

Expert group joint opinion

Evaluation Procedure: Assessment of Study Field

Higher Education Institution: Daugavpils University

Study field: Education and Pedagogy

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

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The Study Field "Education and Pedagogy" and the study programmes assessed [namely, "PRESCHOOL TEACHER" (41141), "TEACHER" (42141), PRIMARY EDUCATION TEACHER (42141), "EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES (45142), "TEACHER" (46141) and "EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES" (51142)] are all implemented in accordance with the principles of the Bologna Declaration, the formal relevant laws and regulations of the Republic of Latvia, thus allowing them to meet the requirements of the EHEA. The study programmes are all topical in terms of development of national teacher education, as well as national and regional labour market needs. The content of studies, as well their organisation is valued by both students and employers.

The short-cycle professional higher education study programme "PRESCHOOL TEACHER" (41141) through its learning outcomes satisfy public needs and needs of the educational system in terms of the development of general competencies and transversal skills that would help the student to adapt to the ever-changing society and labor market needs and environment and would promote change and development in the educational ecosystem; the high demand of the graduates within the educational system of the country and employment rates; the cooperation with local and foreign education institutions for internships of student. Both full-time and part-time implementation options in the study programme have more than the minimum number of students to ensure its profitability; the study programme is delivered by the teaching staff exceeding national legal requirements for the short-cycle professional higher education study programmes. Improvements should be made in the study programme in some subjects to ensure consistency of learning outcomes with the content of the subject. In addition, international/intercultural dimension should be embedded into the study programme to enrich the experience of students with international approach.

The professional bachelor's study programme "TEACHER" (42141) continues the tradition of teacher education in DU as a regional higher education institution ensuring the demand for highly qualified teachers. The number of students in the study programme has remained stable and slightly increased but there is great concern about the fact that there are still many specialisation modules which have no students enrolled, especially in STEM, although, there is a great technological potential and great investments made in the research infrastructure in STEM area laboratories. The content of the study programme ensures the student's readiness to work at school in accordance with the Latvian education reform project "School2030", e.g. the skills to implement the interdisciplinary study content in cooperation with teachers from other study areas; ability to work with students with special needs. Employers provide mentorship and are highly interested in receiving the graduates and students who are invited to start gaining work experience while studying. The study programme is supported by highly qualified academic and teaching staff, but the number of mobilities of students and teaching staff should be maximized in all of the specializations.

The professional bachelor study programme "PRIMARY EDUCATION TEACHER" (42141) is implemented in close cooperation with employers, especially for monitoring needs of employers and students. It provides opportunities for students with short-cycle education to increase their qualification and wider opportunities in the labour market. Its graduates recognize significant knowledge and skills that have gained during the study process as crucial fundamentals for their work at schools. Nonetheless, it appears that there is lack of current up to date resources for effective study and scientific research process. The study programme demands large resources and crucial part of it comes from external funding (projects) that do not give opportunity for sustainable

development projects in mid-term. As far as the teaching staff, they are competent in multiple education sectors, but there is no regular connection of the teaching staff and general education practice that should be supported as mandatory professional development activity. This also would provide clear support of students on case studies and problem identification arising outstanding of study curricula.

The "EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES" (45142) study programme is a well established STUDY PROGRAMME, with some remarks. The content of the curriculum is excellent; students, graduates and employers are pleased with the quality of the study programme. The subjects in this curriculum are well connected to society, school, and educational problems in general.

The first-cycle professional higher education study programme "TEACHER" (46141) offers a one-year study programme in Latvian designed as part of the Ministry of Education and Science's "Teaching Force" project, the programme was developed in collaboration with the University of Latvia and RTU Liepaja University. It addresses the critical shortage of teachers in Latvia, particularly in the Eastern regions, and provides a personalised approach to learning, which students, alumni, and employers appreciate. The study process is notably student-centred, emphasising seminars and practical work over lectures. While state funding and scholarships provide additional support, enhancing students' financial stability that contributes to low drop out rates. Nonetheless, the study programme has low student numbers. To support the study programme's viability, a minimum enrolment for the first-cycle programme is recommended, especially to ensure that rural areas have a sufficient number of qualified teachers. The integration of sustainability goals into learning outcomes, as per DU's 2023-2028 development plan, is another area for potential improvement.

The Joint Doctoral Study Programme "EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES" (51142) is the only joint doctoral degree in the field among four universities in Latvia. It is designed in line with education needs of students as well as is student-centred in implementation. Indicators, like compliance of the study provision, science provision, information base (including the library), material and technical base, as well as the financial base are mostly compliant with the conditions for the implementation of the Study Programme and for ensuring the achievement of its learning outcomes. The academic personnel involved in the implementation of the study programme complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme, their qualifications are consistent with the specifics of the study programme and its implementation requirements, and they are professionals in their field and have demonstrated their competence by participating in international research projects and their numerous publications. Nonetheless, the mechanisms for mutual cooperation of the academic staff in the implementation of the JDSP "Educational Sciences" at the partner institution level is weak and the opportunities within the framework of cooperation with the partner consortium institutions and other scientific institutions and higher education institutions are minimal. The DU could also consider to include external experts and advisors, both from other universities in Latvia, but also from Europe and elsewhere. Online meetings of these bodies (including Expert Panels and Advisory Boards) can facilitate this process. Shortcomings were also identified in the mechanisms for collecting data from graduates and employers could be further structured as far as their timing. Similarly, the procedure of submitting complaints and suggestions in the Study Programme need to follow the academic hierarchy, and should address important ethical considerations and whistleblowing.

Expert panel also support the implementation of study programmes "Educational sciences" (45142) and "Educational Sciences" (51142) in English. Both of these study programmes increase the internationalization of studies of Education sciences, by greater attraction of foreign students and visiting professors, and developing a globally-minded personality capable of acting responsibly

within educational systems, both nationally and globally.

In summary, the Study Field "Education and Pedagogy" and the programmes assessed correspond to the main directions of DU strategic development and highly correspond to the needs of the national labor market and development tendencies. The procedures for the effective implementation of the study processes are developed and implemented. Similarly, the Quality Assurance Policy of the Study Field is developed and in line with DU mission, strategy and aligns the Study Field with national and international standards. Overall, the study programmes of the study field are well balanced in terms of curricula and are in high demand in the Eastern Latvia region, and the academic staff actively participates in scientific activities and projects. The students of the Study Field "Pedagogy and Education" have access to modern and research-relevant infrastructure, access to study materials even for students who do not reside in Daugavpils and have the choice for on campus, remote or hybrid mode of studies. Students are provided with different types of opportunities to get involved in the research activities during the study process.

At the same time, the Study Field "Education and Pedagogy" seems to need to address some current weaknesses. Its real strategic position is not clearly shown and its development plan does not fully indicate how to improve its weaknesses and avoid threats through measurable key performance indicators. The involvement, roles and responsibilities of stakeholders (including students, the SKNC, etc.) of the Study Field within the self-governing bodies is minimal, thus imposing concerns on the internal quality assurance system. Notably, there is lack of external input other than that of employers and the Study field council into the internal quality assurance practice of the Study Field. A worrying factor is the finding that the number of students in some study programmes has decreased, contrary to the recommendations, e.g. in the first cycle study programme "Teacher", in the academic Master's study programme "Educational Sciences". As far as students, it seems that there is no mechanism to motivate and maximize their involvement in scientific research with their academic staff and other students, whereas they are not effectively reached with information about conditions of obtaining scientific activity support grants. As far as the academic staff, their existing remuneration and employment conditions do not encourage the attraction of new teaching staff, thus fragmenting a holistic path for university development. An immediate effect of this is the dependence on part-time academic staff who might not have research profile. Teaching staff professional development is still needed on Moodle developed functions and professional digital skills. Finally, some further actions need to be taken in defining guidelines and regulations on the use of AI in teaching, learning and research, in increasing English library resources (currently a large amount are provided in Russian language and by Russian publishers thus increasing risks of use of these resources in student scientific works opposite social science European social science findings), in the quality and monitoring use of IT systems by the academic staff, in further investing on the long-term maintenance of developed infrastructure, in international cooperation in a more target-oriented manner that will enhance mobility and internationalization opportunities offered.

I - Assessment of the Study Field

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1.1 Management of the Study Field

Analysis

1.1.1

Daugavpils University (hereinafter - DU) DU's strategy is based on the mission (SAR, p. 5) of the DU, which places special emphasis on contributing to the development of a sustainable future society by

conducting scientific research at the international level and providing quality education. The aim of the study field "Education and Pedagogy" is based on the overall strategic vision (SAR, p. 5) of future development of DU, where education and pedagogy are one of the essential pillars of development. The study field "Education and Pedagogy" and its study programmes comply with the main directions of the strategic development of the DU, in particular with the following DU objectives (SAR, p. 5): to act as a regional university in the spheres of natural sciences, humanities, education and social sciences creating opportunities for diversified high quality studies and research; to provide high quality study programmes and conduct research in compliance with the dynamics of labor market demands and needs of the community and to develop personality capable of analytical thinking, critical perception, and creative processing of information, who can, due to the acquired education, contribute to the development of the state and region of Latvia and the welfare of the population.

The aim of the study field "Education and Pedagogy" derive from DU strategy and main objectives: "to prepare highly qualified, competent, excellence-oriented teachers in the field of education throughout Latvia, providing them with appropriate knowledge, skills and competences in accordance with EU requirements, using the results of fundamental and practical research in education science" (SAR, p. 15).

The tasks of the study field "Education and Pedagogy" are defined and directed to meet labour market requirements and Latvian society needs to increase a numbers of teachers, who are responsible, autonomous, proficient, and oriented towards excellence in their professional activities, who understand and implement an individualized learning approach, apply innovative and multidisciplinary teaching and learning approaches, are aware of the goals of sustainable education and sustainable development of professional competence. The aim and tasks of the study field "Education and Pedagogy" especially complies with the Daugavpils City General Education Strategy 2018-2025 (SAR, p. 16), which outlines measures aimed at achieving the highest possible level of education quality at all stages of education: pre-school, primary, secondary, interest education, inclusive education and adult education. DU study programmes of the study field "Education and Pedagogy" are vital for the educational ecosystem for the Eastern Latvia region. Teachers, preschool teachers are mainly educated in this field of study for the whole region.

DU comprises all study cycles within the study field "Education and Pedagogy" (SAR, p. 17), necessary for the development of knowledge and skills as well as professional competencies in the different levels of education system of the country. The study programmes included in the study field "Education and Pedagogy" are interconnected starting from the short-cycle (2 years) professional higher education study programme "Preschool Teacher", continuing with 2 bachelor's study programmes "Primary Education Teacher" and "Teacher", providing possibility to become a teacher having educational background in other study field (second-level (first cycle) professional higher education study programme "Teacher"), ending-up with academic master's in "Educational Sciences". The most talented and motivated students are given the opportunity to study at the Joint Doctoral study programme in "Educational Sciences". The composition of the study programmes within the study field "Education and Pedagogy" and links among different cycles are clear and logical.

1.1.2.

The DU Council of the study field "Education and Pedagogy" has conducted a SWOT analysis (SAR, p. 19-21) and outlined the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and potential threats in the implementation of the study field "Education and Pedagogy". However, there is the room for improvement of SWOT analysis of the study field "Education and Pedagogy", because a certain contradiction between strengths and weaknesses is visible, e.g. on the one hand, "Cooperation with

foreign HEIs and other Latvian HEIs, including the benefits of ERASMUS+ mobility" is indicated as a strength, but on the other hand, "Lack of visibility among EU study programmes" and "Some of the academic staff have insufficient knowledge of foreign languages, which reduces the potential of the field of study to attract foreign students" are stated as weaknesses. Good English command of academic community and European visibility of study programmes of the study field "Education and Pedagogy" should be the key assumptions for the strong and fruitful cooperation with foreign higher education institutions (hereinafter - HEIs). The meetings of the expert panel during the site visit with the teachers and students of the study field "Education and Pedagogy" showed that international cooperation and the international dimension in this study field is an area that needs to be further developed, therefore, stating "Cooperation with foreign HEIs <...>, including the benefits of ERASMUS+ mobility" as a strength is unfounded.

SWOT analysis should also pay more attention to the weaknesses of the study field "Education and Pedagogy". The strengths and weaknesses should be based on internal environmental factors, opportunities and threats should be based on external environmental factors. For example, as the weaknesses of the study field are indicated "Insufficient public funding for research and renewal of the material and technical base" and "Uncompetitive remuneration of academic staff undermines the competitiveness of state-funded higher education institutions in the labor market and has a negative impact on the motivation of professionals involved in the field of study". However, these are not internal factors of the study field. These are external political-economic factors that DU cannot independently control, so these statements must be transferred to Threats. Moreover, putting "the material and technical base" on the side of weaknesses of the study field "Education and Pedagogy" seems strange. On the contrary, during the site visit, the expert panel was convinced that the infrastructure for preparation of teachers, especially in STEAM and arts (music) areas is the strength of the field of study "Education and Pedagogy" at DU.

Also, self-assessment report (hereinafter - SAR) and site visit didn't provide the sufficient grounds for such Opportunities stated in the SWOT analysis of the study field as "Expansion of cooperation with <...> foreign HEIs", "Attracting foreign students", "Increasing the involvement of students and faculty members in <...> international research projects". The Opportunities should be based on the assumptions, conditions and strengths that make up these possibilities to be implemented on the ground.

The SWOT method helps to better visualize the organization's strategic situation. After such an analysis, you can choose one of the problem-solving strategies. An opportunity-strengths strategy can be chosen as using strengths to realize opportunities. Another alternative can also be chosen, which is a strategy of opportunities-weaknesses to exploit opportunities and to neutralize weaknesses. A third alternative to solving problems can be a threat-strength strategy, how to use strengths to reduce threats. And the fourth option is the threat vulnerability strategy, which is to eliminate the weaknesses to reduce the threats.

It should be noted that, the Development plan of the study field "Education and pedagogy" at DU for the study year 2023-2028 does not resemble a specific action plan. In more specific, it does not contain any quantitative and qualitative indicators (second column of the table) to monitor the progress of the plan and assess its achievements. The plan should also be based on the human and financial resources needed to implement the actions.

1.1.3.

As it is stated in SAR (p. 22) the management of the study field and the corresponding study programmes is generally provided by the Council of Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, the

Council of the study field "Education and Pedagogy", and the Head of the study field, the directors of the study programmes, the administration of the institutes or departments, implementing the study programmes, and the Student Self-government of Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.

DU has a system for managing and improving study programmes. As it is described in the SAR (p. 22) proposals for changes in study programmes are developed by the Council of the study field "Education and Pedagogy", based on the recommendations of the teaching staff, feedback from employers, student self-government, as well as from the latest trends in the national legislation and the labor market. Study programmes directors communicate with students and make improvements to study programmes in coordination with the Head of the field of study. Proposals for changes in study courses or study programmes are discussed at the Council of Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and forwarded to the DU Board of Studies. At the end of each academic year, a report on the study programmes within the study field is prepared and after discussion and approval by the Council of the study field "Education and Pedagogy" and the Council of Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences is submitted to the Study Quality Assessment Centre and after its approval by the DU Senate is published and available at the DU internal network.

Management system of DU study programmes is embedded in the DU internal legislation (SAR, Annex 1.2. List of the main internal laws and regulations): DU Senate Regulation; DU Regulation on studies; Regulations on Opening and Managing Daugavpils University Study Directions and Study Programmes, Regulation of DU Council for studies.

As it is described in the SAR (p. 23) the support provided by the administrative and technical staff (secretaries of Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Student Service Centre and computer network administrators and technicians of the Information and Communication Technology Centre) ensures all the needs of the study programmes corresponding to the study field "Education and pedagogy". Communication and cooperation in the implementation of the study programmes of the study field can be assessed as effective and promoting the development of the study field.

