

# JOINT REPORT OF THE EXPERTS GROUP FOR STUDY DIRECTIONS

## LAW SCIENCE

### College of Business Administration

The experts group recommends to accredit the study direction for a period of **2 years**.

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K1. The relevance, aims and objectives of the study direction and its relevant study programmes as a whole and their clarity, attainability, and compliance with the general strategic development of the HEI

*Assessing the criteria, please analyse the following aspects:*

- *Justification and relevance of creation of the study direction and its relevant study programmes;*
- *Aims of the study direction (Are the aims and objectives of the study direction clearly defined and achievable? / Do they comply with the general strategic development directions of the HEI, and with needs and development trends in the society and economy?);*
- *SWOT analysis of the study direction (Can HEI define its weaknesses and use its strengths to prevent threats posed to achieving the aims set for the study direction?);*
- *Study direction development plan (Is it reasonable and implementable, taking into account the activities carried out by the HEI and the existing study quality?).*

#### Analysis

The study direction “Law” was created at the College of Business Administration (hereinafter - **CBA**) in 2014. The study direction includes one study program “Law” - “Legal assistant”, accredited until 14 December 2018. CBA does not offer higher level programmes.

In the self-assessment report (hereinafter - **SAR**) and during the expert onsite visit CBA has provided sufficient justification of creation of the study direction and study program included in it. The uniqueness and competitiveness of the study direction and study program with other institutions of higher education are ensured by the fact that the studies are provided in the form of distance learning and both the program as a whole and individual study courses emphasize the specialization of legal knowledge in business. Such a combination ensures the availability of studies and the possibility of acquiring legal issues related to entrepreneurship. Study direction has been developed in accordance with a previously defined strategy and goals and previous experience. CBA has appropriate infrastructure, resources and academic staff. What is very important, management of CBA is aware of the existing flaws and shows willingness to continue improvement.

At the same time, it should be noted that the quality of the SAR could have been better and expanded. It also provides allegations without evidence and references to subjective sources. For instance, the tendencies in the global education market and the labour market are based on the interview published on a newspaper with persons from the college business in Latvia. Such justification shall not be considered sufficient and impartial. The deficiencies and doubts were mitigated by the representatives of employers and students during interviews with experts.

CBA has adopted a college strategy for 2018-2024 and strategy of study direction “Law” for 2018-2024. Positive aspect is that management of the CBA, academic staff, representatives of students' self-government as well as employer representatives were involved in the development of the strategy of the study direction, thus ensuring that the strategy takes into account the needs of all parties interested. It is also positive that distance learning satisfies the needs and trends of the development of society and economy. Access to education is no longer a physical barrier. Higher education can be obtained from anywhere. It is particularly important in the globalized world. Free movement of workers is a fundamental principle of the

European Union. Also the higher education studies become accessible for persons with disabilities. Disability is no longer a barrier to education. The availability of qualified labor force in the labor market is increasing, which is especially important for Latvia at the moment. Due to the development of technological opportunities the demand of people, who wish to get high quality education remotely, with the help of distance learning, is growing.

Goal of the college strategy and study direction is to develop and implement the study program in as high quality as possible to become the first choice study program for those individuals. Both strategies also include priorities, implementation measures and development plan and performance indicators. The development plan of the study direction "Law" is included in the strategy of the CBA study direction "Law" for 2018-2024. Part IV of the Strategy indicate specific activities how to reach the strategic goals, implementation deadlines as well as responsible persons.

Both programming documents – college strategy and strategy of study direction for 2018-2024 - are coherent and not contradictory. At the same time, it should be noted that college strategy and study direction strategy are different levels of planning documents. The degree of detail should vary, but the content included in the CBA strategy and the study direction strategy is similar or even identical in a significant part.

The strategy for the direction of studies and the development plan must be consistent with the college strategy and be more detailed and accurate. Each priority must be described in sufficient detail with specific objectives, tasks, action plans, performance indicators and budgetary plans. Such an approach makes it possible to avoid, at the outset, the nomination of unfeasible priorities, objectives, tasks. The part of the performance indicators should be significantly expanded and clearer. The strategy and development plan should better link the objectives, tasks and appropriate performance indicators. For many purposes and tasks that can be measured through performance indicators, such indicators are not established. The evaluation of the most important objectives and activities should identify a number of indicators to be obtained by means of different methods, which relate to the same performance parameter. This would result in a more comprehensive picture and greater assurance that the policy or measure in question is really effective. The college strategy and strategy of study direction for 2018-2024 does not have clear methodology, how indicators are defined and how they are measured. Performance indicators should be defined by four types of standards: quality, quantity, timeliness and cost. It should not only be quantifiable to indicate the expected values, but also explain in the descriptive part of the strategy how the projected progress will be achieved and what conditions it needs.

A SWOT analysis is a powerful tool to help develop strategy. For a SWOT analysis to be effective, all stakeholders need to be deeply involved. The SAR gave an impression that CBA is perhaps one of the best higher education establishments in Latvia, however the SWOT analysis was too formal and unfortunately, there is no description of how analysis was created and who was involved.

The SWOT analysis is incomplete and contradictory. For example, as weakness is mentioned the cooperation with employers, although during onsite visit the representatives of the CBA and the representatives of employers indicated close cooperation both in the Council of the CBA and in the study process. Moreover, the weakness of its library is not indicated on the table (see the analysis of K.4 on resources and provision of the study direction).

Contradictory is the specified information on the threats. On the one hand, demographic situation — the decreasing population in Latvia, at the same time decreasing numbers of potential students is pointed out as a threat. However, in the SAR (page 5) it is indicated that the number of CBA students was increasing.

There are serious weak points that were not properly addressed in SWOT analysis. For example, problematic aspect is the employability of CBA graduates in the actual profession of legal assistants. After meeting with graduates and employers it seemed that CBA graduates do not work as legal assistants, but instead work in other jobs.

The strengths in SWOT included a number of potentially strong points that are thought about, partly implemented or in progress (such as scientific conference of academic staff and students is organized once a year, cooperation with foreign higher education establishments, etc.), whereas the weak points do not touch the real weaknesses, such as library resources, ensuring the quality and integrity of studies, etc.).

#### Conclusions, specifying strengths and weaknesses

##### Strengths:

1. studies are provided in the form of distance learning (wide availability and flexibility) and the study program emphasize the specialization of legal knowledge in business;
2. representatives of employers, graduates and students in interviews with experts supported creation of the study direction and study program included in it.

##### Weaknesses:

1. the college strategy and the strategy of study direction are not carefully and thoroughly developed;
2. SWOT analysis is poorly designed and insufficiently balanced;
3. lack of a culture of constant critical self-evaluation.

