer of several study courses, visited the Estonian Academy of Arts in Tallinn. During the visit, the study programme’s goals, tasks and content were introduced to Estonian colleagues. The visit successfully resulted in an agreement on closer cooperation in science and education, holding joint scientific events and cooperation regarding student exchange within the framework of the Erasmus+ programme. The inter-university Memorandum of Understanding was also signed (see Annex 14 in SAR).

Due to the novelty of the study programme, there are no guest lecturers or visiting professors involved in the teaching activities. But, the MOU signed with the Estonian Academy of Arts is a good start for having the invited lecturers or visiting professors who will contribute to the development of the academic and scientific life of the study programme. Also, the director of

the study programme has excellent connections with HEI from Croatia and Germany, being part of an international team that carries out the archaeological excavations in one of the heritage sites from Croatia.

The students mentioned that they had no visiting professors or guest lecturers during the academic year 2022-2023.

Conclusions, strengths and weaknesses

The academic staff's qualifications align with the requirements of the study programme and the implementation conditions, as well as the regulations within the education field.

Strengths:

1. The teaching staff exhibits a high level of qualification, particularly in terms of their professional competence within the relevant areas of the programme.
2. The teaching staff and students are provided with opportunities to engage in scientific activities.

Weaknesses:

1. Missing internationalization of the study programme through visiting professors or guest lecturers.

Evaluation of the requirement [R2]:

Requirement	Compliance			Justification
	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Non-compliant	
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 of the laws and regulations.	X			The academic staff is compliant for implementing the Study programme, as well as legislative requirements.

Requirement [R3]: 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 artistic creation (if applicable).

Analysis

N/A

Conclusions, strengths and weaknesses

N/A

Evaluation of the requirement [R3]:

Requirement	Compliance			Justification
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 artistic creation (if applicable).	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Non-compliant	N/A

Requirement [R4]: Compliance of the study programme with the requirements of the Law on Higher Education Institutions and other laws and regulations.

No.	Requirement	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Non-compliant	Justification
1.	<p>The study programme complies with the State Academic Education Standard or the Professional Higher Education Standard, including the minimum requirements for the content of the compulsory civil protection course and the content of civil protection training for employees specified for the implementation of the study programme.</p> <p>The study courses of the professional study programmes include a module for the development of professional competence of entrepreneurship in the amount of at least 6 CP, if it has not been acquired in the previous professional study programme or is not included in</p>	X			<p>Study course Civil protection 1 CP is provided in 1st semester.</p> <p>The study programme complies with the State Academic Education Standard No.240.</p> <p><i>Not applicable</i></p>

	the theoretical basic courses of the study programme branch (field of professional activity).				
2.	The study programme complies with a valid professional (occupational) standard, or with the requirements of professional qualification (if it is not necessary to develop a professional standard for the profession), if a professional qualification is awarded after acquisition of the study programme				<i>Not applicable</i>
3.	The code of the study programme complies with the Cabinet regulations on the Latvian Education Classification	X			The study programme's code is 43431 that complies with the Cabinet of Ministers regulations.
4.	The qualification of the teaching staff ¹ complies with the conditions and requirements set for the implementation of the study programme, which are specified in the regulatory enactments in the field of education including the participation in the implementation of an academic study programme of at least five professors and associate professors together who have been elected to academic positions in the respective higher education institution, except in the cases provided for in Section 55, Part	X			The composition of academic staff complies with the requirements set out in Section 55, paragraph 1. 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

¹ As used in this document, the term "teaching staff" refers to the academic staff and visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting lecturers, visiting lecturers, and visiting assistants of the corresponding higher education institution / college.

	two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.				
5.	Confirmation of the higher education institution/college that 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, according to the European Language Proficiency Assessment levels (the division of levels is available on the website www.europass.lv), if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language or proficiency of the Latvian language at least on the B2 level, if the study programme or a part thereof is intended to be implemented in the Latvian language and the lecturer has not acquired secondary or higher education in the Latvian language.	X			The SAR Annex 9 signed by the study field director confirms the English language skills of the academic staff at least B2 level.
6.	The study programme, which is intended to be implemented in a foreign language, complies with the requirements of Section 56, Part three of the Law on Higher Education Institutions	X			Studies in the first and second year of admission for now have taken place only in Latvian. As UL can implement one fifth of the study programme also in English, then foreign lecturers can provide classes.
7.	The sample of the study agreement complies with the mandatory provisions to be included in the study agreement (if applicable).	X			Information has not changed since the licensing. There are three types of study agreements (for EU residents, EU non-residents, and outside the EU).
8.	The sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme complies with the procedure by which state recognised documents of higher education are issued (if applicable).	X			The sample of the diploma is attached in SAR, Annex 13.

9.	The higher education institution/ college has confirmed that it will provide the students with the options to continue the acquisition of education in another study programme or at another higher education institution/ college (a contract with another accredited higher education institution/ college), in case the implementation of the study programme is discontinued (if applicable).	X			Information has not changed since the licensing. In SAR and SAR An. is not attached the agreement between LU and LMA about continuing studies in case of closing the programme at UL.
10.	The higher education institution/ college has confirmed that it guarantees to the students a compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the higher education institution/ college (actions or omissions) and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme (if applicable).	X			Information has not changed since the licensing.
11.	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).				<i>Not applicable.</i>
12.	The scientific and pedagogical qualification of doctors of science complies with the criteria specified in the regulatory enactments regarding the evaluation of the scientific and				<i>Not applicable.</i>

	pedagogical qualification of a candidate for the position of a professor and an associate professor (if applicable).				
13.	The joint study programme complies with the requirements prescribed in Section 55 ¹ , of the Law on the Higher Education Institutions (if applicable).				<i>Not applicable.</i>

Evaluation of the requirement [R4]:

The assessment has been carried out with particular attention to the requirements assessed as partially compliant in the evaluation of the licensing experts report.