The structure of management seems to be efficient, although during the site visit in the meetings with students of the study field "Education and Pedagogy" it was hard for experts to understand the real roles of students within before mentioned councils. No one from the student representatives during the site visit mentioned the Council of the study field "Education and Pedagogy" or did not recognise it as the meeting point for all stakeholders of the study field "Education and Pedagogy".

1.1.4

The process and procedure of admission of students are specified in the DU Admission Regulations (SAR, Annex 1.2. List of the main internal laws and regulations), which have been developed on the basis of the Law on Higher Education Institutions, the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 846 of 10 October 2006 "Regulations on Requirements, Criteria and Procedure for Admission to Study Programmes" and the DU Constitution as well as taking into account the special requirements of study field of study programmes. The DU Senate approves the admission rules, the admission process, the registration fee for applicants, the tuition fees for study programmes, the number of study places and announces the admission. The decision of the DU Admissions Committee on the results of the competition may be appealed in accordance with the "Procedure for appealing and appealing against decisions related to admission to a study programme at Daugavpils University" developed by DU (SAR, p. 24). The student's admission system is clear and transparent.

The recognition of the study period, professional experience, previously acquired formal and nonformal education within the study field "Education and Pedagogy" is a convenient and relatively

clear procedure for students. When a student submits an application accompanied by the necessary documents on the acquisition of previous similar study courses and/or professional experience, they are going to be evaluated. Within this procedure students are guided by the study programme director. The decision on the recognition of knowledge, skills and competences acquired outside formal education or in professional experience and study results achieved in previous education is taken by the DU Recognition Committee (SAR, p. 24). Conversations with students during the site visit confirmed that the recognition of study courses mastered in formal education in all study programmes of the study field takes place almost every semester upon request of students. Students are informed about the recognition system.

A system and procedures for the admission of students, for the recognition of the study period, professional experience, prior formal and non-formal education and for the assessment of students' achievements and learning outcomes of DU study programmes is embedded in the DU internal legislation (SAR, Annex 1.2. List of the main internal laws and regulations): Admission Rules for Full-time and Part-time Basic Studies; Admission Rules for Full-time and Part-time Higher Level Studies; Admission Rules for Full-time and Part-time Doctoral Studies; Admission Rules for Full-time Studies for Foreigners; Regulations on the Recognition of Competences Acquired or Gained in Professional Experience and Study Results Achieved in Prior Education at DU; Procedure for the initiation of studies in subsequent study stages.

1.1.5.

The procedure of assessment of Learning Outcomes is described in DU Regulation on studies (approved at DU Senate session on 17 December 2018, Protocol No. 17) (SAR, Annex 1.2. List of the main internal laws and regulations). A variety of assessment methods, such as mid-term exams, examinations, coursework, seminar work, project work, practical work, etc., is used for achieving the aims of study programmes and learning outcomes of each study subject. There are differences in the choice and application of the methods used, because the assessment of students' knowledge, skills and competence take place in accordance with the learning outcomes to be achieved defined in the specific study course. The descriptions of the study courses comprise comprehensive general data of the subject, its content, learning outcomes and their assessment, evaluation criteria of the learning outcomes, the workload of students. All course descriptions are available at DU e-environment.

The curricula of all study programmes seems well balanced, development of digital, lifelong learning skills, skills of interdisciplinarity are included. Meetings during the site visit with employers, academic staff, students demonstrated their understanding about the importance of the interdisciplinary cooperation within the study process at DU and at educational institutions in the region to implement "thread skills" of 21st century: critical thinking, creative thinking, communicating, and collaborating (entrepreneurship skills, digital skills, self-regulation and civic participation (based on Skola 2030). However, learning outcomes of some subjects are described as follows: "Understands the education system in Latvia and the functions and principles of the management process of an educational institution, the role of the teacher in the process of developing the self-evaluation and accreditation of an educational institution"; "Knows the theoretical foundations of strategic planning, the latest trends in strategic management in educational institutions and business"; "Is aware of the development and implementation of national and international projects, as well as the types of project competitions in the educational environment". Vague terms like "know", "understand", "be familiar with", "be exposed to", "be acquainted with", and "be aware of" must be avoided. These terms are associated with teaching objectives rather than learning outcomes. If it is intended to develop and objectively assess the knowledge and comprehension, it is necessary to describe the learning outcomes using the following

verbs: "define", "list", "state", "classify", "describe", "discuss", "explain", "identify", "locate", "recognize", "select", etc., e.g. at the end of the subject "student should be able to explain the education system in Latvia and the functions and principles of the management process of an educational institution, the role of the teacher in the process of developing the self-evaluation and accreditation of an educational institution"; "student should be able to define the theoretical foundations of strategic planning, the latest trends in strategic management in educational institutions and business"; "student should be able to compare the development and implementation of national and international projects, as well as the types of project competitions in the educational environment". Such a description of learning outcomes allows for a more reliable and objective assessment of the student's achievements.

1.1.6.

During the reporting period of the study field "Education and Pedagogy" DU used two major plagiarism control tools in the study process. The final theses of the study programmes have been tested in the Unified Computerized Plagiarism Control System, which unites many Latvian higher education institutions. As of 2023, DU operates OXICO Similarity Checker for Universities and Schools (now it is named as "Identific") control system for detecting plagiarism (SAR, p. 26-27).

As it is described in the SAR (p. 26), plagiarism checking takes place at several levels. At the beginning of studies, in order to reduce the cases of plagiarism, students' independent works, especially first-year students, are emphasized to be honest and rich in reliable sources. During the study process, the lecturers who provide the study courses are responsible for plagiarism checks and the submission of students' honest works. At the end of studies, in all study programmes, all final qualification, bachelor's and master's theses of full-time and part-time students are checked against plagiarism twice a year, when students are preparing to submit their works in electronic form.

Within the study field "Education and Pedagogy" there is the study course "Fundamentals of the teacher's professional activity", which includes the topic of academic integrity, highlighting the importance of observing its principles, types of plagiarism and their recognition in students' works.

Academic integrity principles are set, and control mechanisms are ensured. Since 1997, DU has had a "Code of Ethics for Scientists". "Code of Ethics for Employees and Students of Daugavpils University" is approved by the DU Senate on March 6, 2019. "Procedure for Submission of Final Papers for Plagiarism Control at Daugavpils University" is approved by the DU acting rector's order No.4-4/63 on May 13, 2022 (SAR, Annex 1.2. List of the main internal laws and regulations). Legal documents aim to strengthen the academic culture and honesty in the academic environment of DU, to explain the concept of academic integrity and related actions, to define the main procedures for reviewing violations of academic integrity. However, DU did not provide in the SAR the information on the frequency of plagiarism detected in the study field "Education and Pedagogy". Also, during the site visit expert panel addressed the question concerning the academic integrity (including cases of use of AI) to different groups of stakeholders. No one case was mentioned on the detection of plagiarism, etc.

Given the rapidly evolving technology and challenges facing higher education and research to ensure academic integrity, there is a lack of guidance for the DU academic community and regulations on how not to/to use AI tools in studies and research. During discussions in site visit with teachers, students of study field "Education and Pedagogy", representatives of DU administration, no one could mention DU guidelines or regulations on what is possible use of AI in learning, teaching and research, what needs to be taken into account when using AI applications in teaching and

research, guidance on referencing of AI, security considerations, guidelines for teaching staff how to recognize AI, etc.

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

The aim of the study field is clearly defined and attainable, linked to the DU Strategy 2022 - 2028. The goals of the study field are defined and directed so that they meet the requirements of the labor market and needs of society. The structure of the management of the study field and the relevant study programmes is oriented towards the development and permanent improvement of the study field. However, there are shortcomings within the key strategic management documents of the study field "Education and Pedagogy": SWOT analysis and study field development plan.

DU has established a logical and efficient system as well as procedures for the admission of students, the recognition of the study period, professional experience, and the previously acquired formal and non-formal education. Evaluation of the learning achievements of the students follows the legal requirements, although the wording of learning outcomes needs improvement. DU has a system for managing and improving study programmes. Academic integrity principles are set, and control mechanisms are ensured, however there is the need to encompass the regulations on AI.

Strengths:

- 1) The study field and the respective study programmes correspond to the main directions of DU strategic development and highly correspond to the needs of the national labor market and development tendencies.
- 2) The procedures for the effective implementation of the study process are developed and implemented. The structure of the management of the study field and the relevant study programmes are oriented towards the further development and improvement of the study programmes.
- 3) Study programmes of the study field "Education and Pedagogy" are well balanced in terms of curricula and are in high demand in the Eastern Latvia region.

Weaknesses:

- 1) The SWOT analysis is flawed and does not indicate the real strategic situation of the study field "Education and Pedagogy".
- 2) The development plan of the study field does not fully indicate how to improve the weaknesses and avoid threats as well as lacks measurable key performance indicators.
- 3) The role of students as stakeholders of the study field "Education and Pedagogy" within the self-governing bodies is invisible.
- 4) There are courses learning outcomes which lack outcome-based approach, i.e. some learning outcomes are not precisely describing what the student has to be able to do at the end of the course learning period (too many abstract „know“ and „understand“, which are difficult to be objectively assessed in the cognitive domain of student).
- 5) No defined guidelines and regulations on the use of AI in teaching, learning and research.

1.2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System

Analysis

1.2.1

DU has established a quality assurance policy which is coordinated by the DU Board of Studies and the DU Study Quality Assessment Centre (SKNC). The aim of the quality assurance policy system is to align the study programme content with the requirements of higher education and economic science, as well as the requirements of the labour market of Latvia and the European Union. The aim

of the assessment achieved through the quality assurance policy is to monitor the performance of the study programmes and to plan their development in order to fully achieve their goals and objectives. Within the SAR 1. Information on the Higher Education Institution/College in 1.3. section it is stated that "DU study quality management system observes the compliance with ISO 9001:2017 quality standard. <...> The outcomes of DU implemented ESF project "Daugavpils University governance and management competence improvement" (No. 8.2.3.0/18/A/010) are – adjust DU study and governance quality systems and receive ISO 9001 certificate that is an internationally recognized organization quality mark", although in another part of SAR 2.2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System, the ISO system for ensuring the quality of the study field "Education and Pedagogy" is not mentioned at all. It is explained that the management system of the quality assurance policy sets nine criteria of assessment (five cover enablers and four cover outcomes). The copyright of this mentioned model belongs to the European foundation for quality management (EFQM) excellence model; there is no mention of it in SAR, although academic integrity requires it. During the the site visit in meeting with the administration, the employees responsible for the quality management system were unable to explain to the experts why and how the ISO and EFQM systems are combined, how the ISO and EFQM systems are introduced to DU teachers, students, and administration employees, and how they understand their roles.

The DU quality assurance policy is available in both Latvian and English. However, as it is stated in the SAR 1. Information on the Higher Education Institution/College, 1.3. section "DU Study Quality Policy and Study Quality Monitoring Strategies (see SAR "Other Annexes"), "Procedures for Ensuring the Effectiveness of DU Study Internal Quality Assurance System" (see SAR "Other Annexes" in Latvian only), etc., which are aligned with the content of the newly developed "DU Quality Policy" and "Quality Management System Manual". Availability of DU quality assurance procedures are limited only to DU internal academic community and only in Latvian language. Enlarging the number of foreign students is one of the priority goals of DU. For the purpose of internationalization of studies, 19 study programmes are offered in English. In the time period from 2017 to 2023, there were 775 students from abroad at DU. One of the goals of study field "Education and Pedagogy" stated in the Development plan of the study field "Education and pedagogy" at DU for the study year 2023-2028 is internationalization (International mobility, International scientific research). Also, it is stated that "Quality ensuring policy is part of Daugavpils University Development Strategy for 2022-2028", however, Daugavpils University Development Strategy for 2022-2028 is available only in Latvian. Being in the European higher education area, membership in the OpenEU alliance and the aforementioned strategic goals require DU's quality assurance policy and related documents to be available to all stakeholders, including foreign ones.

Internal quality control of the study field "Education and Pedagogy" is carried out by the Study Field Council, study programme and sub-programme directors, teaching staff of profiling units (Departments). Discussion and evaluation of the development plan and measures to improve the quality of studies take place at the end of each academic year. The quality assurance system aims to ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study field "Education and Pedagogy" and the relevant study programmes, including surveys of students, employers and graduates, reviews and updates of course descriptions, an annual self-evaluation report, the participation of graduates in the study process of the University, the participation of the academic staff in training courses and in various DU motivation activities (SAR, p. 28-29).

However, the internal quality assurance practice of the study field "Education and Pedagogy" does not involve any external input other than that of employers and the Study field council. The DU could consider to include external experts and advisors, both from other universities in Latvia, but also from Europe and elsewhere. Online meetings of these bodies (including Expert Panels and

Advisory Boards) can facilitate this process. Also, to ensure the efficiency of the internal quality assurance system it is suggested not to limit the functions of DU quality assurance unit only for assisting in external accreditation procedures, collecting the feedback, but expand the functions for providing support including for the teaching staff and students to assure and enhance the quality of teaching, learning, and assessment. Study Quality Assessment Centre might become Study Quality Assurance Centre or Study Quality Enhancement Centre.

1.2.2.

The procedures for the development and review of the study programmes of the study field "Education and Pedagogy" and the feedback mechanisms are defined and they are logical, efficient, and available for all stakeholders. "Regulations on Opening and Management of Study Directions and Study Programmes of Daugavpils University" are publicly available and describe how the development and revision of DU study programmes are carried out.

The procedure is initiated by the Director of the Study Programme and includes changes in the course provision, in the credit points, the introduction of new study courses, etc., which shall not exceed 20% of the total study programme. The suggested changes are considered at the departmental meeting, at the faculty council, and the decision is made by the Board of Studies. In case the changes to be implemented are substantial (i.e. more than 20% of the content of the Study Programme is changed and/or the the Study Programme's main indicators are changed), the Director of the Study Programme, in cooperation with the SKNC, prepares an application for changes which is reviewed by the Department, Faculty Council, Board of Studies and approved by the Senate. After approval, the change application is submitted to the Academic Information Centre (AIC). In this case, the Study Programme Director, in cooperation with the SKNC, the Vice Rector of Studies and AIC, organise an expert visit to DU.

The procedures are repeated internally at least once per academic year or earlier (if needed). However, it is implied that this might not always be followed as it is stated in the SAR (p. 31) that "regularity depends on the necessity and importance of the changes to be made".

As far as the feedback mechanisms from students, employers, and graduates, at the end of each academic year, the SKNC organizes a survey of students (3 times per year: 2 months after the start of their studies, at the end of the winter semester, and at the end of the summer semester), graduates and employers, the results of which provide information on the evaluation of the quality of studies and related aspects (SAR, p.34). Based on the results of the surveys, the content of the study programmes is reviewed and improved. The Director of the Study programme responds to all reasoned opinions, suggestions and criticisms expressed in the questionnaires and, if necessary, the issues are discussed in the Study Field Council. After changes have been made to the content of the study programme, the study programme director informs all stakeholders (students, lecturers, employers, graduates). (SAR, p. 32). Based on the discussions with students, employers and graduates during the evaluation visit, the feedback mechanisms are further supported through the Study Programmes' close relations with employers, informal meetings with the industry in regards to the study programme structure, design, etc., as well as informal events during which students have the opportunity to discuss any aspects of the study programme, i.e. during the "Scientific Night". It was also revealed that the Student Council is very active and conducts its own independent student survey (twice a year at the end of each semester) which they then provide to the SKNC (SAR, p.34). It is noticeable that according to the information provided during the evaluation visit the percentage of student participation in the Study Field student survey is between 50-60%. Noteworthy, during the site visit in discussions with students it was obvious to experts that not all students were familiar with the survey and thus did not participate in it.

1.2.3.