#### Evaluation of criterion

Poor	X Average	Good	Excellent
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### K2. The management of the study direction

*Assessing the criteria, please analyse the following aspects:*

- *Study direction management structure (Is it oriented to development of the study direction? / Is the decision-making process effective?);*
- *Processes of creation and revision of the relevant study programmes of the study direction (Are they defined, effective and logical?);*
- *Student admission requirements (Are systems/procedures created, logical and effective?);*
- *Procedure for recognition of the study period, professional experience and previously acquired formal and non-formal education within the study direction (Are systems/procedures created, available, implemented and effective?);*
- *System of evaluation of students' achievements and study results, separately assessing the study programmes implemented in the form of distance learning (Is an evaluation system*



- created, implemented, effective and in compliance with the specific features of the direction?);*
- *Process for submission and review of the students' complaints and proposals (Is the system/procedure created, available, workable and effective?);*
  - *Academic integrity principles, separately assessing the study programmes implemented in the form of distance learning (Are the principles defined? / Are the used mechanisms and anti-plagiarism tools appropriate, workable and effective?).*

## Analysis

There is only one study program implemented by CBA in the study direction "Law", therefore SAR focuses on the management of this program. Table 2 in the SAR provides the main information about persons/bodies involved in the content management and administrative management of the program, also functions assigned to them. However, there are some contradictions and inaccuracies. In page 8 of the SAR, it is indicated: "The Council of the CBA [...] approves the study programs, content of the study programs [...]"; "The work of the Council of Studies of the CBA [...] covers the methodological work of studies". However, Table 2 provides different information on the content and administrative management of the program. The Council of the CBA is not even mentioned as part of the process and the improvement of the content of the study program is based in the hands of study direction/program director. Therefore, at the end it is not entirely clear, which functions are assigned to which body and how the decision-making process is controlled. During the onsite visit the decision-making process has been explained step by step and it seems that in practice it functions quite efficiently. It should be noted that there have been major changes in the personnel of the management of CBA and study program "Law" since the last assessment in 2016: new director, deputy director of studies and director of study direction/program were appointed. Moreover, majority of internal legal acts were also adopted quite recently. Therefore, the onsite visit and presentations during it made the impression that the cooperation and communication between the students, academic staff and management staff is on good level. Even though the study program director works at CBA as a part time lecturer and has other obligations, however, the feedback from the students and his comments during onsite visit confirms the improvement in the study program and efficiency of its management.

Process of revision of the study program is defined and without main responsible bodies – director of the study program and Council of Studies, there are many other stakeholders involved. One of them – Advisory Convention (page 24 in the SAR, although on page 20 Council of Advisors was mentioned), is not included in the scheme of the management structure of the CBA (Annex 1 in the SAR), however, is included in the scheme of the management structure of the Study Direction "Law" (Annex 4 in the SAR). Therefore, at the end its functions and role is not clear. Moreover, the terms of revision are inaccurate, because on one occasion (para. 1, page 23 in the SAR) it is stated that it is done twice a year, whereas on the last paragraph of the same page it is indicated that study program is reviewed once a year during summer break. In practice the last revision has been done in February 2018.

It should be noted that feedback mechanism is not working efficiently at CBA. First, the numbers of respondents, taking part in surveys, are very low, therefore, surveys are not representative and conclusions out of it could not be drawn. Moreover, during the onsite visit some stakeholders (for instance, graduates,

employers) could not remember any surveys and did not take part in them, even though in the Table 3 in the SAR it is indicated that various stakeholders (students, graduates, employers) are involved in the study program revision through the surveys and given feedback. However, in practice, students confirmed that they inform study program director and coordinator in person about all the issues and give their feedback in person.

Student admission procedure is established and prescribed by internal regulations. With respect to student admission - the condition for the immatriculation in college study programmes is previous education (at least diploma for graduation of secondary school). For admission to the college program, the CBA holds an open contest based on the results of centralized examinations.

Recognition of the study period, professional experience, previously acquired formal and non-formal education is also established and prescribed by internal regulations. Previously acquired courses may be recognized at the same or lower level of studies at CBA. Study course comparison is performed and a decision on the recognition of the courses is taken by the study program director. Study courses are not recognized if the content of these courses does not meet the requirements of the study program. This regulation has been approved only in February 2018 (following the recommendations of the experts after last assessment in 2016), therefore, it is difficult to evaluate its efficiency. However, during the onsite visit some students confirmed that this procedure functions and some courses of their previous education were recognized.

Evaluation system of student achievements is created and defined by several internal legal acts. The study program is implemented in the form of distance learning, for which e-learning platform Moodle is used, only, the defense of the qualification paper is organized in person. The final examinations of each course are organized in distance, however, the SAR does not indicate the ways to prevent cheating during the examinations or any sanctions for such activities. During the onsite visit, the academic staff explained that the main ways to prevent cheating are: time limitation, formulation of questions, also some handwriting identification tools can be used. However, experts have some doubts if applied tools are enough efficient to prevent cheating and keeping in mind that examinations are organized in distance, more specific tools should be implemented.

Process for submission and review of the students' complaints and proposals has been recently created (February 2018). Complaints and proposals are accepted from students in oral, written and electronic format. During onsite visit it was confirmed that the same procedure is used for appeals as well. The CBA has an individual approach, therefore students can directly address their issues to the Study Coordinator, who informs the responsible person - the Deputy director of Studies. After meetings with different stakeholders during onsite visit experts have the impression that the mechanism functions efficiently.

## Conclusions, specifying strengths and weaknesses

### Strengths:

1. well-functioning communication system with Study program director and Study coordinator, also individual approach to the students helps to solve issues fast and efficiently. Different stakeholders (for instance, students, graduates) highlighted support and assistance of the Study coordinator;
2. involvement of employers in the management and development of the study program through the work in the Council of the CBA, participation in the

defense procedure of the qualification papers, also by providing places of internship.

3. major changes in the personnel of the management of the CBA and study program “Law” since the last assessment in 2016 gave the impetus for the development and improvement of the program.

Weaknesses:

1. inaccuracy of functions assigned to the persons/bodies involved in the process of management, as well as revision of the study program;
2. surveys and feedback mechanisms are not working efficiently in practice;
3. no clear tools for prevention of cheating during final examinations and sanctions for such activities.

Evaluation of criterion

Poor	Average	X Good	Excellent
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### K3. The effectiveness of the internal quality assurance system

[with regard to achieve the development aims of the study direction, by assessing aspects in the internal quality assurance system]

*Assessing the criteria, please analyse the following aspects:*

- *Quality policy (Is it defined, publicly available? / Are the interested parties involved in the determination of the policy?);*
- *Mechanism for the implementation of the quality policy (Is a mechanism created? / Does it ensure implementation of the policy? / Are persons responsible for implementation of the policy assigned?);*
- *Internal quality assurance system (Is it effective within the study direction? / Are indicators for implementing the objectives and reaching the aims of the study direction defined?)*
- *Internal quality assurance system (Does it ensure the observance of the standards specified in the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)?).*

Analysis

Mainly from 2017 on, CBA has passed a number of Internal Regulations, strengthening the path towards a structured quality management system in all relevant fields (management, study, research, administration processes, stakeholder liaison and collaboration, student support, overall transparency of procedures from enrolment to study guidelines and examinations). The aforesaid Internal Regulations do tackle all necessary aspects of quality assurance but as of now have no common policy for a Quality Assurance Framework which is intended to be developed in the future. All interested parties and stakeholders have been involved in the process of institutionally setting standards for Quality Assurance, namely the administration, the lecturers, employers and students. Coursework and handbooks have been revised and updated as were the presentation tools (Moodle).

To further create a number of quality assurance actions, a unified quality system according to the European Quality Assurance Guidelines and Standards as being embedded in EHEA/ENQA, CBA has in May 2018 successfully applied for project

funding with the European Social Fund “Improvement of management processes and quality of study programs at CBA”. The application was awarded 150.000 euros to build a Framework of Quality Excellence according to the EFQM business excellence framework for organizational management. EFQM is a professional organizational quality standard, used by more than 30.000 enterprises in Europe, Asia and South America and competing with a similar system with USA sources. However, one must see that the professional EFQM Standard aims at business enterprises and not in the first place Higher Education Institutions. CBA should at all times take into account that its ESG standards which have to be met and will enable any HEI to register with EQAR in the end.

The whole process will be externally monitored and counselled and is scheduled to be completed and certified latest 30.9.2020. Indicators of the stages of development of implementation are defined and monitored through the EFQM criteria.