Requirement	Compliance			Justification
	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Non-compliant	
Compliance of the study programme with the requirements of the Law on Higher Education Institutions and other laws and regulations.	X			The study programme fully complies with the requirements of the Law on Higher Education Institutions and other relevant laws and regulations.

4. Implementation of the recommendations received during the licensing of the study programme

Assessment of the implementation of the recommendations provided by the licensing experts of the study programme.

Analyses

Short term recommendations:

1. To reduce number of competences till realistic number. It can be possible to describe competences of graduates with 8-9 competences.

The number of competencies is reduced, three competencies are listed in the SAR (p.11), as well as in the diploma Annex and 12 competencies are mentioned in the description of four study modules (SAR An.3).

2. In accordance with criterion I 2, the conditions and requirements for admission to foreign students must be clearly defined.

The recommendation is implemented. The requirement for studies in English is at least B2 level.

Long term recommendations:

1. According to criteria I 1 and 2 and III 1: to bring the programme closer to today's scientific discourse trends, as well as focusing more accurately on the underlying idea contained therein, then a substantive audit of several courses in this direction or an assessment of their usefulness is recommended. With objectives to overcome some fragmentation and puzzle in the programme and achieve unity programmatic integrity, preferably:
 - 1.1 inclusion of visual anthropology and visual semiotics in the programme, which could serve as a unique link between the approaches of natural sciences and art sciences and may increase the interest of international students.

There is planned revision of the study course content. Provided argument that it will be done in next academic year (site visit 23 September 2023).

- 1.2 the orientation of humanitarian block courses towards environmental philosophy.

It is done partly because several study courses of the humanitarian block have not yet been delivered to the students. The discussion with academic staff and students positively impacted the content of the study courses (site visit 23 September 2023) as well as study course descriptions include environmental aspects.

- 1.3 reducing the number of current multiple courses by combining them, especially if the subjects are presented by the same lecturer and the content of the courses he conducts is close, or eliminating overlapping courses.

The number of study courses is reduced. It was mentioned that 6 courses are transformed into three courses with a larger CP per course (Annex Věstule LU 18.07.2023.; SAR p.27) as well as are reduced number of study courses with an odd number of CP.

- 1.4 the possibility of teaching German also to students with prior knowledge; Latin courses has a small historical excursion in Latin history that should be added substantively to the language course, and practical suggestions for recognizing and understanding Latin of different times, at least in titles.

Changes are made. The course description of Latin includes developing an understanding of the role of Latin language in the European cultural space.

2. Assess, in accordance with criteria I 1 and III 1, the feasibility of introducing a methodological course which cover all the sciences included in the programme, show their specificity and allow later understanding and learn the different methods they use, and understand their interrelationships.

The study course "Introduction to Studies" highlights an overview of research methods (Site visit 23 September 2023). This recommendation should continue to be discussed and implemented.

3. According to criterion II 2, a certain number of copies per semester may be considered as a free service.

Recommendation is solved by using the scanner option at the Library. This approach is environmentally more friendly than printed copies.

4. According to criterion IV 2, all trainers involved in the implementation of the programme must be achieved consistency of English knowledge with at least level B2.

Recommendation is implemented. Excluding one uncertainty, in annex 2: Information of English Proficiency for study courses History of Culture I, II is not described. 7 teachers have assessments at B1 and A2, and in all these situations, are nominated second teachers who can deliver courses in English.

5. In accordance with the criteria III and V 9, work should be done on the description of study courses in English content and informational customization programs for teaching to foreign students.

Recommendation is fulfilled.

Conclusions

Expert can conclude that the university followed the recommendations provided by licensing experts and introduced some of them already in the study programme. It's been one full academic year since the start of the study programme. The time period is too short of drawing conclusions and rearrangements in the study programme.

Strength:

1. Readiness of the director of the study programme and the team of academic staff to improve the study programme, to make clarifications during the work, taking into account approbation.

Weaknesses:

1. Several courses of study methods are in the final stages of studies. Whether students will be able to apply these methods to research. In the long term, the development of a Research methods Module can be considered.

III. Assessment of the study programme

Excellent	<u>Good</u>	Average	Poor
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IV. Recommendations

Experts recommend including the licensed academic bachelor study programme “Cultural and Environmental Heritage” in the accreditation form of the study field of Environmental Protection.

Short-term recommendation till Study quality committee meeting:

1. Change the title of the study programme in Latvian and English so that there is clearly unified information regarding the expected content.

Short-term recommendations till the next student enrolment:

2. Discuss with the Latvian Academy of Art the practical and organisational implementation of the study programme by entering into a co-operation agreement regarding the implementation of the study programme.
3. Promote attractiveness of the study programme and to increase the number of students in the study programme at least 15 students per group.

Short-term recommendation till 2025 August:

4. Revise course planning according to the timeline so that students have an understanding of the ethics, theories and frameworks before they go into detail, deep subjects.

Long-term recommendation till the next accreditation:

1. Strengthen and expand international cooperation, both by inviting incoming foreign lecturers to guest lectures at least one per semester and by providing ERASMUS outgoing mobility opportunities for UL teaching staff (2 mobility visits per year) and for students, recognising study courses abroad.