As it is stated in the SAR 2.2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System section 2.2.3, students have the right and are informed on how to submit complaints and suggestions to the study programme director, the head of the profiling unit, the dean of the faculty, the SKNC, the Vice Rector of studies and the Rector. Complaints and proposals may be submitted orally, in writing and electronically, depending on their level of importance. Complaints and suggestions are accepted individually or collectively, openly (identifying) and anonymously. The presentation and reception of complaints at DU are carried out in accordance with the procedures laid down in the "Complaints Law". On behalf of the students, the Student Council may submit a petition, which may act as a representative of the student during the examination of the complaint. An example is provided in the SAR on how a suggestion was handled in the short-cycle professional higher education study programme "Preschool Teacher". It is advisable that the procedure of submitting complaints and suggestions follow the academic hierarchy, by submitting the complaint initially to the academic staff involved, and if not resolved then to the study programme director, and so on. In addition, anonymous complaints and suggestions (including the online SKNC provision of submission) should address important ethical considerations and whistleblowing.

1.2.4

As it is stated in the SAR 2.2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System section 2.2.4, for the purposes of the collection of statistical data on the study programmes of the study field "Education and Pedagogy", DU operates the information system DUIS, which provides internally statistical data and information on the study programmes, the students and the academic staff. The most important data sources are:

1. The student surveys conducted by the SKNC online 3 times per year (as explained above in Section 1.2.2. of this report). Based on this survey, the SKNC conducts observations and discussions of academic staff and individual student group surveys aiming at introducing measures to improve the quality of studies. The analysis of the data are included in the self-evaluation report of the Study Field, and are taken into account in the "planning of the next academic year, in the assessment of the pedagogical and professional competences of lecturers, the availability of study support materials and sources, the involvement of foreign lecturers, etc." (SAR section 2.2.4, page 35);
2. As stated in SAR 2.2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System section 2.2.4 The Student Council surveys are conducted 2 times per year (as explained above in Section 1.2.3. of this report). It is not clear, however, how this data after being collected and submitted are used for the purposes of the self-evaluation report of the Study Field or any relevant quality assurance processes;
3. The Alumni/Graduate survey is conducted randomly, i.e. they are surveyed on average every two years. Graduates are surveyed or interviewed both immediately after graduation and several times after graduation and provides information on graduates' employment trends and an evaluation of the study programmes the graduates have completed and recommendations for improvement. Either through a survey or interview, graduates are contacted to provide data immediately after graduation and several times after graduation.
4. The Employer surveys are also conducted randomly, i.e. after placements. Collected data is provided to the study programme directors. Non-placement employers are also surveyed randomly, on average every two years. Their aim is to provide recommendations for the improvement and development of the content of the study programmes.

Based on the collected data and its analysis, changes are made to the content of the study programme. The study programme director informs all stakeholders (students, lecturers, employers, graduates) for the suggested changes, thus providing them feedback on their contribution. The mechanism for obtaining and providing feedback from students, graduates and employers is focused

on the improvement of the study field, despite the fact that graduate and employer surveys could be further structured as far as their timing. Provided in SAR section 2.2.4 "Survey analysis" annex which should include analysis and evaluation of the results of surveys of students, graduates and employers of study field "Pedagogy and Education", their use in the improvement of study content and quality, providing examples of each of the programmes within the field of study, however, contains only student survey data (probably only for the last academic year), the style of analysis for each study programme is very different, in some places, e.g. the PhD study programme does not present any results at all, even collected by using qualitative research methods (e.g. individual interviews or focus groups of PhD students). Samples are not specified for some study programmes student surveys. There are no graduate and employer survey results. Therefore, it raises doubts about the regularity of feedback collection and about its reliability. Also, the text of the study survey analysis presented in the annex raises questions about the effectiveness of the mechanism for obtaining and providing feedback from students, graduates and employers, in terms of human resources, who must process the received data. Today's information and communication technology era is full of freely available electronic survey systems that can process and visualize quantitative research results in a uniform style and fast speed.

1.2.5

Information about the studies, faculty, study field and study programmes are provided on the DU website in Latvian and English, as well as opportunities for listening to study courses, opportunities for further education at the DU Lifelong Learning Centre (<https://du.lv/en/studies/>). Major changes in the content and structure of study programmes of the study field "Education and Pedagogy" took place during the project "Modernisation of the study field "Education, Pedagogy and Sport" of Daugavpils University for Sustainable Development of the Latvian Education System" (SAR, p.36).

The International and Public Relations Department is responsible for ensuring that the information on DU study fields is consistent with the official registers. The Study Department is responsible for regular and timely provision of information on students in VIIS. At the end of each month, the data collected in the DUIS system is exported to the State Education Information System (VIIS). The data export is implemented in accordance with the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 276 of 25 June 2019 "Regulations of the National Education Information System". For the purpose of data export to VIIS, personal data of DU students, information on the status of students (number of matriculated students, changes in their status, e.g. semester affiliation, students on study break, etc.) and other relevant information are collected.

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

The internal quality management system of DU is developed and embedded in the governance structure and is based on the quality policy, resources and function in the process of the study field management is allocated by contributing to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programmes within the study field. However, it is not clear on what kind of quality management model (ISO and EFQM) DU's internal study quality assurance system is based on. The procedures for the development and review of the study programmes and the feedback mechanisms are established and witness a culture of self-reflection. The mechanism for submission of student complaints and suggestions is in place. The statistical data collection mechanism is established and is integrated into the quality management system of DU. Not clear for the expert panel how collection and analysis of the data (including feedback from stakeholders) on the relevant study programmes on a regular basis bring to the diagnosis of potential problems and preventive actions justifying the measures implemented in the right moment fostering the quality of the study field programmes. The information on the study field and the relevant study programmes is published on

DU website and is available.

Strengths:

- 1) The Quality assurance policy is developed and in line with DU mission, strategy and aims to align the study field of "Education and Pedagogy" with national and international standards.
- 2) The internal quality assurance process is applied properly and external feedback is also considered as an instrument for improvement.
- 3) The procedures for the development of the study programmes of the study field "Education and Pedagogy" are defined and available for all stakeholders.

Weaknesses:

- 1) Ambiguity and confusion regarding the application of international quality assurance models at the university.
- 2) The role of the SKNC is limited only to the assistance in external accreditation, feedback collection, and producing reports.
- 3) Relevant information about the internal quality assurance system, e.g. relevant management procedures; formal quality assurance processes (inputs and outputs); involvement, roles and responsibilities of DU stakeholders; methods and tools to define, measure, evaluate, assure, and enhance quality; etc., are not publicly available to all study field stakeholders.
- 4) Lack of external input other than that of employers and the Study field council into the internal quality assurance practice of the study field "Education and Pedagogy".
- 5) Lack of regularity of the implementation of the procedures for the review of the study programmes of the study field "Education and Pedagogy".
- 6) Low response rates from students of the study field "Pedagogy and Education" and poor analytical reports of the feedback data.
- 7) Eclectic complaints procedure without respect for management structure and academic hierarchy.

Assessment of the requirement [1]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The culture of self-reflection and continuous improvement was evident in DU during the visit (also see section 1.1.4 of this report).

Despite the establishment of internal quality mechanisms, there is room for their improvement, including popularizing student surveys and systematization collection of feedback from employers and graduates. In overall though, the extend of these imperfections impact on the overall evaluation of the Study Field's compliance is limited.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

DU has established a clear quality assurance policy which aims to align the content of the study programmes of the study field of "Education and Pedagogy" with national and international standards.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The procedures are specified in the "Regulations on Opening and Management of Study Directions and Study Programmes of Daugavpils University" (approved at the Session of DU Senate on 31 August 2020).

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The procedure of assessment of Learning Outcomes is described in DU Regulation on studies (approved at DU Senate session on 17 December 2018, Protocol No. 17), complying with the basic principles and procedures for assessment of education at the respective study level defined in the Cabinet of Ministers regulations.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

"Regulations on the Election to Academic Positions at Daugavpils University"

DU overall has a system for developing the competence of the academic staff. DU provides multiple opportunities for qualification improvement and advancement of teaching skills. The teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programmes of the study field "Pedagogy and Education" improve their professional qualifications by participating in international conferences, seminars, internships, international and national research projects, as well as by publishing their scientific research in journals and conference proceedings included in the Scopus and Web of Science databases. Courses and seminars on the latest pedagogical methods to improve digital competence, emotional intelligence, and educational technologies are regularly organized to improve the pedagogical competencies of the academic staff.

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

The quality assurance system of DU in this Study Field includes the collection of data from numerous data sources (surveys of students, employers and graduates), and numerous deliverables (reviews and updates of course descriptions, an annual self-evaluation report, reports on graduates' perceptions of the study process of the University, academic staff in training courses, etc.). Despite the establishment of these mechanisms, there is room for their improvement, including: 1. achieving a high response rate in student surveys by securing that all students are familiar with the survey. 2. further structure the process for the systematic collection of feedback from employers and graduates. Thus, this criterion is partially compliant. In overall though, the extend of this criterion compliance impact on the overall evaluation of the Study Field's compliance is limited.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The actions of continuous improvement of study programmes were evident during the meeting

with study field stakeholders.

1.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Field

Analysis

1.3.1.

The financial revenue for the SF "Education and Pedagogy" includes state budget grants and student tuition fees. Cost calculations for each program are detailed, accounting for salaries, employer social security contributions, materials, energy, and equipment, ensuring comprehensive support (SAR, p. 36).

Scientific research funding at DU is provided from the central budget and allocated by the DU Scientific Council based on faculty and institute reports. The funding supports scientific publications, participation in conferences, and scientific missions, with an emphasis on publications indexed in major databases like SCOPUS and Web of Science, developing DU's commitment to research (SAR, p. 37). At the same time, during the site visit interviews with students and graduates show that the conditions for obtaining scientific activity support during studies are based solely on ensuring the availability of information and none of the participants in interviews had used such support. This would allow transparent internal procedures for updating the availability and transparency of financial support in its distribution (site visit interviews on 24th of September, 2024).

The system effectively ensures resource allocation that supports sustainability both the operational stability of study programmes and research activities. DU uses internal financial tools to monitor study programme profitability, aligning resource distribution with the quality requirements of study programmes and scientific endeavors, which supports the university's mission and strategic objectives (SAR, p. 27, p. 62).

1.3.2.

The SAR details that DU has equipped auditoriums and classrooms with essential technical equipment, including video projectors, interactive whiteboards, and computers, accessible for both students and teaching staff. This infrastructure allows a robust learning environment, especially for the professional teacher training study programmes (SAR, p. 159, p. 286). During the discussions in the site visit, the students shared appreciation for the available equipment for studies, but expressed a reasonable request to set aside an auditorium or a "corner" in the old university building where they could eat their own food and make coffee or tea during the breaks, since there was no cafeteria left in the old building after the pandemic.

The SAR outlines that DU has a structured system for updating and maintaining educational and technical materials. Experts were introduced to the system of digital material storage and development in interviews with Faculty teaching staff and interviews with students. The Moodle system is utilized for hosting updated course content, ensuring continuous access to the latest resources and methodologies in the field of education sciences (SAR, p. 44; presentation of Moodle system during the site visit). A reliance on digital resources and remote access could pose a risk if there are technical failures or cybersecurity concerns. It should be noted, that keeping the model of 50% of delivery remotely (SAR, p. 34), there is room for improvement with the technical equipment for the hybrid and online delivery of the sessions. Especially bearing in mind that part-time working students and students who do not reside in Daugavpils city are in favor of online delivery of the lectures and seminars (students expressed this wish during the meetings with expert panel), more classrooms with the technical equipment for the hybrid and online delivery of the sessions should be considered by the management of DU.

DU has implemented significant infrastructure developments to improve accessibility, using mainly financial project support from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) (SAR, p. 223). During site visits experts were introduced to infrastructure developments, especially in STEM related infrastructure that is used commonly for the whole study field. While resources are available, there is a potential risk associated with the budgetary allocation and ongoing maintenance of the infrastructure, particularly if state budget funding fluctuates, as part of DU's support relies on these grants (SAR, p. 37). Especially low numbers of students might have direct impact in further years and this risk was discussed in interviews with Faculty management. DU has improved cooperation with municipalities to diversify the potential risks yet keeping this risk still high.

1.3.3.

The institution offers comprehensive access to databases, including ScienceDirect, Scopus, and EBSCO, providing students with valuable information sources for research across educational and scientific disciplines (SAR, p. 41-43). DU provides sustainable resources through years for access to current scientific resources (interviews with library management). This includes more than 100,000 e-resources in various fields, facilitating comprehensive academic support for students and faculty.

Library resources include a well-maintained collection of books, periodicals, and online resources across various fields, particularly covering current scientific literature in Educational Sciences and related disciplines, aligning with both local and international academic standards (SAR, p. 40-43). Yet during the library tour it was noted and confirmed by library management that a large amount of available resources (up to 20%) are provided in Russian language. Based on an overview of final thesis papers and interviews experts noticed the necessity to strengthen resources and practice of use of resources in English to provide coherence with current European and global scientific findings in SF (interviews and visits on 23rd and 24th of September, 2024). The institution has an organized process for resource procurement and updates. The Budget Commission annually reviews book purchases, ensuring new publications are selected based on program requirements and academic recommendations (SAR, p. 41). Methodological and informative provision is bolstered by subscriptions and interlibrary loan services, allowing access to materials beyond the institution's direct collection (SAR, p. 324). Yet during interviews with students experts noticed that joint PhD study programme realization does not provide access (or it is not effectively used) to consortium universities library resources (interviews on 24th of September, 2024). DU library hours have been expanded based on student needs, including some Saturday availability; however, further expansion, or 24/7 digital resource access, would better support students' diverse schedules (SAR, p. 40-43), especially taking into consideration that most of students of pedagogy programs are full time employees in education institutions (interviews on 24th of September, 2024).

Students and faculty can access subscribed electronic resources remotely via secure platforms (MS Teams, Office 365), supporting flexible learning and research environments (SAR, p. 44), although mainly students use Moodle available course resources, which are uploaded by the teaching staff of the courses (interviews on 24th of September, 2024). While digital resources are accessible, the digitization of the physical library collection is still limited, potentially restricting access to materials not prioritized for digital or physical access optimization (SAR, p. 218).

1.3.4.

SAR outlines several aspects in which ICT solutions are integrated effectively within the study environment, notably through the use of the Moodle e-learning platform, which provides students with access to study materials, assessments, and feedback opportunities. The use of Moodle is complemented by direct communication through emails, tutorials, and other digital tools such as Zoom / Microsoft Teams, allowing for a flexible e-learning ecosystem. The integration with the DU

information system (DUIS) further simplifies student access to course materials and records without additional login requirements (during site visit experts were not introduced to DUIS system and evaluation of it is based on SAR included information) (SAR, p. 44). Any downtime in DUIS or Moodle may hinder course progression, especially for distance learning students who depend entirely on these platforms.

Additionally, ICT solutions are reinforced by professional development for lecturers, who receive training in using Moodle and assessment methodologies within the e-learning environment. The university's provision of video recording equipment allows lecturers to create video lectures, enhancing the learning experience with multimedia content that remains accessible in Moodle (SAR, p. 44). During interviews with students there has been noticed by experts that some students are dependent on internet quality in rural areas (also in SAR, p. 20). There are risks for students' participation in online learning. Experts have also noticed that DU teaching staff highly encourage onsite studies that decrease risks caused by such obstacles.

Experts have concerns about some staff's limited proficiency in foreign languages, that impacts wide use of technologies due to language barriers.

During interviews with students experts noticed that there are used open sources and survey mechanisms for evaluation of study process outside the authorized systems (based on interviews with students, teaching staff uses Google forms for study quality surveys). To provide transparency of evaluation all evaluation process elements should be realized through DU official IT systems.

1.3.5.