Despite the previously mentioned, the quality management system still has not been developed and it not is completely functional in the educational establishment, the quality management framework, policy, the very process of quality management, the responsible persons are unclear. Even though, a range of internal normative acts have been developed, yet their functionality under the framework of quality management is not structured. After the discussion with representative of the educational establishment no confirmation was acquired of what is the quality management system, its processes, the responsible persons. In the SAR of the educational establishment surveys with the students, lecturers and employers have been mentioned, however, after the discussions with the students, lecturers, graduates and employers, it came into sight that no such surveys are conducted (or stakeholders did not remember them), neither the results of those surveys would have been summarized and used under the framework of the quality management system.

#### Conclusions, specifying strengths and weaknesses

##### Strengths:

1. after introducing the EFQM Excellence Model, which will take existent funding and a good workload, internally managed by the appointed Quality Assurance Manager, CBA should have a certified internal quality mechanism which should largely eliminate any flaws;
2. it can be positively assessed that the educational establishment has received EU grant for the improvement of the quality management system, however, it will be possible to assess it only at the end of 2020, when the project will have been accomplished.

##### Weaknesses:

1. as of now, quality assurance standards are building on somewhat scattered Internal Regulations. The experts are satisfied that these initial steps towards quality assurance have made some impact but are far away from an implemented and running quality assurance system. CBA seems to be on track but we are in early stages. The progress still lies in the future and must be observed closely;
2. shareholders do not remember participating in surveys and results of those surveys have not been properly summarized and used under the framework of the quality management system.



## Evaluation of criterion

Poor	X Average	Good	Excellent
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### K4. Resources and provision of the study direction

*Assessing the criteria, please analyse the following aspects:*

- *Financial provision of the study direction (Is the HEI aware of the financial resources required for the implementation of the study programme? / Does the HEI have them? / Are they sufficient to ensure a qualitative study process? / Is there long-term planning with regard to financial resources?);*
- *System to finance scientific research and/or artistic creation (Is it defined and effective?);*
- *Infrastructure of the study direction and material and technical provision (Is the HEI aware of the infrastructure resources and material and technical provision required for the implementation of the study programme? / Does the HEI have them? Do students and teaching staff<sup>1</sup> have a long-term access to the resources? / Is development of the infrastructure planned?);*
- *Methodological and informational support of the study direction (Is the support sufficient and suitable for the needs of the implementation of the relevant study programmes of the study direction? / Is it effectively applied in the study process? / Is there long-term availability of this support?);*
- *Support from the administrative and technical staff for the implementation of the study direction;*
- *Support system for students (Are needs of the support system identified? / Is it officially introduced and functioning?);*
- *Provision for distance learning (Is infrastructure, material and technical provision, methodological and informational support sufficient and in compliance with the specific features of distance learning?) (if applicable);*
- *Provision of the resources required for the study process in the branches (Are financial resources, infrastructure, material and technical provision, methodological and informational support and support from the administrative and technical staff sufficient?) (if applicable);*
- *Procedures for selection and employment of the teaching staff (Are the procedures officially determined and implemented in practice? / Are they observed? / Do they ensure that qualified and appropriate members of the teaching staff are employed?);*
- *Professional and didactic improvement of the teaching staff (Are needs of the teaching staff for professional and didactic improvement determined in a target-oriented manner? / Are the appropriate improvement measures are taken and used? / Is the result and efficiency of the taken measures assessed?);*
- *Compliance of the qualification, professional and academic experience of the teaching staff with the implementation of the relevant study programmes of the study direction;*
- *Mobility of the teaching staff (Does the teaching staff take part both in outgoing and ingoing mobility? / Does the mobility provide added value for the implementation of the study process and study quality?).*

<sup>1</sup> The definition "teaching staff" used herein is applicable to the academic staff of the relevant higher education institution and its visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting docents, visiting lecturers and visiting assistants.

## Analysis

CBA has provided annual expenditure, including the planned CBA expenses for the provision of studies in 2017. However, in order to assess the financial resources for the particular study direction (Law Science), the exact distribution of expenses between the study directions, as well as distribution of income between the study directions is needed.

CBA suggests that financial and resource planning for study programs is based on a unified principle, since the number of students in the programs is from 50 to 200 and entire study process is planned for relatively similar student groups which does not create additional costs for administering small groups. Similarly, marketing, advertising, sales and administration costs are shared. However, despite the fact that number of students in this program is growing, namely, in 2016 there were 5 students, 2017 – 39 students, 2018 – 52 students (PowerPoint slides by CBA Director Signe Enkuzena), it is still relatively low. Especially taking into account that entire study process is planned for relatively similar student groups which does not create additional costs for administering small groups. Thus, it is vital to increase the number of students particularly in this study direction to ensure the sustainability.

The main source of income for the CBA are tuition fees, deferred payments, study process administration fees. At present, the amount of study fees collected in the study program “Law” (only program in this study direction) is proportionally lower compared to all study fees than the proportional amount of students of this study program against all students. Therefore, the program is financed from the funds of other study programs from different study directions though cross-subsidies resulting from the overall planning of financing of the study program (SAR. p. 43.) By raising the total number of students at CBA, it is expected that income will increase. However, CBA does not highlight, how in particular it plans to distinguish this program from others to attract more law students.

Experts appreciate, that in order to stimulate the provision of additional resources, the CBA aims to attract additional funding through European Union funds that are intended to be invested in the development of the study process. CBA is currently running the project funded by the European Social Fund “Improvement of management processes and quality of study programs at the College of Business Administration”.

Infrastructure of premises is in order, since the premises are rented from Riga Graduate School of Law since year 2010 (Lease agreement Nr.12/2-6, dated 21 June, 2010). Nevertheless, methodological and informational support of the study direction, in particular, the library, databases and provision of e-books, is still not sufficient. With respect to the library, it must be noted that its resources are not sufficient for the library, there are only about 70 books available in law sphere. For instance, during on site visit constitutional scientific comments, which are of prime importance for study course on constitutional law, were not available (CBA did not present any prove of existence of this book – records in the catalog, records that it has been lend to the student etc. If this book was truly purchased, then there is no policy stating that one copy has always to present in the library for onsite use to suffice interests of all students). The experts from previous accreditation had pointed out as urgent work to arrange the library resources, it still has not been done, despite the fact that some efforts were made to improve the situation. The director of the CBA mentioned that students can use any library in the city as well as the information given during the visit was complemented by the contract between the

college and Riga Graduate School of Law. Taking into consideration that the college offers e-studies, it is important to establish their own e-library appropriate in volume and contents which practically does not exist at this point of time. The students (as it was mentioned by them), mainly use the study materials developed by their lecturers.

EBSCO database has been purchased and used. According to the statistics there are positive dynamics of use of this database, namely, in 2016, 57 log-in sessions and 1317 searches were registered, and in 2017 – 829 login sessions and 3292 searches were registered (SAR p. 50.). CBA has also prepared methodological material for use of EBSCO, which has been appreciated by the students. During the interviews, one graduate admitted, that she has used this database not only for her research at CBA, but also to prepare her bachelor thesis at different institution, which failed to explain how to use this database. Experts have observed that use of EBSO is highly promoted and it is very visible in Moodle environment. At the same time experts would like to draw attention that there is a lack of other databases, that are relevant for law students and provide law specific content (for instance, Westlaw International, HeinOnline, etc.). If these databases are available and free of charge, based on agreement with Riga Graduate School of Law, CBA fails to advertise this possibility to the students.

Taking into consideration that CBA focusses on distance learning, it is advisable to expend its own collection of electronic resources. Moreover, during onsite visit it was observed that each study subject, which was showed to the experts during on site visit, has only 1-2 video lectures available (approximately less than 2 hours). Not all subjects, quickly demonstrated in the Moodle environment during the visit, had video lectures at all, despite the fact that CBA positions itself as institution with developed distance learning possibilities.