The recruitment process follows transparent practices, where vacancies are publicly advertised on DU's official website and in national publications, allowing for open competition within a specified period (SAR, p. 45). The selection process aligns with regulations such as the "Regulations on the Election to Academic Positions at Daugavpils University" covering both Latvian and international candidates who meet academic and professional requirements (SAR, p. 46). The selection criteria focus on matching qualifications with legal and academic standards. These include relevance in research and teaching competencies, ensuring that academic staff can contribute to DU's educational goals. The teaching staff's qualifications, including advanced degrees and experience, support DU's commitment to high-quality education and study programme outcomes (SAR, p. 163). Yet faculty members often face substantial workloads that limit their availability for research and participation in new projects. This overload decreases staff engagement and hinder their capacity to update their teaching methods or integrate innovative practices effectively, especially it was noticed by combination of several positions for faculty management and teaching staff in and out of DU (interviews during the site visit on 23rd and 24th of September, 2024). The SAR notes that low salaries for academic staff reduce the institution's ability to compete effectively with other sectors. This financial limitation impacts staff motivation and retention, as competitive salaries are offered in other regions or industries (SAR, p. 20). This was noted also during experts interviews on several occasions as a common education system problem in Latvia but from the perspective of DU as employer it raises uncertainty of employability sustainability. Insufficient public funding affects the ability to conduct research and renew educational resources, making it harder to sustain a competitive educational environment. This constraint can deter potential staff who seek well-supported academic settings (SAR, p. 21) and leads to low numbers of those who express their interest in working in DU.

The open voting process for selecting academic staff, conducted in councils, is another mechanism. It allows for broader institutional involvement, aligning with the university's academic goals and enhancing staff's scientific and practical contributions to education quality.

The institution's system for improving academic staff qualifications includes international opportunities, conferences, and projects like the Erasmus+ program, which help staff integrate contemporary pedagogical and research skills into their teaching (SAR, p. 227).

1.3.6.

DU has established a well-coordinated approach to professional development, as evidenced by active participation in EU funded projects, Erasmus+ exchanges, and specific professional training such as in digital competences, emotional intelligence, and educational technologies (SAR, p. 47-48). The integration of international exposure for staff through Erasmus+ enhances the quality of instruction, broadening staff perspectives and improving academic offerings back at DU. Should these funds decrease, DU may face challenges in sustaining the current level and quality of faculty development.

Regular training and seminars focus on areas essential for the university's academic goals. These include "interpersonal and communication skills" and "basics of e-learning" to ensure faculty adaptability to current educational trends, especially within a digitally growing landscape.

Yet during the site visit it was noticed by experts that professional development is organized for providing basic use of concepts but there has not been organized training about functions development after release of newer versions of ICT systems (interviews during the site visit with teaching staff and during ICT systems presentations, 23rd and 24th of September). Partly this may be related to academic staff's significant teaching responsibilities that limit their availability for continuous ICT training, essential for optimal use of e-learning tools. This constraint can result in inconsistencies in the usage of Moodle and other digital resources, impacting the uniformity of the learning experience across courses.

Evaluation processes include feedback mechanisms like surveys, which provide insights into teaching effectiveness and the relevance of content. Moreover, the university's collaboration with external institutions ensures that the professional development aligns with actual market demands, further validating the effectiveness of the implemented measures (SAR, p. 227-228; interviews with employers on 24th of September, 2024). While feedback mechanisms are in place, assessing the true impact of professional development on long-term teaching effectiveness and student success remains challenging. Quantitative metrics may fail to capture qualitative improvements, risking a superficial evaluation of training effectiveness.

1.3.7.

DU enforces a structured approach to managing teaching hours, with a limit of 1000 teaching hours per academic year for faculty members. If exceeded, additional teaching hours are managed according to national guidelines, ensuring that faculty members do not experience unsustainable teaching loads, thus preserving the quality of education provided (SAR, p. 50). Yet during interviews with teaching staff it was noticed that high workloads of some of them leads to burnout, which may, in turn, affect continuity and quality in teaching and research. Without adequate support, faculty may prioritize immediate teaching obligations over research, leading to a decline in research output and affecting DU's academic performance.

To prevent excessive teaching burdens on permanent faculty, DU hires visiting lecturers (especially for masters study program). This allows it to distribute teaching responsibilities but also bring into DU external expertise (SAR, p. 49); interviews with teaching staff (24th of September, 2024). Although DU invites foreign visiting lecturers, this collaboration may be developed not only related to English studies.

DU fosters a supportive environment for research by allocating resources to fund scientific activities. Teaching staff are rewarded through a point-based system that encourages publications and conference participation, linking research output to academic performance and future funding eligibility (SAR, p. 59). Expanding and encouraging students to be more engaged in research activities may also positively impact their motivation to develop their further academic career within DU.

Experts have noticed that administrative duties are occasionally reassigned or reduced as necessary to ensure that faculty members can maintain a balanced workload across their academic, research, and administrative obligations (SAR, p. 49). This also impacts for example teaching staff engagement of evaluation of their pedagogical results or development planning like in interviews. It was noticed by experts that SAR mainly is developed by administrative staff of DU.

1.3.8.

DU has implemented a structured support system that includes the Student Service Centre, Psychological Support Centre (PAC), and an e-learning environment (Moodle) aimed at assisting students across various needs. DU's Student Service Centre and faculty staff provide students with assistance related to study organization and guidance for academic work, such as thesis preparation. Individual consultations with lecturers are available for academic guidance (SAR, p. 51), however, there is room for improvement in terms of remuneration policy for the teaching staff who are working extra time to help students to improve their knowledge in a particular subject (e.g. math).

During the site visit experts were informed that PAC offers up to three free psychological consultations for DU students and can extend services if necessary, providing flexibility to accommodate the mental health needs of students. It was also noticed that in case of necessity these consultations are provided as much as necessary upon evaluation of PAC specialists. Yet a notable dropout rate among first-year students, influenced by factors such as employment, financial issues, and personal reasons, poses a risk to DU's long-term student retention.

DU has made its facilities accessible for students with disabilities, including development of infrastructure for wheelchair-accessible purposes, visual and auditory aids in both buildings (site visit on 23rd and 24th of September, 2024).

DU's Moodle platform and tools like Zoom are utilized for students who may be unable to attend in-person due to geographic or personal constraints. This support is vital for part-time and remote students.

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

DU has provided the financial resources necessary for the implementation of the study field. Students have access to the necessary infrastructure, human resources, IT security, a library with the necessary resources to ensure that the study field is implemented in an appropriate quality. At the same time, access to the financial resources of the DU is limited due to the relatively small number of students and that increases dependence on external (EU funding) sources. Fluctuations in funding also affect the availability of resources to be evaluated, thus it is necessary to evaluate and develop the availability of additional resources from the state or local governments, especially taking into account the critical role of DU in the development of the region.

Strengths:

- 1) Students of the study field "Pedagogy and Education" have access to modern and research-relevant STEM infrastructure, which is used together with students from other study fields and forms a cross-sectoral impact.
- 2) DU ensures access to study materials necessary for students, using and developing solutions of library and internal IT systems, including by facilitating access to these resources for students who do not reside in Daugavpils.
- 4) Teaching staff selflessly help students in the study process, which contributes to the well-being of students. Students appreciate the choice in-person, remote or hybrid mode of studies.

Weaknesses:

- 1) Existing remuneration and employment conditions do not encourage the attraction of new teaching staff, create an overload in the employment of existing staff, which affects their professional development opportunities and participation in administrative duties, thus fragmenting a common vision and a holistic path for university development.
- 2) Library resources in a certainly large amount are provided in Russian language and by Russian publishers increasing risks of use of these resources in student scientific works contradict European social science findings.
- 3) IT systems functionality is not fully used by teaching staff for quality and monitoring functions.
- 4) Students are not effectively reached with information about conditions of obtaining scientific activity support grants.
- 5) Most investments are provided through external funding increasing uncertainty of long-term maintenance of developed infrastructure.
- 6) Teaching staff received professional development in ICT related to minimum functionality, there have not been training about Moodle developed functions for professional digital skills.

1.4. Scientific Research and Artistic Creation

Analysis

1.4.1.

Analyzing the development goals of the DU, it is possible to highlight some keywords for the scientific research area: "Balanced development in all strategic areas in areas of specialization", "strengthening involvement in scientific networks", "Cooperation in the national and international science space", "Interdisciplinarity", "Technology transfer and innovation" (see DU strategy 2022-2028., p. 63). Researching the list of publications (SAR Annex 2.4.4. List of Publications) it is concluded that topics covered by lecturers of DU is related to their sphere of expertise, corresponding to the study courses they lecture, but specifically, analyzing the DU joint doctoral study programme "Educational Sciences" lecturers carry out scientific activities in: "research methodology (qualitative research) and scientific writing, philosophy of education, teacher education, academic honesty, children's mental intelligence, study in a work environment, innovation in the teaching and learning process, their digital challenges, career and professional education, upbringing, music didactics, language learning didactics, sports didactics." (SAR p. 53). Research interests of the academic staff of the field of study and scientific topicalities in the society are taken into account.

Experts highly value that DU has their own scientific journal to support the publishing opportunities: "Journal of Teacher Education for Sustainability" in the electronic version: <https://sciendo.com/issue/JTES/25/2>. The journal is rated with SCImago Journal Rank of 0.420, which places it in the Q2 quartile among journals devoted to education. (SAR p.57). During the site visit in meeting with teaching staff members and Doctoral study programme students mentioned this as an opportunity for publishing.

Although some cases were mentioned during the site visit in the meeting with the teaching staff members that lecturers/researchers are cooperating with the students in the research projects and in creation of publications, this is still not widely observable, and there are quite a few teaching staff members, especially not-elected staff members, who do not have high value - index publications. This is an area for development.

1.4.2.

Searching for the examples when and how scientific research or applied research is included/integrated in the study process, study plans of all study programmes and the corresponding study course descriptions (SAR annexes 3.2.1., 3.1.2., 3.2.4. of Preschool Teacher (41141), Teacher (42141), Primary School Teacher (42141), Educational sciences (45142), Teacher (46141), Educational Sciences (51142) were researched. For the first cycle professional higher education bachelor's study programme "Teacher", there is a course "Research in education" (4 CP) in the "Subpart - theoretical basic courses and information technology courses of the industry (professional field of activity).", "English for research" (2 CP) in the "Subpart - Specialization study courses in the field of English", Term papers I, II, III, and Development of bachelor thesis I, II, Thesis (Total: 20 CP). For the the short-cycle professional higher education study programme "Preschool teacher", there is a course "Research in education" (4 CP) in the "Subpart - theoretical basic courses and information technology courses of the industry (professional field of activity).", "Term paper" (2 CP), "Elaboration of qualification paper" (8 CP) and "Qualification paper" (8 CP). For the professional bachelor's study programme "Primary Education Teacher", there are courses: Research in education. Term paper 1 (4 CP), "Preschool learning models and child development research" in the "Module. Professional competence in preschool methodological work". (2 CP), "Information technology in education. Term paper 2" (2 CP), "Supervision of preschool education methodological work. Term paper 3" (2 CP), "Personalized approach in the context of diversity pedagogy. Term paper 3" (2 CP) or "Content and learning approaches of the field of cultural understanding and self-expression in arts. Term paper 3" (2 CP) depending on the Module, "Development of bachelor thesis I, II", "Bachelor's thesis" (Total: 20CP). For the Master's study programme "Education Sciences", there are courses "Research I, II" (Total: 8 CP), "Elaboration of master's thesis I, II" (Total: 20 CP). For the first cycle professional higher education study programme "Teacher", there are courses "Diploma thesis development" (10 CP), "Diploma paper" (10 CP). For the DSP "Educational Sciences", there are courses: "Historical experience and current theories in education science research" (4 CP), "Educational sciences research methodology" (4 CP), "Responsible research and innovation in education" (2 CP), "Equality, Equity and Diversity as Innovation in Education Research" (2 CP), "Educational strategies for research competence in preschool and basic education" (4 CP), "The Doctoral Thesis in Education Sciences I, II, III, IV, V, VI" (Total: 64 CP), "Doctoral thesis: scientific publication I, II, III" (Total: 20 CP); Limited elective courses: "Responsible research and innovation in education" (2 CP), "Scientific Communication" (2 CP).

It is concluded that the proportion of study courses which are directly devoted for the research competence development is in accordance with the level of the study programme and outcomes planned.

The results of scientific research (articles in conference proceedings, journal articles, monographs) and teaching aids published by the academic staff of the study field are integrated in the study process of the study programmes in the form of publications. The list of publications of academic staff for the period 2018 - 2024 has been provided by the DU (SAR Annex 2.4.4. List of publications) as well as study course descriptions (SAR Annexes 3.1.2.Study course descriptions) for each study programme.

Experts discovered that there are publications of lecturers or the authors of the study courses included in the “Mandatory sources of information” in the study course descriptions, e.g., for the study course “An introduction to education for sustainability for development” in Part A - Compulsory courses” of the first cycle professional higher education bachelor’s study program “Teacher” (SAR Annex 3.2.1.Study plans_PBSP Teacher), there is a publication (monograph/teaching aid) included (SAR Annex 3.1.2.Study course descriptions; SAR Annex 2.2.4. List of publications, p.17) for students to investigate. But it was noticed that none of the latest publications by the same authors were included in the study course description mentioned above, although some of them could be coherent (e.g., SAR Annex 2.2.4. List of publications, p. 21).

There are good examples mentioned in SAR (p.95) of the latest publications used in the joint doctoral study programme “Educational Science” as the basis for the implementation of the study course “Cooperation of Social Partners in Education Contexts for Promoting Change”. There is also an example of how scientific monographs published by teaching staff of the study field are used during the implementation of the study courses “Development of a doctoral thesis: preparation of a scientific publication I, II, III” and “Development of a doctoral thesis in educational sciences I, II, III, IV, V, VI” as well as “Research Methodology in Education Sciences” and “Scientific Writing in Education Sciences”. A monograph developed specifically in Latvian for the national research competence development has been included in the study course “Research II” description of Academic master study programme “Educational Sciences” developed by teaching staff of DU.

Participation in projects is used as the basis for the development of the study courses, e.g., the study course “Project Management in Educational Sciences” of the joint doctoral study programme “Education Science” was developed within the DU research project “Transition to teaching only in Latvian: assessment of the situation and identification of support directions in the pre-school and primary stages of general education”, State Research Programme “Letonika for the Development of Latvian and European Society” project “Narrative, form and voice: rootedness of literature in culture and society”; ESF project “Enhancing the Digital Capacity of Universities through the Integration of Online Learning Resources and Analytics (EduAim)” (SAR, p.95).

There are quite recent publications developed by the authors of the study Course “Fundamentals of a teachers’ professional activity” (SAR Annex 3.1.2.Study course descriptions_Full time_Preschool Teacher) of the first level professional higher education study programme “Preschool Teacher” included in the Compulsory reading list, as well as for the study course “Content and learning approaches in the field of language studies”.

These examples represent the scientific and methodological publications as sources to support students during the process of acquisition of the specific study course.

1.4.3.

During the site visit in the meeting with the HEI management, rector of DU informed experts that the agreement concerning the establishment of UNESCO Chair on Teacher Education and Continuing Education: Interplay of Tradition and Innovation in Education for Sustainable Development at Daugavpils University was signed between the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and Daugavpils University in 2013. Experts have discovered that “According to the agreement, the purpose of the Chair is to promote an integrated system of research, training, information and documentation of education for sustainable development (ESD) and research for ESD.” (see: <https://du.lv/en/about-us/structure-2/unesco-chair/>). It is stated in the Report (SAR p. 56-57) that thanks to the work of UNESCO Chair, DU faculty members and many other researchers around the world have the opportunity to publish an issue of the scientific journal “Journal of Teacher

Education for Sustainability" and "Discourse and Communication for Sustainable Education" published by DU. It is possible to see that cooperation partners from different countries are members of the editorial board, it is also mentioned in the Report (SAR p. 111): USA, Australia, Austria, Turkey, Germany, Jamaica, Canada, United Kingdom, Norway, Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, Hungary, India, Turkey, Finland, Ukraine, Italy, Spain and other countries.

Internationalization of a programme was included in inclusion recommendations (SAR annex 2.6.1.) "2.3. It is recommended to put more effort into the internationalization of the study program." and DU has included information for the period of 2022-2024, stating that "foreign specialists from Taiwan, Lithuania, Poland, Switzerland, Finland, Estonia, Great Britain are involved in teaching study courses, in academic discussions, as well as participating in scientific conferences (in the annual DU international conference in 2023, in the international conference "Problems in Music Pedagogy" in September 2022)." (SAR p. 205).

Experts received information during the visit from different target groups - HEI management, academic staff, students that there are grants, financed by DU, and there are other types of projects enhancing international cooperation as well. One of the most noticeable are ERASMUS+ projects. One of these is mentioned in the Report (SAR p. 56) - "From 1.09.2021.- 30.09.2023. the Erasmus+ project "ESD: SuperVision 4.0" project". There is a list of projects included in the tables in the Report (SAR p. 55-56) informing about other ERASMUS+ projects: "Innovation and transformation in education" KA201 - Strategic Partnerships for school education", Nr. 2019-1-TR01-KA201-076605 (2019-2022), "Coaching Academics as Learners for Inclusive Teaching in Optimal Networks" (COALITION) Contract No: 2022-1-NL01-KA220-HED-000088497 (2023-2025). There are other financial sources mentioned, e.g., European Economic Area Financial Mechanism and Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2020 - 2021 Programme "Research and Education" Activity "Innovation Centres" Project "Establishment of Innovation Centre in Daugavpils", Nr. NFI/IC/VIAA/2020/4 (2020.-2023).

Taking into account that one of the ERASMUS mobility goals is: "to develop their transversal skills such as communication skills, language skills, critical thinking, problem solving, inter-cultural skills and research skills" (see <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/programme-guide/part-b/key-action-1/mobility-projects-for-higher-education-students-and-staff>) it is possible to acknowledge that research activities could be performed during the mobility visits, that is why the outgoing mobility cases of teaching staff and students of DU were analyzed (see SAR annexes: Statistical data on the outgoing mobility of academic staff for 2018-2023 in the study field "Education and pedagogy" and "Data on the outgoing mobility of students in the study field "Education and pedagogy"") and, there is a tendency observable.

Teaching staff has performed quite a lot of mobility cases to countries: Lithuania, Bulgaria, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Turkey, UK, Belgium, Sweden, Netherlands, Denmark, Czech Republic, Finland, Austria, France, Ireland, Philippines, Spain, Slovakia, Germany, Croatia, Island, Belgium, but students have performed mobility only to Lithuania (most of the cases), some to Poland and Estonia. There is also general information mentioned that some student mobilities were performed to Poland, Czech Republic, Jamaica and Seotho as well (SAR annex "Data on the outgoing mobility of students in the study field "Education and pedagogy"), but it was not possible to identify which students from which specific study programmes for what type of activity (e.g., study, research) went. Still, the proportion between students and teaching staff seems quite inadequate. The data should be analyzed and some solutions should be found to balance out this disproportion.

Experts want to emphasize the fact that there are plenty of other mobility opportunities for the research purpose, e.g., Horizon Europe (see https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en; https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2023-2024/wp-2-msca-actions_horizon-2023-2024_en.pdf etc.), that could be used to enhance the international cooperation within the study field.

1.4.4.

Academic staff were interviewed during the visit about the mechanisms DU provides for them to support their scientific needs and interests, as well as professional development. One of the instruments representatives mentioned was payment for publications in peer-reviewed journals, participation in the international conferences, project funding (internal grants), as well as fast communication with the management of the Study Programmes. It is mentioned in the Report (SAR p. 57) that there are such documents elaborated to ensure and promote the involvement of teaching staff in scientific research: "Daugavpils University Procedure for Payment of Expenses for Scientific Publications", "Procedure for Payment of Expenses for Scientific Publications and Monographs of Academic Staff of Daugavpils University", "Daugavpils University Procedure for Payment of Expenses for Participation in Scientific Trips and Events", "Daugavpils University Research Projects Competition Procedure".

To gather the statistics and evaluate the outcome from financial investments, at the end of each calendar year lecturers have to submit a report on achievements in scientific and creative work, project work, participation in scientific seminars and conferences, publications (SAR p. 58) and it has to be done in accordance with the "Procedure for Evaluating the Efficiency of Scientific Work of Academic Staff of Daugavpils University". This helps academic staff to apply for the possibility to be elected in academic positions at DU.

For the evaluations of scientific publications, The Hirsch index is calculated. It is said in the Report, that for the teaching staff involved in the study field "Education and Pedagogy" it has increased during the reporting period (see some examples given in p. 58). A scientific index at DU is developed: <https://www.adscientificindex.com/university/Daugavpils%2BUniversity/>

It must be admitted that academic staff are well informed about the possibilities DU offers and are eager to use them, it means the instruments used are purposeful and effective.

1.4.5.

As it was mentioned in the analysis of this report in criterion 1.4.2., that study plans of all study programmes and the corresponding study course descriptions were researched to find out the examples when and how scientific research / or applied research was included/integrated in the study process and experts were happy to see that the study courses were developed with the intention to inform and support the enhancement of the research competence of the students during the study process, and it was discussed during the site visit when meeting the students and graduates of the study programmes of the study field. Students admitted that also during their internship at educational institutions their tasks and objectives were connected with the research competence. It is stated in the Report (SAR p. 60): "Students have the opportunity to participate in research projects, present research results at international scientific conferences and publish scientific articles in internationally peer-reviewed journals and conference proceedings. Students can apply for a one-off scholarship for their achievements in scientific research." But it was discussed with the management of the study programmes and students and graduates as well that it is not a

mandatory requirement.

It is great that DU motivates students to participate in conferences specifically devoted to the target group - students: "the annual international scientific conference of Daugavpils University, the Student scientific conference "Sports Education Current Affairs", the international scientific conference "Sports: Education, Science, Technologies", the international Student Scientific and Practical Conference "Child. Teacher. Education"" (SAR, p. 60).

There are 4 examples mentioned in the Report (see p. 61), where students from several study programmes take part: DU internal project "Factors affecting the quality assurance of study programs in the field of education implemented at Daugavpils University in the context of the transformation of teacher education" (project No. 14-95/2023/13), DU internal project "Academic integrity in social sciences: assessment of the situation and development perspectives in Latvian regional universities" (project no. 14-95/2022/14), DU research project "Transition to learning only in Latvian: assessment of the situation and determination of support directions in the pre-school and primary school stages of general education (project No. 14-95/2023/12), and "Mobbing in the schools of the Latgale region: evaluation of the opinions of students, teachers and parents". These are the projects where students of such study programmes are involved: AMSP "Educational Sciences " students, joint DSP Educational science students, KDSP Educational Science students. But there is no information in the materials about, e.g., the bachelor's level students being involved, although it is mentioned "Involvement in research is compulsory for Bachelor level students, but recommended for students who intend to continue their education at a higher level." (see p. 61). Involvement in research at doctoral level is compulsory in accordance with the national legislation.

DU admits the increase in numbers of students' involvement in research activities, but there is no precise statistics to calculate the percentage. So there still is a topical question there - how to motivate and how to involve students in the scientific research with professors and other students as there will always be some exceptional students who are good at using all the opportunities offered but there will be those who are not that eager to do some extra work although it is inspiring.

1.4.6.

DU has chosen to give some examples for the innovations (SAR p.62):

- "Process innovation. In recent years, DU has devoted significant resources to improving the e-learning organization." During the site visit teaching staff admitted that they feel supported technically;
- They are happy about their marketing solutions, e.g., DU Open Days, Researchers' Night, DU Science Festival, Career Fair Camps, and when meeting with the employers experts found out that these activities are noticed and highly valued;
- And from the perspective of organizational innovations, DU is satisfied with digitized systems implemented: DUIS, Namejs, HoP etc.

During the site visit, experts noticed that there are some other aspects where DU has shown excellence. All the target groups - employers / academic staff / students demonstrated their understanding about the importance of the interdisciplinary cooperation within the study process at DU and at educational institutions in the region to implement "thread skills" / 4'C - The 21st century learning skills: critical thinking, creative thinking, communicating, and collaborating (entrepreneurship skills, digital skills, self-regulation and civic participation) (based on Skola 2030).

Student centered approach is detected. Academic staff – dedicated and high professionals in their field of science, able to keep up high standards and didactics and methodology as well.

Study content of short cycle, first level, bachelor level study programmes is really practice based – to prepare students for real life situations at school, to be ready for diversity in the classroom and to recognise students' individual need and social-emotional well-being.

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

Research topics covered by lecturers of DU are related to their sphere of expertise, corresponding to the study courses they lecture. Research interests of the academic staff of the field of study and scientific topicalities in the society are taken into account. The proportion of study courses which are directly devoted for research competence development is in accordance with the level of each study programme and outcomes planned. Teaching staff has performed quite a lot of diverse ERASMUS+ mobility cases to countries, but there is no evidence that mobility programmes specifically targeted for research purposes (e.g., Horizon Europe) were used. DU academic staff members value the support provided by DU to cover payment for publications in peer-reviewed journals, participation in the international conferences, project funding (internal grants), as well as fast communication with the management of the Study Programmes.

Strengths:

- 1) DU has their own scientific journals to support the publishing opportunities, e.g., "Journal of Teacher Education for Sustainability".
- 2) DU is a UNESCO Chair on Teacher Education and Continuing Education: Interplay of Tradition and Innovation in Education for Sustainable Development at Daugavpils University since 2013.
- 3) Academic staff is well informed about the possibilities DU offers to support their scientific research activities and are eager to use them, it means the instruments used are purposeful and effective.
- 4) There are different types of opportunities provided for students to get involved in the research activities during the study process: within study courses, internship, elaboration of term papers and qualification paper/bachelor, master or doctoral thesis, conferences, research grants, publications.
- 5) Interdisciplinary cooperation within the study process at DU and at educational institutions in the Latgale region provides transition of innovative solutions to implement the 21st century learning skills: critical thinking, creative thinking, communicating, and collaborating (entrepreneurship skills, digital skills, self-regulation and civic participation, based on Skola 2030).

Weaknesses:

- 1) There are quite a few teaching staff members, especially not-elected staff members, who do not have high value - index publications.
- 2) International cooperation in the field of scientific research within the study field "Education and pedagogy" and the relevant study programmes is not ensured and improved in a target-oriented manner.
- 3) There is no mechanism to motivate and maximize the involvement of students in scientific research with professors and other students.

Assessment of the requirement [2]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

System developed at DU (SAR Annex 1.4. Procedure of assessing the scientific activity.pdf; internal DU grants, finances allocated for publications and participation in conferences; DU scientific journals and conferences etc. activities described in SAR chapter 2.4. pp. 52-62)

supports the research needs of academic staff, is oriented to attain the high level scientific research results thriving for the goal to locate DU as a regional center of excellence.

1.5. Cooperation and Internationalisation

Analysis

1.5.1.

According to the SAR, page 64, during the reporting period, more than 17 cooperation agreements were concluded with various municipalities for internships within the study field "Education and Pedagogy". In 2018, a network of inter-university and institutional cooperation was established throughout Latvia. The expert panel found the list of partners impressive: University of Latvia, Riga Technical University Liepaja Academy, Rezekne Academy of Technologies, Riga Stradiņš University Latvian Academy of Sports Pedagogy and Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music. Also, experts from the State Centre for Education project "Competence Approach in Curriculum", Teachers' Methodological Association, foundation "Mission Possible" and representatives of the Ministry of Defence, helped to develop new study programmes. The cooperation with Latvian higher education institutions contributes to the achievement of scientific objectives of the study field "Education and Pedagogy", and cooperation with employers contributes to the development of students' professional skills.

Additionally, in the context of the Operational Programme "Growth and Employment" a specific support objective "Reduce fragmentation of study programmes and strengthen resource sharing" should be mentioned.

During the site-visit the experts were told that there is no problem to find co-partners in the local community: one just must share the information and ask for it. The DU has cooperated with many higher education institutions, municipalities and structures of the Ministry of Education, also with the Goethe Institute and with the French Embassy in Latvia. From Annexes of the SAR, experts did not get detailed info about the content of cooperation. From the site visit experts found out, for example, that with the French Embassy the French language and culture are popularized through the French week in Daugavpils.

According to the SAR, page 64, in 2024 (in February), the Agreement to promote access to quality education, and to ensure teacher training and professional development was signed with the following institutions: the Municipality of Zemgale, the Municipality of Vidzeme, the Municipality of Latgale and Selija, the Municipality of Kurzeme, the Municipality of Riga. In site-visit experts found out that the cooperation between the institutions (both inside and outside of the region) is active on different levels. For example - local institutions are places for practice for students; specialists from different institutions are part-time teachers, etc.

Great job is performed by building relationships with employers. Great strength is the cooperation with local education institutions (for internships, for projects, for supporting the teaching staff of schools, supporting pupils for the preparation for the competitions in national or international contests, doing research, participation of employers in the final thesis defense committees, etc.). Special commendation goes for the management and coordination of internships of students. Clear involvement of schools, development of methods and quite visible united requirements in all study programmes is established.

1.5.2.

In the SAR, p. 63, one can read that criteria in the context of foreign cooperation partners are similar

to the priorities of the DU, and also to the specific essence of each study programme. According to the SAR, p. 65, the guest teaching staff enriches the academic field in the DU in many ways:

1. Scientific lectures & seminars.
2. Cooperation in the study courses with the DU lecturers, offering innovative methodology.
3. Scientific consultations for doctoral, master's and bachelor's theses.
4. Mentoring of DU teaching staff about scientific research work.
5. Developing methodical material and/or study course content for studies.
6. Developing methodical material for teaching English.
7. Participation in scientific and methodological conferences, to prepare publications together with the scientific staff of the DU.

For Experts it was not easy to find contracts with foreign partners: in the SAR Annex 2.1.4. (Cooperation agreements) is only one agreement (with the Latvian University). There is another Annex under the same number (2.1.4.), with the headline: Agreement on studies, where a project of Agreement on studies can be found.

In reality, Cooperation agreements with partners are in the annex 2.5.1. From this Annex one can see that there are only two joint-work-cases with foreign partners, held by the "Primary school teacher": one partner is from Ukraine, one from Lithuania; and one scientific contract is with Estonia. To be exact: partners are named, but no copies of agreements are included in annexes. Experts can not see the content of the joint-work.

1.5.3.

According to the SAR p. 65, since 2018 the outgoing mobility of DU faculty members in the field of study "Education and Pedagogy" has increased, both in teaching and professional development programmes. Attracting international students and teachers has been realized through several information campaigns. For example, at the beginning of every year, the Erasmus+ coordinator of DU sends out an Erasmus+ information letter to all Erasmus+ partners on how foreign students and staff can apply for studies, internships, teaching or professional development. The DU Erasmus+ Coordinator visits the international Staff Week in different countries several times a year, where it is possible to establish new contacts and sign inter-university agreements for the exchange of students and teaching staff within the Erasmus+ programme. Another important mechanism is international partnerships to enrich the research and study process - as is written in SAR, p. 65.

During the site-visit the experts were told that teachers share information about the DU, when visiting foreign universities. The attraction of guest lecturers is ensured by the ESF project No. 8.2.2.0/18/I/005 "Strengthening the capacity of academic staff in strategic areas of the Daugavpils University study direction "Education, pedagogy and sports"". For example, experts from Lithuania, Poland, Czech Republic and Sweden joined the study field in the context of this agreement.

There are two SAR Annexes under the same number 2.5.3. One is about teachers, one is about students. From one Annex 2.5.3. (incoming and outgoing mobility of the students), the experts found out that during the last 5 years 47 students of the DU visited 23 institutions abroad. Below the table there is information about the study field of "Education and pedagogy": during the last 6 years 11 students went on a outgoing mobility. For experts it is hard to understand which number is valid: 47 or 11.