CBA is using various tools, for instance, WhatsApp, Facebook, Skype, etc., but not always these tools are professional and modern. Often better tools are available in the market, for instance, Slack. Also not all options of Moodle are used and explored, for instance, CBA does not use Moodle Big Blue Button – video conferencing solution.

Support system for students has been developed and it has been highly appreciated by the students. Students agree that they receive an individual approach and all problems are solved very fast. Students even suggested that they are not willing to fill in feedback questionnaires, because it is easier to communicate all issues directly. However, since number of students is increasing, this approach might become less effective in the future.

CBA has developed regulations for selection of academic and administrative personnel. Based on Article 39 of Law On Institutions of Higher Education in pursuance of the necessity for acquiring practical skills and knowledge, a person who has higher education without an academic degree may hold the position of docent, lecturer and assistant in profile subjects of professional study programmes, if he or she has a sufficient length of practical service appropriate to the subject to be taught [...] Lecturers and assistants who do not have a scientific and an academic degree shall be required to have practical service appropriate to the subject to be taught, the length of which is five years. CBA meets this criterion - 21 academic staff members are involved in the implementation of the study direction - 4 of them with PhD, and the other 17 lectures have a Master's degree and have a sufficient length of practical service.

CBA is committed to attract academic personnel with both – academic degree and practical experience in the field. Management of CBA during onsite visit has explained that it aims to attract and keep academic personnel with talent.

Experts strongly support this aim, because they have observed that rotation of academic personnel is relatively high. Experts understand that CBA might be not able to provide full time employment for lectures and they have to work at various places. However, retention of academic personnel is of a prime importance, because it is a way, how to achieve certain level of succession and retain institutional knowledge (memory).

In order for the professional development of academic staff to be purposeful, according to the Strategy of the CBA 2018-2024, the “Plan for development of professional competences of the academic staff 2018-2024 ” has been developed, where 3 priorities were highlighted - promotion of teaching skills, promotion of research competence and promotion of acquisition of competences by providing a motivating and supportive environment for the academic staff as well as exchange of experience in cooperation with higher education institutions abroad. Various events were organized to increase the competence of academic staff, for instance, methodological seminar “Standard for the description of the study course and creation of the distance learning course” on 27 March, 2018.

During onsite visit experts have obtained information that some representatives of the academic personnel are PhD students and they are obliged to conduct research activities in order to receive qualification. However, CBA is not listed as a place of employment when research is published, thus, CBA does not fully benefit from these activities. In order to motivate academic personnel to conduct research activities, CBA has created a working group, which is currently working with the aim of creating a motivation remuneration system for lectures that would purposely promote their research and applied research activities.

Mobility of the academic staff has not taken place as the CBA is not a participant of the Erasmus+ program. In 2017 the CBA applied for a membership of the Erasmus University Charter, but received a refusal. More than 8 recommendations were provided (for instance, CBA is required to provide a satisfactory description of the preparation of mobility activities and of the Course Catalogue, of the institutional procedure for the approval and monitoring of inter-institutional agreements and learning agreements and of the institution's language policy), thus, after the elimination of deficiencies CBA can apply repeatedly.

#### Conclusions, specifying strengths and weaknesses

##### Strengths:

1. CBA aims to attract additional funding through European Union funds and has been successful so far;
2. academic personnel meet the requirements and is passionate about work at CBA;
3. CBA has created a working group, which is currently working with the aim of creating a motivation remuneration system for lectures.

##### Weaknesses:

1. no mobility of the academic staff;
2. methodological and informational support of the study direction, in particular, the library, databases and provision of e-books, are not sufficient. E-library is appropriate in volume and contents;



3. CBA does not explore the whole functions of existing resources (for example, Moodle).

Evaluation of criterion

Poor	X Average	Good	Excellent
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K5. Scientific research, and, if the study direction “Arts” is assessed – also artistic creation

[organisation within the study direction and the scientific research work of the academic staff and students of the HEI, and, if the study direction “Arts” is assessed – also the work of artistic creation]

*Assessing the criteria, please analyse the following aspects:*

- *Directions of scientific research and/or artistic creation of the study direction (Are they in compliance with the study direction and the relevant industry, as well as with the development aims of the HEI?);*
- *Relation between scientific research and/or artistic creation and study process (Is the relation defined, ensured, and effective? / Are scientific research and/or artistic creation and their results integrated in the study process (in the study programmes of all levels)?);*
- *Both national and international activities of the academic staff in scientific research and/or artistic creation (within the study direction); application of the obtained information in the study process;*
- *International cooperation in scientific research and/or artistic creation (Is there any cooperation? / What type of cooperation is implemented? / How has cooperation developed? / How does it influence on the relevant study programmes of the study direction?);*
- *Students' involvement in scientific research and/or artistic creation (Is a system created? Is it functioning? / Is it effective? / Are students of all levels involved in scientific research and/or artistic creation?);*
- *Innovative solutions in the study process.*

Analysis

Even though there is no requirement for the college to carry out scientific activities at the first level professional higher education programs, however, promotion of applied research is indicated as one of the strategic priorities in the Strategy of the CBA. In the SAR main directions of scientific research are prescribed, highlighting its focus on business. However, the aspects of the European Union Law and Private International Law, which are closely related to the business, are not included at all.

Academic staff is mainly comprised of practitioners and it influences the research activities, but it should be noted that the number of publications, in comparison to the last self-assessment period, has increased. However, still the main research activities are presentations in the conferences without actually published papers. Therefore, these research materials are not accessible to the students and research results are not involved in the study process. Moreover, majority of lectures also work as academic staff in other higher education institutions of Latvia,

therefore, articles, which have been published, are not linked to the CBA (at least in the articles, from the Table 6 in the SAR, which were accessible online, either there was no indication of the represented institution or the other higher education institution has been indicated). It is expected that introduced “Plan for developing of professional competencies of the academic staff 2018-2024” will increase research activities of academic staff. As concerns the mobility of academic personnel, it does not occur, and as the main argument here can be mentioned that till today the college has not received Erasmus+ Charter.

New course “Research design” has been included into the curricula and according to the Guidelines students are required to prepare their qualification papers as scientific research papers by using research methods and scientific sources. During onsite visit some qualification papers have been checked and unfortunately not all students followed mentioned requirements.

In April 2018 CBA in cooperation with another College has organized the scientific conference for lecturers and students, in which 13 students from CBA participated. One section in the Conference was dedicated to the Law science and some students of the program “Law” also participated. This was confirmed during the onsite visit by the graduates of the program. Moreover, after the conference a collection of articles was published and it was presented to the experts during the onsite visit.

According to the Strategy of the CBA the involvement of students in the scientific research activities should increase every year, for instance, it is planned to carry out applied research projects in cooperation with employers.

At the moment, there is no international cooperation in scientific research at the CBA. Even though in the SAR (p. 66) it is stated that in 2018 CBA has signed cooperation agreements with higher education institutions abroad, however, other sections of the SAR (p. 68) and Annex 5 reveals that only one cooperation agreement has been signed with the Lithuania Business University of Applied Sciences (Lithuania, Klaipėda). It is planned to launch international cooperation in scientific research by organizing international scientific conference.

#### Conclusions, specifying strengths and weaknesses

##### Strengths:

1. adopted “Plan for developing of professional competencies of the academic staff 2018-2024”, which include promotion of research competence of the academic staff;
2. inclusion of a new course “Research design” into the curricula;
3. organized scientific conference for lecturers and students, in which one section was dedicated to the Law science;
4. placement and accessibility by the students of video lectures available on e-platform Moodle. A visually developed e-platform on Moodle can be positively assessed where all the learning materials can be accessed including video lectures.

##### Weaknesses:

1. directions of scientific research lack international aspects (for instance, EU Law and Private International Law);
2. . The main research activities are presentations in the conferences without actually published papers and those, which are published do not represent CBA;
3. no international cooperation in scientific research activities.

#### Evaluation of criterion

Poor	Average	X Good	Excellent
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### K6. Cooperation and internationalization

[compliance with achieving the development aims of the study direction, and with the implementation of the relevant study programmes of the study direction and with associated research, and, if the study direction “Arts” is assessed – also the compliance with artistic creation]

*Assessing the criteria, please analyse the following aspects:*

- *Aims and management of cooperation and internationalization (Are these aims in compliance with the development aims of the HEI and aims of the study direction? / Does management help to achieve the aims?);*
- *Description and assessment of the cooperation forms and types (except for cooperation with employers) (Is there any practical cooperation, if yes, what is it? / How does it contribute to improving the study quality? / Are cooperation partners chosen according to the aims of the study direction?);*
- *Cooperation with employers and employers' organisations of the relevant industry;*
- *Provision of places for traineeship for students and organisation of traineeship (if applicable);*
- *Attraction of foreign students and teaching staff within the study direction;*
- *Students' outgoing and ingoing mobility;*
- *Joint study programmes implemented by Latvian and foreign HEIs (Justification of creation of the joint study programmes and of selection of partnering HEIs / Is the process of creation and implementation of the joint study programmes defined and efficient?) (if applicable);*
- *Study direction in the international environment (Does the HEI take part in the international organisations associated with the relevant study direction) (if applicable).*

#### Analysis

CBA has a development strategy, being in place renewed since 2018 and reaching till 2024, where a major point is the cooperation with employers and employers' organisations, such as the Chamber of Commerce and other multipliers, reaching out to a cluster of companies. The employer side is sufficiently represented in the Council of the CBA, takes active participation in running, monitoring and modifying the Law Program according to the needs in the market. Employers are taking part in offering internship places to students and taking part in examinations. Some students have been provided with topics for the qualification papers. This has added a practical touch to the papers and could lead to later employment. All in all, CBA has entered into a number of institutionalized cooperations with professional associations, the Supreme Court and the Chamber of Commerce, all internally managed by an internship supervisor and controlled through the necessity to present a qualification paper, overseen by a qualification paper supervisor.

Students reported that CBA was very helpful in providing a place of internship/traineeship. Employers representatives have unilaterally expressed their content with the motivation and professional skills of the students, doing their internship.

Employers are taking part in conferences and discussions around curricular questions and administrative tasks of the CBA. The experts are satisfied that students profit from this approach.

At the moment there is hardly any international collaboration in the college, there is no inbound or outbound mobility of students or academic personnel. Internationalization is a field where much is desired. "Law Science" still is a very much stand-alone Latvian study direction, run in the Latvian language, not able to attract foreign students, not encouraging student mobility or staff mobility, not in any sufficient way having bilateral, active and working institutionalized cooperation with foreign HEIs. Internationalization needs much and immediate care. With the implementation of the EFQM standards, CBA hopes to also attract foreign students; catering for their needs with the implementation of easy accessible information in English on all procedures, study possibilities and information on studying and living in Latvia on the Website.

In 2017 CBA has applied for being awarded the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE; Erasmus+) which would have anchored and speeded up internationalization. The application was turned down for Selection Year 2018 under the 26.10.2017. CBA was furnished with comments and recommendations by the ECHE Evaluation Committee. The application can be renewed for the next proposal round.

CBA has in the past undertaken to invite guest lecturers from outside since 2016 on a small scale (2 guest lecturers). This path initiative should be broadened. The college has signed a collaboration agreement with Business College in Lithuania that could be the beginning of international collaboration, however, in order to facilitate the mobility of students and academic personnel, the college has to receive Erasmus+ Charter.

Not all but some students have shown interest in study mobility. Lecturers should get a chance to broaden their horizon and make the idea of internationalization a practical means.

#### Conclusions, specifying strengths and weaknesses

##### Strengths:

1. collaboration with employers is a clear strength of CBA and should be followed up accordingly;
2. lecturers from Latvia and foreign guest lectures have been invited under the framework of study process.

##### Weaknesses:

1. at the moment there is hardly any international collaboration in the college, there is no inbound or outbound mobility of students or academic personnel;
2. CBA still has not been awarded with the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education;
3. "Law Science" still is a very much stand-alone Latvian study direction, run in the Latvian language, not able to attract foreign students, not encouraging student mobility or staff mobility, not in any sufficient way having bilateral, active and working institutionalized cooperation with foreign HEIs.



## Evaluation of criterion

Poor	X Average	Good	Excellent
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### K7. Work of students' self-governance

*Assessing the criteria, please analyse the following aspects:*

- *Work principles of students' self-governance (Is there self-governance? / Are students informed about self-governance and its functions? / Do they actively take part in activities of students' self-governance?);*
- *Compliance of the work of students' self-governance with the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (Does students' self-governance, carrying out its activities, represent students in academic, material (social), cultural life matters? / Is there a procedure defined that allows students to be elected for collegiate entities of HEI);*
- *Support provided by the management of the HEI to facilitate students' representation development and activities of students' self-governance.*

#### Analysis

Students' self-governance is regulated by internal regulation on these matters (available on CBA webpage). According to this internal regulation the self-government of students shall be composed of the senior members of the groups elected within each academic group of the college [in Latvian: grupas vecākais. A member nominated by the students as responsible for a group - number of students admitted in each program within an academic year].

Based on information, provided by the CBA currently the self-government of students consists of 7 members, 4 of them can be described as active members. CBA managements holds regular meetings with the self-government of students (at least once per month). CBA management has identified need to increase the level of students' activity and engagement. However, due to the specifics of the CBA, namely, distance learning and student tense schedules and employment outside studies, this is a difficult task.

Representatives nominated by the students' self-government have been elected to the Council of the CBA with the right to veto on questions concerning the interests of the students, as well as are informed about the work of the collegial decision – making body – the Council of Studies. Issues suggested by the students are considered at the meeting of the Council of Students. The suggestions for improving the study process have been taken into account, for instance, suggestion that the Moodle environment should provide an opportunity to communicate with the course lecturer directly to get answers more quickly.

Major activities carried out by the student self-government are:

- Spring/summer 2018 – CBA video interviews with alumni for promotion of study programmes;
- Spring/summer 2018 – organizing practical open webinar on relevant topics in the industry;
- in February 2018, within the framework of the activities of the Latvian Association of Colleges, students had a study visit to Tartu University in Estonia.

During onsite visit experts did not meet any representatives of students' self-governance, however, students and alumni were able to mention some examples of activities carried by students' self-governance.

Based on the SAR (p. 42), activities of the Students' self-government are financed from the CBA budget in accordance with the procedure specified in Section 53 of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education. Funding is available for all students' activities, but the practice is that now the funding agreed with the administration and budget expenditures are planned according to the experience of the previous use. The amount of this item in the budget is scheduled to be revised as the amount requested changes.

Section 53 (4) of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education states that management bodies of institutions of higher education and colleges have a duty to support and promote the activities of a student self-governance body. The student self-governance body shall be financed from the institution of higher education or college budget in an amount, which is not less than two-hundred part [experts remark: 0,5% or 0,005 units] of the institution of higher education or college budget [...]