As the precondition for this kind of visit is a bilateral agreement, it is possible to add this fact to the analysis of this chapter, too. Even if experts have not seen those agreements in annexes.

According to the Annex 2.5.3, about ongoing mobility of the teaching staff, 114 persons visited 74 institutions in 22 countries. But those 74 contracts are not presented. Usually, in SARs, universities do the statistics and count all numbers themselves, before presenting the report, but from the DU annexes the experts had to do the statistical analysis themselves. At least in the context of mobility.

Despite the headline: Incoming and outgoing mobility of the other Annex 2.5.3., there is no information about the incoming mobility of the students. At the end of this, there is a sentence: There is no incoming mobility of teaching staff during the reporting period. But experts got additional info during the site-visit, that from 7 countries 11 students arrived during 2018-2023 to the DU. And, according to the same additional info, the 15 teachers from 4 countries (from 7 institutions) visited the DU. If those numbers are correct, some other annexes are wrong. Not to mention, that for the whole study field 11 students and 15 teachers during 6 years is not much.

It even seems like some information may be about the whole university, not about the study field. Experts can not check this as international agreements are not presented in annexes, as was previously mentioned. Because of messy annexes, it is hard to decide which information is valid; and it took a lot of extra time to try to find out the additional numbers, and to do the statistics.

The discussions with representatives of the academic community of the study field “Pedagogy and Education” during the site visit revealed that the level of English to be able to use academic resources available for research, implement the principles of internationalization of higher education is still inconsistent (for every member of the academic staff (specifically the directors of the study programmes) and for most of the students (specifically on the master’s and PhD level). Proficiency in English among both the academic staff and students should become a long-term target. This will enhance the professional competency development options for staff as well as students’ effective use of library resources, and international mobility of both. Outgoing mobility of students and staff should be further stimulated to ensure the immersion into English language learning. Employers, who attended the meeting with expert panel, strongly encourage students in the study field “Pedagogy and Education” to have mobility periods abroad for expanding their scope of understanding in the field of Pedagogy and Education, opening minds and thinking out of the box, what is crucial for being creative for any teacher. So, both the incoming and outgoing mobility of students and staff should be further stimulated to ensure the study programmes’ international attractiveness.

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

The staff of the study field „Education and Pedagogy“ achieved the DU aims of establishing strong cooperation with partners from Latvia, such cooperation contributes to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study field „Education and Pedagogy“. International cooperation is developed/presented poorly, systems and mechanisms, which are used by the DU to attract foreign students and the teaching staff are not efficient for the study field „Education and Pedagogy“.

Strengths:

- 1) Inside Latvia the cooperation between institutions, especially higher education institutions and colleges, sectoral associations, state institutions, non-governmental organizations, scientific institutes, is well established.
- 2) Cooperation with Latvian employers' and state institutions works well. The DU study field “Education and Pedagogy” is well on its way to creating an excellent reputation to its study programmes. There are high evaluations on the part of employers, which provides good career

opportunities for graduates.

Weaknesses:

- 1) The study field "Education and Pedagogy" is poorly internationally oriented.
- 2) No contracts about international scientific joint-activities are presented.
- 3) Cooperation of the study field "Education and Pedagogy" with internationally recognized professors and experts in connection with study programme is not deep enough.
- 4) The flow of incoming professors and students of the universities involved in the ERASMUS+ programme is insufficient in the study field "Education and Pedagogy".
- 5) Low involvement of the teaching staff of the study field "Education and Pedagogy" in international workshops, exchange programmes, and long-term visits abroad.

Assessment of the requirement [3]

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

The local cooperation is well established. But the international cooperation is not very active: there are 2 contracts with foreign partners, held by the study programme "Primary school teacher": 1 partner is from Ukraine, 1 from Lithuania; and one scientific contract with Estonia. Experts have not seen copies of contracts with foreign institutions.

Experts asked additional info during the site visit, they also got some additional info, but despite of it the statistics is not clear.

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

Analysis

1.6.1.

The previous study field accreditation took place more than ten years ago, taking into account that significant reforms have taken place in Latvia since that time it is difficult to compare with the current situation. Major changes that have taken place are the amendment of the title of the study field from "Education, pedagogy and sports" to "Education and pedagogy" (SAR, p. 66). Also amendments have been made to the Law on Higher Education Institutions, new educational standards have been adopted, for example, the Cabinet of Ministers' regulations of June 13, 2023 No. 305 "Rules on the standard of state professional higher education" (Latvijas Vēstnesis, 118, 20.06.2023. <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/342818>). The previous recommendations were implemented through new study programmes after licensing process in 2020 completely restructuring the new study field "Education and Pedagogy".

The improvement of study courses is essential for ensuring the quality of higher education and promoting the competitiveness of students. The main criteria taken into account in the process of making the new study programmes also according to inclusion assessment procedure recommendations:

1. Improving the quality of study programmes - DU has implemented various active learning methods such as problem-based learning, integration of digital technologies in the learning process, for example, in study course Social sciences I digital platforms have been introduced in study process, and support materials for the internship have been created, for example, handbook for internship process. E-study environment and MOODLE system has been improved.

2. Increasing the efficiency of the study process - More efficient use of human and material resources was made, which can help optimize the study process and improve the quality of studies in general. Strengthening of consultation and support systems for students and teaching staff were introduced, such as psychological consultation, career counseling, supporting initiatives etc.
3. Improving the study environment and culture - It is evident that DU is thinking about accessibility issues and there are examples of support for people with functional disabilities in the physical infrastructure. The Student Council social media accounts are involved in raising awareness of social issues, providing information on international opportunities and cultural events. (SAR, p. 67-68)
4. Improving the professional competence of teaching staff - Here are some examples of measures to improve professional competence that have been implemented in various ways. Joint research projects of lecturers, promoting scientific cooperation, for example, implementing international projects: EU-Twinning project "Supporting inter-sectoral collaboration possibilities between Research and Industry" (No. GE 18 ENI OT 02 19), European Economic Area Financial Mechanism and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism for the period 2014-2021 program "Research and Education" activity "Innovation Centres" program project "Development of Innovation Center in Daugavpils", No. NFI/IC/VIAA/2020/4, Agreement No. 9.-20.2.2.1/4, Erasmus+ project "ESD: SuperVision 4.0".

DU participated in the ESF project 8.3.2.1./16/I/002 "Implementation of national and international measures for the development of learners' talents" in the academic year 2020/2021. From 2019 to 2023, the study programme faculty members implemented the Erasmus+ project "Innovation and transformation in education" (No 2019-1-TR01-KA201-076605), involving a network of education professionals with academics from other countries. DU also organizes activities to improve English language skills and knowledge for teaching staff.

Providing human resources development in the ESF project SAM 8.2.2 "Strengthening academic staff of higher education institutions in areas of strategic specialization". Academic staff were given the opportunity to undertake 200-hour internships in educational institutions to develop their professional competences.

Licensing recommendations.

Study programme "Preschool Teacher":

Study programme licensing recommendations include the need of learning more about information technologies in education in study course "Research in education". Not only the study course "Research in Education" has integrated IT education content topics, but also study courses "Organization and management of the preschool pedagogical process", "Content and learning approaches of language teaching" etc.

This study programme also supplemented the programme goals and tasks based on the competence learning content implemented in preschool education. The new, competence-based preschool education material is included also in other parts of the study course description. The terminology has been updated in accordance with recommendations, including the issues of inclusiveness, cooperation with family etc. Overall, the study course descriptions have been restructured.

The mandatory and additional sources used in study course descriptions contain latest scientific literature and teaching staff monographs and articles except for study course "Legal aspects of pedagogical process" which compulsory reading list contains literature from 1998 to 2001 and except from one regulation, all compulsory and further reading list contains of articles or regulations that are 10 years old or older. One reason for this could be the laws and regulations that are the basis of the course literature, which are constantly being amended, but have been issued a long time ago. Another course that could use an update of the compulsory and further reading list is "Game activities and interdisciplinary", where the most recent literature is from 2014, but most of it is 15 to 20 years old.

The study contracts are supplemented with a clause on DU's obligation to guarantee compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited due to the university (activity or inaction) or the license of the study programme is revoked and the student does not want to continue his/her studies in another study programme. It is evident that the study process is not only student-centred, but also child-centred. This topic can be further developed.

Study programme "Primary School Teacher":

Previous recommendations included the need to implement changes in the correct and uniform use of titles. The broader inclusion of research skills development in the study process and the extension of the use of databases were important aspects. An important section of the licensing recommendations was focused on updating the study process in line with the latest trends, updated study literature, student expectations and attracting potential students.

The mandatory and additional sources used in study course descriptions contain latest scientific literature and teaching staff monographs and articles except for study course "Elementary mathematics methods". The compulsory literature except for one publication is from the 20th century. In study course "Transversal competences in the field of cultural awareness and self-expression in arts: Visual Arts. Movement art. Music" there is a list of 16 compulsory reading literature items and a further reading list contains 56 literature items many of which are outdated. There are other courses where the compulsory literature is too much for the length of the course. The expert panel suggests that items of literature on similar topics be either removed from the course materials or moved to further reading lists or periodicals and other sources. Such courses include "Field of mathematics: Mathematics, its teaching methodology I", where the compulsory reading list is longer than further reading list.

The study programme has been successful in attracting students to study part-time, but the number of full-time students is fluctuating, especially in the context of dropout rate. There is also a developed and updated internship regulation and an internship handbook to support students and internship institutions in the learning process.

DU acknowledges the need to further increase opportunities for primary teachers to develop research skills beyond the "Research in education" course. Participation in conferences organized by DU and others is a suggestion, but there is a need to find a possibility where all students can develop their research skills.

To expand its database offer, DU is looking for an opportunity to collaborate with the National Library of Latvia and use free resources, which is a logical step in the context of limited funding. As the number of students and the proportion of teaching students increase, it would also be logical to review the offer of databases within the university, focusing on the use of available databases in the study process.

Study programme "Teacher":

Specific recommendations included rules for evaluating the courses offered and the effectiveness of obtaining feedback. At the same time, the emphasis was on an efficient process of organizing the practice. According to meetings with students and alumni there was not evident any problems with the process of practice or internship management or implementation.

DU collects regular feedback and provides internally statistical data and information on the study programmes and the students through the student surveys conducted by the SKNC online 3 times per year and the Student Council surveys conducted 2 times per year.

Long-term recommendations are in the process of being implemented. The issues with specialization should be implemented at a quicker pace.

First cycle study programme "Teacher":

The requirements of the recommendation covered issues related to the admission process and the

study contract. In the process of study implementation, it is important to take care of the financial aspects of the internship and the development of national cooperation partners.

Short-term licensing recommendations about a third variant for entrance exam has been established. The study contract has been changed to include a requirement to complete a study course about civil and environment protection. In the study programme, IT skills are added to the course content.

Long-term licensing recommendations about various partners and employers, financial support for teachers-mentors for practice in schools and training for all teaching staff are in the process of being implemented. The number of students raises concerns about the financial sustainability of the study programme, this issue has not been adequately addressed and should be the main priority of this study programme.

Master's and doctoral study programme "Educational Sciences":

An important recommendation concerned a review of the substance of the formulation of study programmes, e.g. aim and learning outcomes for the study programme. At this level of study, there was a need to focus more on testing students' research skills and the importance of internationalization, taking advantage of the common programme. Recommendations were also made for modifying certain aspects of the teaching staff.

The issue about the number of students and especially international students has not been addressed in the master's programme (vice-versa with doctoral study programme). It is evident that the teaching process of the study programme follows the development plan of DU and the European Educational Sciences, however, several long-term recommendations are only being implemented.

It is evident that DU generally provides professional development training for teaching staff, but it is important that professional capacity building and digital skills are also provided to as many teaching staff as possible in a given study programme. DU is implementing comprehensive improvements to its e-platform system and quality data collection. According to DU, a common doctoral e-platform has been implemented, which runs on the LU e-platform MOODLE, but closer cooperation between universities implementing joint doctoral programmes needs to be pursued beyond the existing system. Undoubtedly, the existing conditions already make use of the teaching and administrative resources of each university to achieve common goals.

To avoid thematic overlap the study course "Trends in the Development of Didactics Theories" and the study course "Inclusive Didactics for Proficiency" will be removed from the program due to content overlap; it will be replaced by the study course "Current Issues in Developmental Psychology".

There are some topics that have been mentioned in each study programme's recommendations and needs to be addressed more seriously. First of them is the issue of international mobility. Of course, many of the students work in parallel with their studies and the positive side is that many of them work in their profession, but mobility opportunities are poorly exploited. There are some examples of successful mobility cases, but they need to be made more accessible, perhaps by offering shorter, blended intensive programmes that do not require physically going to another country for a whole semester or year. The lack of incoming and / or outgoing mobility has been expressed as a recommendation in every study programme previously and should be addressed thoroughly in the future for all study field jointly and each study programme individually. Similarly, internationalization and the involvement of foreign students and teaching staff in the DU study process, although emerging, is not sufficiently active according to discussions with students and teaching staff.

It is evident that DU is investing in the renovation and modernisation of the infrastructure of the university buildings. DU should continue to invest in the well-being of students and staff and create more convenient physical infrastructure for individual and group work of students, such as an on-site

cafeteria.

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

Since the previous study field accreditation recommendations have been enacted through creating new study programmes. The licensing and inclusion recommendations in most cases have been implemented. Some of the issues noted in a number of study programmes that need more attention are incoming and outgoing international mobility, internationalization issues and improving the physical infrastructure by increasing the availability of modern equipment and facilities for individual and group work.

Follow-up is not an integral part of the internal quality assurance system of the study field, aimed at improving the study field and relevant study programmes, taking into account the conclusions of the external evaluation and the recommendations provided in them.

Strengths:

- 1) The requirements relating to document modifications and administrative requirements are in most cases adequately implemented.
- 2) The doctoral study programme has succeeded in attracting international students by creating favorable conditions through remote learning.
- 3) Teaching staff actively participate in scientific activities and projects.

Weaknesses:

- 1) The number of students in some study programmes has decreased, contrary to the recommendations, e.g. in the first cycle programme "Teacher", in the academic Master's study programme "Educational Sciences".
- 2) Some recommendations to improve course descriptions have not been fully taken into account, e.g. compulsory and further reading list to be updated.
- 3) Mobility and internationalization issues have not been sufficiently implemented, although such opportunities are offered.

Assessment of the requirement [4]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Recommendations of previous expert panels were implemented according to the follow-up plans prepared after the previous accreditation processes. Short-term recommendations have been implemented (see expert analysis of 1.6.1. criterion).

1.7. Recommendations for the Study Field

Short-term recommendations

- 1) Revise the SWOT analysis of the study field "Education and Pedagogy" to indicate the real strategic situation of the study field by the beginning of next 2025-2026 academic year.
- 2) Supplement the development plan of the study field with quantitative and qualitative key performance indicators, indicating human and financial resources needed for the implementation of the action plan, ensure response within the development plan to the weaknesses and threats, which are faced by the study field "Education and Pedagogy" by the beginning of next 2025-2026 academic year.

- 3) Approve and publish the guidelines and regulations for the academic community on the use of AI in teaching, learning and research at DU as soon as possible but no later than by the beginning of next 2025-2026 academic year.
- 4) Clarify and introduce stakeholders of DU to why and how the ISO and EFQM systems are combined, what are the roles of DU teaching staff, students, administration staff, graduates, social partners, employers, etc. within the chosen quality assurance model at the university as soon as possible but no later than by the beginning of next 2025-2026 academic year.
- 5) Make publicly available both in Latvian and English for all stakeholders of DU the relevant information about the internal quality assurance system, e.g. relevant management procedures; formal quality assurance processes (inputs and outputs); involvement, roles and responsibilities of DU stakeholders; methods and tools to define, measure, evaluate, assure, and enhance quality; etc. as soon as possible but no later than by the beginning of next 2025-2026 academic year.
- 6) Include external experts and advisors into the Boards and Councils responsible for quality assurance in the study field, both from other universities in Latvia, but also from Europe and elsewhere as soon as possible, but no later than by the beginning of next 2025-2026 academic year. Online meetings of these bodies (including Expert Panels and Advisory Boards) can facilitate this process.
- 7) Improve the procedure for obtaining feedback from students, teaching staff, graduates, and employers. Make the process more systematic, transparent, and documented (inputs, outputs, regularity, owners of the process, etc.) as soon as possible but no later than by the beginning of next 2025-2026 academic year.
- 8) Make the procedure of submitting complaints and suggestions applicable to follow the management structure and the academic hierarchy and address important ethical considerations and whistleblowing as soon as possible but no later than by the beginning of next 2025-2026 academic year.
- 9) Improve existing solutions for library and IT systems in order to ensure the availability of higher quality and security resources, i.e. in libraries, resources related to the development of European scientific directions (reducing the possibility of individual studies using resources from Russian scientific directions that have not been validated in a scientific discussion), as well as strengthening the efficient use of IT systems not only at the core function level, but also for quality monitoring, wider functionality and productivity, reducing, as appropriate, the workload on teachers in the use of multiple IT solutions. Revise and implement developed solutions not later than by the beginning of next 2026-2027 academic year.
- 10) The literature available in the compulsory and further reading list must be updated to reflect more recent scientific publications, for example in the courses "Legal aspects of pedagogical process", "Game activities and interdisciplinary" and "Elementary mathematics methods". as soon as possible but no later than by the beginning of next 2025-2026 academic year.
- 11) Research the individual challenges of each teaching staff member as soon as possible to elaborate a more effective plan by the beginning of the study year 2005-2006 on how to support those teaching staff members who have not reached the goal – to get high value-index publications.
- 12) Develop an effective methodology to make teaching staff's research mobilities more effective to attract incoming lecturers and students as well by the beginning of the study year 2005-2006.

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| 13) Develop a mechanism to motivate and maximize the involvement of students in scientific research with professors and other students by the beginning of the study year 2005-2006. |
| 14) Develop and implement a transparent support system for students' scientific activity grants. Implement systematic support system not later than by the beginning of next 2025-2026 academic year. |
| 15) Develop and provide professional development for teaching staff in Moodle updated version functionality. Implement and provide regular professional development by the beginning of next 2025-2026 academic year. |

Long-term recommendations

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| 1) Strengthen the role of students of the study field "Education and Pedagogy" within the self-governing bodies of DU. |
| 2) Review and upgrade some intended learning outcomes to clearly and simply express what it is expected that students should be able to do at the end of the learning period (avoiding vague verbs as „know“ and „understand“). Learning outcomes of the courses must be achievable, simply and clearly described, and capable of being validly assessed - specific and clear. |
| 3) Expand the functions of SKNC for providing support including for the teaching staff and students to assure and enhance the quality of teaching, learning, and assessment. Study Quality Assessment Centre could become Study Quality Assurance Centre or Study Quality Enhancement Centre. |
| 4) Recruit professors and researchers from abroad to contribute to an increasingly international and cosmopolitan innovative milieu, as well as to bring students closer to world-class research. |
| 5) Increase cooperation with internationally recognized professors and experts related to the study programmes. |
| 6) Explore international cooperation that would offer academic staff and students more opportunities for international exchanges in order to extend the Erasmus+ exchange directions, use the blended mobility (BIP) or online mobility opportunities provided by Erasmus+ programme. |
| 7) Take the opportunity to disseminate information among HEIs involved in the ERASMUS+ programme for the attraction of incoming professors and students. |
| 8) More focus on increasing the number of students to make studies financially effective (especially the first cycle study programme "Teacher"). |
| 9) Develop long term sustainable cooperation with municipalities to provide regular, municipality co-funded study places for specialists in the education sector, thereby increasing financial stability of DU. |
| 10) Improve proficiency in English among both the academic staff and students at least at B2 level. |

II - "Preschool Teacher" ASSESSMENT

II - "Preschool Teacher" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1.

The short-cycle professional higher education study programme "Preschool Teacher" envisages acquisition of a corresponding fifth level professional qualification "Teacher" with the right to work as a preschool teacher, which corresponds to the fifth level of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (LQF) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The relevance of DU short cycle professional higher education study programme "Preschool Teacher" to the study field "Education and Pedagogy" is determined by the necessity to implement and develop the study programme, which graduates are in big demand in the Eastern region of Latvia. The study programme "Preschool Teacher" comply with the aim of study field "Education and Pedagogy" (SAR, p. 15): to prepare highly qualified, competent, excellence-oriented teachers in the field of education throughout Latvia, providing them with appropriate knowledge, skills and competences in accordance with EU requirements, using the results of fundamental and practical research in education science.

The short-cycle professional higher education study programme "Preschool Teacher" also comply with Professional standard "Teacher" (2020) in terms of planning, implementation of the study process, assessing the learning performance and growth of the learner, as well as developing skills and attitudes, professional and general knowledge and competencies required for the fulfillment of the basic tasks and duties of the professional activity.

2.1.2.

The title of the study programme, the professional qualification are logically interrelated. Aim of the study programme ((SAR, p. 172) to provide studies based on the theory and practice of educational sciences for the acquisition of professional qualifications, educating competent pre-school teachers oriented towards professional development and lifelong learning) is logically linked with the title and qualification of the study programme. The short-cycle professional higher education study programme "Preschool Teacher" corresponds to the Cabinet Regulation of 13 June 2023 No. 305 "Regulations on the State Standard for Higher Vocational Education" and to the Teacher's Professional Standard. For more detailed analysis see criterion 2.2.1 of this report.

General secondary education, taking into account the average grade in the compulsory subjects, which must not be lower than 7 points and an entrance examination (an interview), if the average grade is lower than 7 points is required to be admitted to the short-cycle professional higher education study programme "Preschool Teacher" (SAR, p. 177).

Study programme intended learning outcomes are formulated as knowledge, skills and competences which are in line with Latvian and European qualification framework (LQF and EQF) Level 5. The short-cycle professional higher education study programme "Preschool Teacher" has (SAR, p. 173) 11 intended learning outcomes. 4 out of 11 intended learning outcomes are subject knowledge related, 4 out of 11 are professional skills related and 3 are teacher's competences related learning outcomes.

It should be noted that short-cycle professional higher education study programme "Preschool Teacher" learning outcomes in nowadays relevant to the labor market broadly applicable and transferable skills as leadership, creativity, problem-solving and critical thinking, digital literacy and communication skills are interrelated with the study programme aims and objectives of the study field "Education and Pedagogy".

Study programme implementation duration complies with the requirement that short-cycle professional higher education and fifth level professional qualification corresponding to the fifth level

of the Latvian Qualifications Framework is obtained by studying for not less than 2 years in full-time mode and in part-time mode accordingly (SAR, p. 174). Implementation of a study programme in Latvian language is reasonable and justified by the demand of pre-school teachers in the educational system of Latvia and its Eastern region.

2.1.3.

Changes in the parameters of the short-cycle professional higher education study programme "Preschool Teacher" were made since the inclusion of DU the short-cycle professional higher education study programme "Preschool Teacher" in the accreditation sheet of the study field (included on 3 August 2022, Decision No 2022/14-SPI) (SAR, p. 175). The study programme learning outcomes were reviewed and improved, highlighting cooperation with the family, inclusiveness and innovation in the practice of pre-school education; clarification of the admission requirements was made; the title of "First-Level Study Programme of Professional Higher Education" changed to the "Short-Cycle Study Programme of Professional Higher Education"; the number of credit points of study programme volume was mathematically recalculated to 126 ECTS following the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 305 of 13 June 2023 "Regulations on the State Standard of Professional Higher Education" and the equation of Latvian higher education credits (CP) with ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) credits; the study plan was restructured for ensuring the minimum volume of the basic parts - general knowledge - not less than 30 ECTS; field study courses - no less than 54 ECTS; practice - no less than 24 ECTS; qualification paper - not less than 12 ECTS; "State, civil and environmental protection" (3 ECTS); "Education for sustainable development" (3 ECTS) was included in the mandatory content of the study programme; "Educational Management" (3 ECTS), "Legal Aspects of the Pedagogical Process" (3 ECTS) and "Entrepreneurship and project development" (3 ECTS) were included for the formation of business professional competences; a free choice part (Part C) in the amount of 3 ECTS was included in the study programme curriculum; the number of ECTS in such courses as "Research in education", "Study work", "Pedagogy of childhood", "Physiology of child development, hygiene and basics of first aid" were revised (SAR, p. 175-176).

This shows that study programme implementers monitor national legal changes and carry out updates in order to comply with national legislation, as well as improvement of the study programme is made based on expert recommendations.

2.1.4.

Official statistics within SAR (p. 179) and the meetings with representatives of employers during the site visit shows that there are regular vacancies in pre-school educational institutions in Daugavpils city and there is a continuing demand for preschool teachers in pre-school educational institutions in municipalities of the Latgale region. The need for pre-school teachers is also confirmed by the fact that the majority of final year students find jobs in their specialization while still studying. Graduates as pre-school teachers meet the current educational and labor market requirements within a relatively short study period, which is a significant contribution to the support and development of the Latvian educational system in Latgale region. Expert panel was in doubt with the duration of the study programme in terms of achievement of the pedagogical knowledge and skills within such a relatively short period of time. Meetings with representatives of employers revealed that the pre-school educational institutions, which employed graduates of this study programme are very satisfied with their pedagogical knowledge and interpersonal as well as systemic general skills like problem solving, teamwork, communication, creativity and initiative, etc.

The concept of the study programme is oriented towards work-based studies (i.e. 24 ECTS internships) and the need for such an approach is pointed out by all potential employers, emphasizing that it allows young specialists to get to know the specifics of work and to focus their

attention on current developments in the sector already during their studies. Employers provide students with internships and part-time jobs during their studies, and graduates have the opportunity to continue their professional activity in preschool educational institutions after their studies. Employers are interested in cooperation during students' internships in order to attract new professionals.

The dynamics of the number of students by study years shows (SAR, p. 181) the increase of student number from 52 in 2020-2021 till 137 in 2023-2024. Graduates of the study programme have the opportunity to work in public or private pre-school education institutions. On the average 72% of graduates from 2021-2022 till 2023-2024 academic years started or continued to be employed in pre-school education institutions, the rest part of the graduates continue their studies in the higher cycle of the study field "Education and pedagogy".

2.1.5. N/A

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

The title of the study programme and the professional qualification are interrelated. The aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements fell within the breadth of what could be expected from a professionally-oriented short-cycle higher education study programme. The study programme is monitored with the aim to update the parameters of the study programme in accordance with legal requirements and experts recommendations.

Strengths:

- 1) The study programme learning outcomes include public needs and needs of the educational system in terms of the development of general competencies or transversal skills that would help the person to adapt to the ever-changing society and labor market needs and environment and would promote change and development in the educational ecosystem.
- 2) Increasing number of students.
- 3) Demand of the graduates within the educational system of the country and employment rates.

Weaknesses: not identified

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1.

The content of the short-cycle study programme "Pre-school Teacher" is relevant and complimentary, it reflects the development trends in the education and ensures training of specialists, which are in demand by the permanent development of educational system in Latvia, as well as global trends, which point out the increase of teachers who apply not only innovative and multidisciplinary teaching and learning approaches, but also have an understanding of the goals of sustainable education and sustainable development of professional competence.

The compulsory content of the study programme consists of (SAR, p. 182):

- Courses that provide an understanding of studies and the integration of the content of the study courses (general education and business professional competence-building study courses) - 33 ECTS;
- Courses providing professional competences (theoretical and professional specialisation courses) - 54 ECTS;

- Internships - 24 ECTS;
- State examination (qualification work) - 12 ECTS;
- Free elective courses - 3 ECTS.

The content of the short-cycle study programme "Pre-school Teacher" also complies with the Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers of September 11, 2018 No. 569 "Regulations on education and professional qualifications necessary for pedagogues and procedures for improving the professional competence of pedagogues" in terms of teacher's education and professional qualification requirements. It provides studies based on the theory and practice of educational sciences for the acquisition of professional qualification.

The structure and courses of the study programme meet the needs of Latvian education system by promoting employability of graduates through the integration of theory and practice and through the promotion of multidisciplinary competencies and skills, it runs as a common thread of the study programme through all its courses. Therefore, the expert panel can agree with the statement that: "The choice, content and scope of study courses, as well as the content of internships relevant to the qualification to be obtained, are aligned with the Teaching Profession Standard (2020). The study content of the study programme is structured sequentially into study courses and practices, which ensure the gradual acquisition of competence, and is directed towards the fulfillment of study outcomes and the integration of students' theoretical and practical experience" (SAR, p. 182).

Study courses of the study programme complements professional pedagogical education with the knowledge and understanding in the field of law („Legal aspects of the pedagogical process”), political and public administration sciences („Introduction to education for sustainable development”; „State, civil and environmental Protection”), psychology („Psychology for teachers”), management („Educational management”, „Entrepreneurship and project development”, „Organisation and management of preschool pedagogical process”), etc. and reflects the mission of higher education in general. However, some content of study courses needs improvement and is overlapping with other courses content, e.g. the content of study course „Educational management” must be developed in accordance with the fundamentals of management science and must be structured in accordance with the basic functions of management: planning, organizing, motivating staff and controlling the activities of the educational organization. Moreover, the topic on „Education project management” overlaps with the study course „Entrepreneurship and project development”, the topic on „Education project management” should be moved to the content of study course „Entrepreneurship and project development”. Instead of this topic the content of the „Educational management” course must encompass lectures and seminars of the planning function of the management of education (use of PEST, SWOT, and other management tools). Another study course which needs considerable changes is „Entrepreneurship and project development”, this course is characterized by an eclectic content, indicated learning outcomes are impossible to be achieved within the course (e.g., „Is able to design and implement various types of current projects in the field of education in line with social demand”); title of the course is misleading, content is not proportional (only 2 topics out of 7 are dedicated for project management).

Professional specialization courses are designed in accordance with the curriculum areas developed by the project "Competence Approach to Curriculum" (School 2030): language, social and civic, cultural awareness and self-expression in art, technology, natural sciences, mathematics, health and physical activity (Cabinet Regulation No 716; in Latvian only: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/303371>) (SAR, p. 183).

The internships and their content are planned in accordance with Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 305 (in Latvian only: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/342818>) and are linked to the study courses, which are

sequenced in the study plan according to the internships (SAR, p. 183).

In general, it can be stated that the content of the study courses, the internships, and the final thesis are interconnected and complementary, corresponds to the objectives of the study programme as well as meets the needs of the educational system and scientific trends. Ensurance of the achievement of some learning outcomes must be improved, also there is no international dimension within the study programme in terms of English taught subjects, international students, visiting professors from foreign countries in the short-cycle study programme "Pre-school Teacher".

2.2.2.

N/A

2.2.3.

According to the descriptions of the study courses (SAR annex 3.1.2) there is a vast variety of teaching and learning methods (e.g. individual and group work, individual and group consultations, presentations of results, project work, situation simulations, field trips, discussions, etc.) and assessment methods (e.g. tests, oral and written exams, group work, presentation, independent work, and other forms of assessment available in the e-learning environment Moodle, etc.) used in the study process, which contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the courses and the study programme, taking into account the principles of student-centered teaching and learning, e.g. meeting with students revealed that at the beginning of each course, the teacher explains the purpose and learning outcomes of the course; there is a strong focus on interactive learning methods to work with others, brainstorm, discuss, play roles, make decisions and undertake responsibility; teaching staff consults with students on their satisfaction, expectations and evaluation of the quality of studies. Discussions with the representatives of students and teaching staff during the site visit confirmed that students are engaged in the discussions during the lectures and seminars; guest lectures from educational institutions bring the case studies and involve students in practical problem solving, including research work. Students pointed out that the development of students' practical skills is the streaming line within the study programme „Preschool teacher“.