Based on the actual and planned expenses for the common study process 2017-2021 (SAR p. 39.), it can be derived that students' self-governance has not been financed sufficiently in accordance with Section 53 (4) of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education, requiring at least 0,5% or 0,005 units of college budget to be attributed to students' self-governance. For instance:

	<i>Euros</i>	<i>Units/Percentage</i>
Total amount in 2017	453 365,32	1 unit or 100%
Expenses for student self-government	760,11	0,00167 units or 0,167%
Total amount in 2018	499 364,10	1 unit or 100%
Expenses for student self-government	813,32	0,00162 units or 0,162 %

In the academic year 2017/2018 the CBA Students' self-government has become a member a member of the College Students Association of Latvia.

#### Conclusions, specifying strengths and weaknesses

##### Strengths:

1. management of CBA is holding regular meetings with student self-governance to work on improvement and receive feedback.

##### Weaknesses:

1. students are not sufficiently involved in students' self-governance;
2. student self-governance does not receive sufficient funding according to Section 53 (4) of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.

#### Evaluation of criterion

Poor	X Average	Good	Excellent
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K8. The implementation of the recommendations (if such had been given) provided for a particular study programme within the previous accreditation of the study direction (if such had been conducted) or licensing of a study programme

*Assessing the criteria, please analyse the following aspects:*

- *Completion of the plan for the implementation of recommendations given during the previous accreditation of the study direction or licensing of study programmes (if applicable) (Are the recommendations implemented fully/partially? / Is there any contribution from the HEI to analysis of the recommendations and to their adaptation to the specific features of the study direction?).*

#### Analysis

Nearly all 17 recommendations given as a result of the previous accreditation have been tackled and either realized in full or in part. The recommendations realized in part are in the process of being implemented and need more time, such as the installation of a complete quality assurance system or the internationalization topic.

As uncompleted can be marked 2 – the improvement of the internal quality management (commentary at K3); 8 – the library resources (commentary at K4); 13 – internationalization and mobility (commentary at K4, K6).

Recommendation 15 was not taken up by CBA on the grounds that filming the defending of qualification papers would violate the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). However, this would only be true, if there were no legal basis for processing of personal data according to Article 6 of the GDPR. Several legal grounds can be used to justify filming of defense, for instance, consent or legitimate interest of CBA to ensure quality of educational process and provide possibility to appeal after defense.

Background of the recommendation was that either a protocol should be written, showing questions and answers during the oral exam or the process filmed for the purpose that in the case of an appeal against the evaluation of the students' performance, proof should be able to be provided from the side of the CBA what exactly was asked and answered in the process.

After the visit the CBA has sent 2 written protocols of defense. In first protocol only questions asked were fixed, in second protocol - answers were fixed. Experts agree that appropriate and detailed protocols are sufficient to fulfil this recommendation. In addition, it has been proved to be beneficial to have the answers protocolled as well in case of later contested defenses.

#### Conclusions, specifying strengths and weaknesses

##### Strengths:

1. recommendations have been taken seriously and are realized or initialized satisfactorily.

##### Weaknesses:

1. some recommendations are uncompleted. As uncompleted can be marked recommendation No 2 – the improvement of the internal quality management; recommendation No 8 – the library resources; recommendation No 13 – internationalization and mobility.

Evaluation of criterion

Poor	X Average	Good	Excellent
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## Recommendations for the study direction

### **Recommendations for elimination of the deficiencies found (in the short-term period):**

1. It is recommended to develop a strategy for the direction of studies, including performance indicators in a more detailed manner.
2. It is recommended to develop a more detailed and accurate SWOT analysis involving all stakeholders in the process.
3. It is recommended to clarify the functions of all persons/bodies involved in the study direction/program management and the decision-making process, also the terms of study program revision.
4. CBA management should keep an eye on the quality standards implemented and crosscheck with The EFQM with the ESG standards, probably using the EQUIP project which provides information, training, consultation possibilities and Webinars on the criteria and ways of implementation of ESG 2015.
5. It is recommended to improve constant critical self-evaluation and feedback mechanisms, in particular, conduct of surveys (amount of surveys should be adequate and representative), which should be a useful tool for the development of the study program.
6. It is necessary to expand library resources, including electronic books and data basis. At least the most necessary books and e-materials should be available as soon as possible (at least 2-3 relevant books per each subject, for instance, constitutional scientific comments). Keeping in mind that expansion of library requires large investments, it is recommended to expand it further gradually.
7. It is recommended to improve Moodle platform by designing the communication between students and lecturers not only in the discussion area, but also for the students to add their homework, analyses of practicums, essays, study work as well as an option to view assessment and commentaries given by a lecturer.
8. It is recommended to continue the initiative of organizing scientific conference for lectures and students.
9. It is recommended to establish international cooperation in scientific research activities. For instance, by organizing international scientific conferences, preparing joint publications with researchers from other countries, etc.
10. It is recommended to follow up the comments and recommendations of the ECHE Evaluation Committee and make Erasmus + workable for CBA. It is the best basis for student and staff mobility and provides necessary funds for projects, internships, studies, etc.
11. It is recommended to appoint a responsible person taking charge of International Affairs and start managing an International Office.
12. It is recommended to step up language courses towards active Language of Meetings standards which will enable students to avail of a language training enabling them to be internationally mobile.
13. It is recommended to install English language courses (e.g. through readily available E-study courses on European Law topics) to enable non Latvian speakers to choose CBA as a place of study for a limited time.

14. Students' self-governance has to be sufficiently financed in accordance with Section 53 (4) of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.

**Recommendations for improving the study quality in the long-term period:**

15. It is recommended to set long-term interdisciplinary research directions and prepare a research program to implement those directions.
16. Since study direction is "Law", it is advisable to motivate students to join European Law Students' Association of Latvia (ELSA).

### Assessment of the study direction

Experts suggest to accredit this study direction for 2 years. Experts gained a very good impression during onsite visit from all the stakeholders involved. Experts appreciate that CBA has undertaken a lot of activities to perform better in the future and improve quality of the process, including, has attracted funding from the European Union. However, at the current moment there are quite a lot of issues that need to be solved, for instance, lack of library resources, too much credit point for internship that in practice is a study visit to a court, no mobility, almost no international cooperation, etc. Thus, experts reached the conclusion that progress of CBA requires monitoring.

Moreover, guidelines suggest that "if the criterion K4 "Resources and provision of the study direction" or criterion K8 "The implementation of the recommendations (if such had been given) provided for a particular study programme within the previous accreditation of the study direction (if such had been conducted) or licensing of a study programme" is evaluated as "average", then the experts may recommend to accredit the study direction for a period of 2 years."

Both Sections K4 and K8 have been evaluated as average. Despite many positive aspects, experts would like to stress that each weakness and strength has different weight and importance.

Regarding recommendations of the Section K8. The Experts have marked as uncompleted the following recommendations from the previous accreditation: the improvement of the internal quality management, the library resources, internationalization and mobility. The guidelines suggest that evaluation should be good, if deficiencies are insignificant and they can be easily eliminated. If deficiencies in implementation are significant and affect the quality of the study direction – the evaluation should be average. As it is indicated in the Joint Report there are significant deficiencies:

- a) library resources are not sufficient,
- b) CBA was not granted the Erasmus + Charter and international cooperation is very weak (signed one agreement and invited one guest lecturer),
- c) despite the fact that internal policies are drafted, the quality management system still has not been developed and it is not completely functioning in the educational establishment, etc.

The same is applicable to the section K4. Methodological and informational support of the study direction, in particular, the library, databases and provision of e-books, is not sufficient. In addition, as CBA itself states in the SAR that the program is financed from the funds of other study programs from different study directions through cross-subsidies resulting from the overall planning of financing of the study program (SAR p. 43).

## 1. STUDY PROGRAMME "LAW"

- K9. The reciprocal compliance between the name of the study programme, the degree to be acquired, professional qualification or degree and professional qualification, aims and objectives, and terms of admission

*Assessing the criteria, please analyse the following aspects:*

- *The reciprocal compliance between the name of the study programme, the degree to be acquired, professional qualification or degree and professional qualification, aims and objectives, and terms of admission.*

### Analysis

Study program correspond to the study program direction and professional qualification to be acquired. A total volume of the study program is 92 CP and realization period – 2,5 years (in the SAR p. 78 it is indicated 2,6 years). The total volume of credit points and study duration cast doubts whether 92 CP for part-time studies correspond to 2,5 years. One study program is realized under the framework of the study direction.

As one of the study aims mentioned, there is a facilitation of practical conclusions, however, the curriculum does not reflect it as it is rather arranged in a theoretical aspect. Thus far, with the minimal aspect in the contents of the studies for acquiring a professional qualification a possibility to facilitate skills and competences corresponding to the qualification to be acquired is limited and under its framework one of the study program tasks is not realized i.e. to facilitate skills and competences during two internships as practically only one is facilitated (commentary at K10).

### Conclusions, specifying strengths and weaknesses

#### Strengths:

1. admission requirements have been developed in accordance with admissions in the first level professional higher education program. The name "Law" (state code 41380) is adequate and complies with the content of the study programme (aimed at educating legal assistant with specialization in business) and qualification requirements of law to be conferred. The admission rules of study programme are appropriate. Enrolment in the study programme is based on the college Admission requirements which are published on the College website. The study programme is aimed at persons who have at least secondary education (a document certifying secondary education required)

#### Weaknesses:

1. it is doubtful whether total volume of credit points corresponds to study duration.

### Evaluation of criterion

Poor	Average	X Good	Excellent
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## K10. The content of studies

*Assessing the criteria, please analyse the following aspects:*

- *Content of the study courses/modules (Is it relevant and in compliance with the relevant industry, needs of the labour market and scientific trends?);*
- *Compliance of the study courses/modules with the aims of the study programme and study results to be achieved (Does the study course form an integral whole and help to achieve the determined study results of the study programme? / Is the layout of the study courses in the curriculum is logical and consecutive? / Are descriptions of the study courses developed in a detailed and qualitative manner?);*
- *Study implementation methods (including evaluation methods) (Do the methods contribute to achieving the results of the study courses and the set aim of the study programme? / Are student-centered education principles taken into account?);*
- *Students' traineeship (Do students obtain the required skills in the course of traineeship according to the study results to be achieved in the study programme?);*
- *Topics of the students' final works (Are they relevant and in compliance with the needs of the labour market and scientific trends?);*
- *Results of the students' opinion surveys (Are the results used for improvement of the study quality, if yes, to what extent?);*
- *Results of the graduates and employers' opinion surveys (Are the results used for improvement of the study quality, if yes, to what extent?).*

### Analysis

The study program has been developed in accordance with existing requirements of normative acts i.d. in accordance with standard of the first level higher education and the standard which has been approved by Trilateral Collaboration Council in 2009. The study program has been developed in accordance with law sphere and the requirements of labour market, it facilitates graduates to work both in private and public sectors. Although the college declares its program is connected with specialization in business sphere, however, it is not affirmed either by the curriculum itself or its contents. Descriptions of courses developed under the framework correspond to the aim of the program to acquire the professional qualification of legal assistant.

Under the framework of the study program, the description for all the study courses have been developed in accordance with unified standard and requirements. The description of courses has been approved by the College Council. In the description of courses, a division of academic hours, results achievable, structure of a study course, bibliography etc. are indicated.

However, the division of academic hours invokes certain discussion i.d. the division that is reflected in the description of the study course, yet is not practiced in nature. Taking into consideration that the study program is realized in distance learning form, 8, 14, etc. contact hours are indicated in the description of studies, however, after discussions with the lecturers it was confirmed that they are not organized in the volume indicated in the program, they are organized on request.

Undoubtedly positively can be assessed the video lectures that are offered under the framework of studies, but in this case the video lectures would not be considered as contact hours, but rather a study material. In the division of academic hours there are separately allotted hours for solving tasks, controlling questions and self-



assessment which can be positively assessed, however, it is insufficient from the practical facilitation point of view. In the study materials developed by the lecturers the tasks, controlling questions, and self-assessment are included, however, it should be noted that under the frame of professional studies it is insufficient that students assess them themselves. The students assessed very positively the discussions organized by the lecturers under the frame of the study course (within one week) during which different situations are discussed, however, it is not convincing that by acquiring professional study program it is sufficient. As it can be seen in the study course descriptions, at the final assessment of the course the lecturers grant a large percent to the discussions, therewith as it was noted before, the volume of discussions should be revised and the study contents should be complemented with practical tasks, situation analyses of case-law, etc.

Students' internship is designed under the frame of the study program – 16 CP. The college has divided this internship into two parts, out which one part is attending the court (8 CP). In connection with this part of internship, a range of requirements have been developed, however, after visiting the CBA, it was confirmed that in reality the students do not undergo the internship in the court, and only attend a few court hearings, neither the trilateral collaboration agreements of internship are signed in accordance with the Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers on Internship No. 785 (20.11.2012). It was also indicated as one of the matters to be arranged by the accreditation experts in 2016. The second internship place student can choose independently, according to study programme and internship aim to provide the opportunity to acquire practical skills in the application of legal theory and history, Civil law, Administrative law, Criminal law or International law. Duration of second internship is 8 credit points. Internship is regulated by Regulation of prequalification internship (2018). After internship students have to submit internship report based on internship regulation.

At the end of studies, the students develop and defend their qualification paper, in the defense employers are also involved. Having been acquainted with the qualification papers, it must be noted that topics of the papers are selected correspondingly to the industry. The development of qualification paper is regulated by two binding internal normative acts: Qualification Work Regulations and Methodical Rules for Development Qualification Work. Qualification work(s), from the point of view of the contents, are rather developed from theoretical aspect, and from the practical, however, it is important to note that qualification paper is developed to acquire professional qualification.

In the SAR, the summary of students' survey results is given that attests on quite a positive process of studies, however, when meeting the students, the confirmation of such survey conducted was not received. The experts being present and asking questions on satisfaction with the study process, everybody assessed it positively, especially highlighting the study coordinator (Daiga).

The survey of graduates is conducted formally. There is very large number of dropped out students (2016) and a small number of those who have acquired qualification (SAR, Annex 11.) It is not clear why there is so small number of graduates. In the visit representatives of CBA did not clarify why there is so small number of those who have acquired qualification and so large number of those students who have dropped out. Representatives of CBA only noted they are fast growing college, in 2016 they admitted 5 students in program, but in 2017 already 39.

Year	Matriculated	Studying	For a fee	Got a qualification	Dropped out
2016	5	29	29	2	52
2017	39	86	86	6	1

Conclusions, specifying strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:

1. one can positively assess the description of study courses as well as additional study materials developed by the lecturers (a book).

Weaknesses:

1. division of academic hours is not corresponding to the real situation and professional qualification to be acquired;
2. students' internships do not meet all the requirements concerning the internships.

Evaluation of criterion

Poor	X Average	Good	Excellent
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## K11. Resources and provision of the study programme

*Assessing the criteria, please analyse the following aspects:*

- *Teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programme (Is the teaching staff chosen according to the specific features of the study programme? / Do the qualification and mutual cooperation of the teaching staff ensure achievement of the aims/results of the study programme?);*
- *Teaching staff in the branches (Does teaching staff in the branches differ from provision in the main place of the implementation? If yes, does it ensure the implementation of a qualitative study process? (if applicable)).*

Analysis

CBA has developed regulations for selection of academic and administrative personnel (valid from year 2007). Vacancies are publicly available.

CBA is committed to attract academic personnel with both – academic degree and practical experience in the field. Based on Article 39 of Law On Institutions of Higher Education in pursuance of the necessity for acquiring practical skills and knowledge, a person who has higher education without an academic degree may hold the position of docent, lecturer and assistant in profile subjects of professional study programmes, if he or she has a sufficient length of practical service appropriate to the subject to be taught [...] Lecturers and assistants who do not have a scientific and an academic degree shall be required to have practical service appropriate to the subject to be taught, the length of which is five years. CBA meets this criterion - 1 lecturer holds a PhD in Law, 1 lecturer is a candidate of a PhD in Law (theoretical part is passed), 8 lectures have a Master's degree and 2 out of them are PhD in law

students. All lectures have sufficient level of practical service that compliments academic competences.

The qualification and mutual cooperation of teaching staff supports achievement of the aims and results of the study programme, namely, preparation of legal assistants. Some of the lecturers are coming from the public sphere, for instance, two lectures work at the Supreme Court of Republic of Latvia; some are employed at private companies or law offices. Therefore, together bringing experience from both - public and private sector. Experts understand that CBA might be not able to provide full time employment for lectures and they have to work at various places.

During onsite visit academic personal has demonstrated passion to work at CBA and some of the lectures also highlighted, that they prefer distance learning, since it provides flexibility not only for students, but, also, for lectures.

During onsite visit CBA Director Signe Enkuzena who, also, has more 17 years' experience in HR matters, has explained that CBA aims to attract and keep academic personnel. CBA has created a working group, which is currently working with the aim of creating a motivation remuneration system for lectures. Experts strongly support this aim, because they have observed that rotation of academic personal is relatively high. There are a lot of changes, which, according to CBA, have been done purposefully to improve the quality of the study program. At the next accreditation cycle results will show, if this move led to the desired stabilization and improvement in the long term. Nevertheless, experts remind that retention of academic personnel is of prime importance, because it is a way how to achieve certain level of succession and retain institutional knowledge (memory). Minimizing fluctuation helps to keep up a good standard of teaching and good staff – student relations.

#### Conclusions, specifying strengths and weaknesses

##### Strengths:

1. Academic personnel meet the requirements and is passionate about work at CBA.

##### Weakness:

1. Fluctuations of academic personnel - lot of academic personnel has changed since last accreditation.

#### Evaluation of criterion

Poor	Average	X Good	Excellent
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## K12. Employment opportunities of the graduates of the study programme

*Assessing the criteria, please analyse the following aspects:*

- *Employment of the graduates of the study programme. (Are the graduates employed in the field of the acquired degree/professional qualification or in other field?);*
- *Employment forecast and opportunities of the graduates of the study programme,*

Analysis, specifying strengths and weaknesses

SAR and the expert visit provided a justification for the employment opportunities of the graduates of the study programme. At the same time, it should be noted that the quality of the reasoning in the SAR could be more convincing. It provides allegations without evidence and references to objective sources. For example, the SAR (p. 97) does not refer to the sources' claim that the tendencies in the global education market show that a growing number of people choose to take a short cycle, including first level higher education programs.

The reasoning in the SAR (p. 100) is also contradictory. On the one hand, the main emphasis of the study programme is on the Latvian legal system; on the other hand, the opportunities for employment to work outside Latvia are indicated on the employment perspective. Such a possibility is to be assessed critically at the existing courses of the study programme. There is also no understandable reference to the World Bank Doing Business 2018 ranking, in context with graduate employment opportunities.

During the accreditation period 9 graduates have graduated the program and received the Legal assistant qualification. SAR (p. 100) states that this study program is often chosen by people whose purpose is not to work as lawyers, but whose profession requires additional and advanced knowledge in law. This is also evidenced by the work experience of the graduates. The experts' team has no doubt that labour market finds legal education useful for professionals working in other professions. However, CBA should analyze this aspect in the SWOT analysis and provide it with an assessment. Without such an analysis, the issue of whether the motivation of students to choose CBA study program is more because of the study form (distance learning) or high quality of studies and the desire for studies to work on legal assistance is still topical.

The above mentioned weaknesses and doubts about the sustainability of study program were mitigated by representatives of employers and graduates in interviews with the experts. Employers confirmed that specialists with legal assistance degree were required for the Latvian labour market. Employers also expressed satisfaction with the knowledge and skills of the CBA graduates. In addition, employers' representatives are involved in the management bodies of the CBA (Council) and in the study process (participation in the defense of qualification papers and providing places for the internships). Systematic cooperation is emerging between colleges and employers. The graduates also confirmed that CBA studies were useful for them in the labour market and provided opportunities for continuing studies.

Conclusions

Strengths:

1. systematic cooperation is emerging between the CBA and employers;



2. employers also expressed satisfaction with the knowledge and skills of the CBA graduates.

Weaknesses:

1. quality of the reasoning in the CBA SAR is poorly designed;
2. graduates mainly employed in other fields and not in the field of professional qualification as legal assistant.

Evaluation of criterion

Poor	Average	X Good	Excellent
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## Recommendations for the study programme “Law”

### **Recommendations for elimination of the deficiencies found (in the short-term period):**

1. It is recommended to revise the division of academic hours, corresponding to the real situation and professional qualification to be acquired, to complement the study contents with the practical aspect, corresponding to the professional qualification to be acquired. It is also recommended to review the program implementation period (according to credit points and part time studies).
2. It is recommended to bring into order the matter related to the students' internship that include the ensuring of meeting all the requirements as concerns the internship.
3. It is recommended to improve the requirements for the development of qualification paper as concerns the professional aspect and design of the contents.
4. It is recommended to assess together with employers, graduates and students, in the framework of the SWOT analysis the question why the study programme is selected by people, whose purpose is not to work as lawyers, but whose profession requires additional and advanced knowledge in law.

### **Recommendations for improving the quality of the study programmes in the long-term period:**

5. It is recommended to use more of interactive learning methods in the study process including mutual communication between students and lecturers.
6. It is recommended to create policy for retention of academic personnel.

## Summary of the criteria for assessing the study direction

No.	Criteria	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
K1.	The relevance, aims and objectives of the study direction and its relevant study programmes as a whole and their clarity, attainability, and compliance with the general strategic development of the HEI				
K2	The management of the study direction				
K3	The effectiveness of the internal quality assurance system with regard to achieve the development aims of the study direction, by assessing aspects in the internal quality assurance system				
K4	Resources and provision of the study direction				
K5	The organisation of scientific research, and, if study direction “Arts” is assessed – also the organisation of artistic creation, within the study direction and the scientific research work of the academic staff and students of the HEI, and, if study direction “Arts” is assessed – also the work of artistic creation				
K6	The compliance of cooperation and internationalisation with achieving the development aims of the study direction, and with the implementation of the relevant study programmes of the study direction and with associated research, and, if the study direction “Arts” is assessed – also the compliance with artistic creation				
K7	Activities of students’ self-governance				
K8	The implementation of the recommendations (if such had been given) provided for a particular study programme within the previous accreditation of the study direction (if such had been conducted) or licensing of a study programme				

## Summary of the criteria for assessing the study programmes

Table references: poor – 1, average – 2, good – 3, excellent – 4

No	Criteria	SP1
K9	The reciprocal compliance between the name of the study programme, the degree to be acquired, professional qualification or degree and professional qualification, aims and objectives, and terms of admission	(3) Good
K10	The content of studies	(2) Average
K11	Resources and provision of the study programme	(3) Good
K12	Employment opportunities of the graduates of the study programme	(3) Good