The procedure for assessment of students' knowledge, skills and competences at DU is determined by the "Regulations on Studies at Daugavpils University" (approved on 03.04.2024, Minutes No.5) (SAR annex 1.2.), complying with the basic principles and procedures for assessment of education at the respective study level defined in the Cabinet of Ministers' regulations. The content and number of mid-term examinations is appropriate to the scope of the course of study and allow the quality of the content to be assessed using a variety of assessment methods (essays, mind maps, infographics, presentations, tests, practical work, etc.). Overall, the content and volume of examinations correspond to the content of the study course curricula and make it possible to check the level of achievement of knowledge and skills of students.

Teaching and learning is organized in accordance of student-centered approach (SAR, p. 186): there is constant reflection, providing students with immediate feedback and support in the study process; respect to the needs of each student and diversity of students (different learning styles, different requirements, interests, experience, previous knowledge), individualizing and differentiating the study process, offering different forms of studies, including using the e-learning environment Moodle and on-line sessions. Discussions with student representatives during the site visit revealed existing continuous cooperation between students and academic staff, ensuring communication during the study process and supporting students' individual needs, especially those who are employed at educational institutions and / or reside not in the Daugavpils.

2.2.4.

The internship is carried out in accordance with DU Regulations on Studies and DU document "Practice regulations of the short-cycle professional higher education study program "Preschool Teacher"" and are planned in accordance with Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 305 (SAR, p. 187). Internships are a compulsory part of the short-cycle professional higher education study programme "Preschool Teacher" and contribute to the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study programme. In total there are 3 internships carried out during the study period (SAR, p. 188): 1) Pre-school Education Practice (3 ECTS); 2) Early Childhood Pedagogical Practice (9 ECTS); 3) Preschool Teacher Pedagogical Practice (12 ECTS), in total it takes 24 ECTS. Internships are linked to the study courses, which are sequenced in the study plan according to the internships. For example, the content of the study courses "Fundamentals of Teacher's Professional Activity", "Childhood Pedagogy", "Psychology for Teachers", etc. is designed with an emphasis on understanding the guidelines of the field of educational sciences, pedagogy and psychology (SAR, p. 189). Internships ensure the development of students' knowledge, skills and competence in accordance with the objectives of the study programme and the real needs of the pre-school educational institutions.

DU has concluded agreements of intent for an indefinite period with the municipalities of Daugavpils City, Augšdaugava County, Preiļi County, Dagdas County, Rzekne County, Līvāni County, Balvi County, Ludza County, Jekabpils City, etc., which provides internships for many students and some of them turns into their first workplaces. The internship may be carried out in public and private pre-school and general education institutions implementing pre-school education programmes. Students are informed by the director of the study programme about the conditions for choosing the most suitable internship placement, the internship organization procedure, internship tasks, their content, and the deadlines for the completion and submission of the internship report. Tripartite agreements are concluded between Daugavpils University, the educational institution providing the internship and the student (SAR, p. 188).

Within the reporting period of the short-cycle professional higher education study programme "Preschool Teacher" internships were carried out not only in Latvia. In the spring semester of the academic year 2023/2024, 8 students of the 1st year and 2 students of the 2nd year participated in the internship abroad in Lithuania (SAR, p. 189). Meetings and discussions with students and graduates during the site visit revealed their satisfaction with provided internships and the opportunity to apply the theoretical knowledge acquired during their studies in the work environment of a particular educational organization. Discussions with representatives of employers during the site visit have shown to experts that the knowledge and skills acquired by students meet the professional requirements and organizations' needs.

Special commendation goes for the management and coordination of internships of the study field "Education and Pedagogy", including preschool teachers' internships in kindergartens. Clear involvement of educational institutions, development of methods and quite visible united requirements in all study programmes of the study field "Education and Pedagogy" are great strengths of the study process.

The implementation of the aims and objectives of the internship ensures the transition from semi-independent professional activity to independent professional activity, as a result of which students' research, self-assessment and self-reflection skills are improved, as well as their skills to analyze the learning process and obtain research data for the development of a qualification thesis.

2.2.5.

N/A

2.2.6.

At the end of the short-cycle professional higher education study programme "Preschool Teacher", students develop qualification theses that address current issues in pre-school education: needs of pre-school education in the implementation of the competence approach in the curriculum - learning the content of learning areas, development or promotion of pervasive skills and habits based on values, social-emotional learning using methodological developments, diverse teaching and learning techniques, methods and approaches. Some of the qualification theses are concerned with promoting teacher-child cooperation, organizing the rhythm of the day and the learning environment, and digitizing the learning process. The qualification theses of the students of the study programme is evaluated by a national examination board consisting of the head of the board and at least four members of the board. The head of the board and half of its members are professionals in the field of education - employers or their representatives (SAR, p. 190).

As much as it can be concluded from a short study of the final thesis presented to the panel in the Library during the site visit it can be concluded that these are of high quality and generally comply with the provisions set forth in the regulatory enactments (DU Methodological guidelines for the preparation and defense of qualification theses). The average of the grades of the qualification theses within the reporting period is 8,84 (SAR, p. 190). However, it must be mentioned that some papers contained mostly books and very few publications in the bibliography; some others mainly Internet sources, some papers had only sources in Latvian language, some papers had many resources in Russian language.

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

The structure and content of the study programme's curriculum and its pedagogical approach correspond with the intended learning outcomes as well as is relevant to Latvian education system and the scientific trends. Short-cycle professional higher education study programme "Preschool Teacher" complies with the regulatory enactments of the Republic of Latvia. The teaching, learning and assessment approach applied is adequate to achieve learning outcomes. The diversity of students and their needs are respected, student-centered principles are taken into account. The internships are organized well and effective in achieving the aim of the study programme. The students' qualification theses are relevant to the study field "Education and Pedagogy" and correspond to the short-cycle professional study programme.

Strengths:

- 1) The content of the study courses is consistent with the type and level of the studies and reflects the latest achievements in science and technologies.
- 2) The organization of the study process ensures an excellent provision of the programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes.
- 3) The implementation of student-centered learning and teaching is highly ensured.
- 4) Cooperation with local and foreign education institutions for internships of students.

Weaknesses:

- 1) Learning outcomes of some study courses lack consistency with course content.
- 2) Weak international/intercultural dimension experienced by students at home within the course content of the study programme (lack of visiting foreign teaching staff, lack of interaction with international students).

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

programmes)

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1.

Outstanding technical resources, modern facilities, access to Library databases, labs for practical work strongly contributes to the achievement of learning outcomes of the short-cycle professional higher education study programme "Preschool Teacher" students and ensure the quality of education and research activities of students. The resources available (SAR, p. 191 - 192) to ensure the study process, including study rooms, material and technical resources, technical equipment (computers, video projectors, multifunctional devices), informational resources (Internet, intranet, Moodle, computer-based applications and software), databases (library network, free access to databases (database of books and scientific publications, including Web of Science and Scopus) allows student to learn all study courses provided in the study programme, conduct research within the framework of studies and qualification thesis and provide a flexible and student-oriented study environment (also see section 1.3. of this report).

At the DU library, students have access to professional study literature, which is updated every year. International databases (SAR, p. 192): Web of Science, EBSCO, SCOPUS, SCIENCE DIRECT, SpringerLink full-text journals and books are available to students. 2023-2024 in the study year, 14,788 units of information resources were available to students of the study programme "Preschool Teacher", of which 8,491 books, 6,133 serials and periodicals, 200 other publications. There are subscribed multidisciplinary e-resources, which include materials according to the specifics of the "Preschool Teacher" study programme (Preschool, School & Family, Parents, etc.). There are also several free access resources available (for example, 200 Free Kids Educational Resources, Free Download The Montessori Method's related books, Pedagogics; Primary resources, etc.), which students use when doing practical tasks, developing teaching and methodical materials, preparing for seminars within study courses and developing study and qualification works. The library also purposefully increases the share of e-resources and develops the remote access capabilities of e-resources to provide users with the opportunity to use information resources remotely.

DU laboratories of the Institute of Life Sciences and Technologies, the offered technical resources and computer classrooms are used to support the study process (SAR, p. 192), conducting practical lessons in the study courses "Research in education", "Organization and management of the preschool pedagogical process", "Basics of the teacher's professional activity", "Educational management", etc. In the laboratories, research works and experiments of the study course "Content and teaching approaches of natural sciences" are demonstrated and conducted. Students have access to a sports hall, a gymnasium, an indoor swimming pool, a wrestling hall, a gym with modern trainers, an athletics arena equipped with modern sports equipment, which are used in the study course "Health and physical activity content and learning approaches".

2.3.2. N/A

2.3.3.

Full-time studies of the short-cycle professional higher education study programme "Preschool Teacher" at DU are organized with the funds of the state budget, DU grants and funds contributed by the students themselves or other legal and natural persons. Part-time studies are paid for from the funds of private or legal persons, the tuition fee per year for part-time studies is 3274,34 euro (SAR, p. 195).

The minimum number of students per group to ensure the cost-effectiveness of the study programme is 11 students. Within the reporting period the number of admitted students range from 31 to 46 in full time studies and from 21 to 38 in part time studies. Almost 100% of students of the short-cycle professional higher education study programme "Preschool Teacher" were in state-funded places (SAR annex 3.1.4). This allows for stable financing of the full-time study programme. However, the data for the reporting period shows that part-time studies depend on the personal funding of students. The social partners (legal persons) should be encouraged to support part-time studies by granting scholarships or alike.

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

DU study provision, scientific provision, informative provision (including library), material and technical provision and funding are sufficient and adequate in view of the intended learning outcomes of the short-cycle professional higher education study programme "Pre-school Teacher".

Strengths:

- 1) The premises for studies, the teaching and learning equipment (material and technical, etc.) are outstanding both in their size and quality.
- 2) Both full-time and part-time study programmes have more than the minimum number of students to ensure the profitability of the study programme.

Weaknesses: not identified

Assessment of the requirement [6]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The on-site visit of the expert panel confirmed that the resources and provision of the short-cycle professional higher education study programme "Preschool Teacher" fully meet the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1.

During the reporting period 28 teaching staff were involved in the implementation of the study programme - 4 professors, 2 associate professors, 9 assistant professors, 3 senior researchers, 6 lecturers and 4 guest lecturers, 24 of whom were elected at Daugavpils University. 18 lecturers have doctoral degrees, 7 of them have doctoral degrees in psychology (Dr.psych.), 6 lecturers have doctoral degrees in pedagogy (Dr.paed.), 1 - doctoral degree in biology (Dr.biol.), 4 lecturers have

doctoral degrees in education (PhD.). 10 lecturers have a Master's degree in the field of their specialization (SAR, p. 195-196).

18 of the study programme's faculty members are experts in the social sciences, 9 of whom are experts in education, 8 in psychology, 3 in economics and entrepreneurship, 1 in sociology and social work, and 1 in other humanities and arts, including the creative industries (SAR, p. 196).

The qualification of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the short-cycle professional higher education study programme "Preschool Teacher" complies and exceeds (there are many teachers who hold doctoral degrees) the requirements (Article 39 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions) for the implementation of the the short-cycle professional higher education study programmes.

The teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programme improve their professional qualifications by participating in international conferences, seminars, internships, as well as by publishing their scientific research in journals and conference proceedings included in the Scopus and Web of Science databases.

Overall, the qualification of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the short-cycle professional higher education study programme "Preschool Teacher" is appropriate to the specifics of the study programme and the conditions for its implementation, as well as to the requirements of the regulatory enactments in the field of education and enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses, e.g. discussion with study programme director revealed that the teachers are elected for a period of 6 years, if they are struggling with delivering courses, they are advised to attend relevant trainings which can help them to improve with course delivery. However, during the site visit expert panel realized that the director and key teachers of the programme have to develop and master their English language to increase international dimension of the study programme, also there is no evidence of the teaching staff participation in the international and national research projects.

2.4.2.

Reported staff changes in the SAR (p. 197) show that the teaching quality of subjects, coordination of the internships and supervision of students' works did not suffer as a result of the new teachers' appropriate qualification, involvement in research and vast professional experience in the educational institutions. Meetings with the Head of study field "Education and pedagogy" and directors of the study programmes revealed that measures are taken to ensure that changes in the composition of the teaching staff do not negatively affect the quality of the implementation of the study programme, e.g., competent teaching staff from other universities are contracted to deliver the courses.

2.4.3. N/A

2.4.4.

The materials provided by DU (List of publications (see SAR annex 2.2.4. List of publications.pdf), CVs of academic staff (see SAR annex CV_ENG.zip) and the document "Compilation of quantitative data on the scientific/applied research of the academic staff involved in the implementation of the study direction "Education and pedagogy" 2018-2023" (see SAR annex 2.4.4. Quantitative data on scientific work)), states that in total during the reporting period more than 115 studies were published in the Scopus and Web of Science databases, as well as more than 40 publications indexed in other journals and confirms that teaching staff who is teaching in the short-cycle

professional higher education study programme "Preschool Teacher" have necessary amount of publications published in peer-reviewed editions, including international editions.

Also, teaching staff of the short-cycle professional higher education study programme "Preschool Teacher" in addition to their academic work at DU have accumulated extensive practical experience working for several years in preschool educational institutions, thus ensuring the unity of theory and practice in the study process (SAR, p. 196).

18 of the short-cycle professional higher education study programme "Preschool Teacher" faculty members are experts in the social sciences, 9 of whom are experts in education, 8 in psychology, 3 in economics and entrepreneurship, 1 in sociology and social work, and 1 in other humanities and arts, including the creative industries (SAR, p. 196).

2.4.5.

DU has a mechanism for teachers to cooperate with each other, which facilitates the improvement and interconnection of study courses of the short-cycle professional higher education study programme "Preschool Teacher". The study programme faculty members cooperate in planning the content of study courses, as well as in implementing and updating the content of study courses. Teaching staff also collaborate within research groups, proposing ideas for qualification thesis topics, programme and study course development. Teaching staff is also represented in the Study Programme Board, participating in the evaluation and development of the study programme (SAR, p. 198).

Meetings and discussions with teaching staff during the site visit revealed that during the implementation of the courses, there are regular meetings of the teachers, where they exchange experience on the topics of the courses, as well as develop and improve the study content by mutually agreeing on the topics, focuses, responsibilities and compliance with regulatory requirements. By periodically discussing and revising the content of the study courses, thematically coordinated and complementary acquisition of the study programme is achieved. However, the cooperation of teaching staff should be increased to avoid overlapping of topics in different courses (e.g., „Educational management“, „Entrepreneurship and project development“) within the study programme.

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

The qualifications and professional experience of the teaching staff, scientific publications, and measures taken to ensure that changes in the composition of the teaching staff do not negatively affect the quality of the implementation of the study programme are adequate to ensure learning outcomes of the short-cycle professional higher education study programme "Preschool Teacher".

Strengths:

- 1) The study programme is delivered by the teaching staff exceeding national legal requirements for the short-cycle professional higher education study programmes.
- 2) Teaching staff turnover is able to ensure an excellent provision of the study programme.

Weaknesses: Not identified

Assessment of the requirement [7]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Provided data and discussions with the teaching staff during the site visit confirmed that the qualitative composition of the academic staff involved in the implementation of the short-cycle professional higher education study programme "Preschool Teacher" complies and exceeds the requirements of the Law on Higher Education Institutions and other normative acts.

2.5. Assessment of the Compliance

Requirements

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The content of the study programme is designed according to the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 305 of 13 June 2023 "Regulations on the State Standard of Professional Higher Education", the compliance confirmed by SAR Annex 3.2.1. Compliance with National standart_Preschool teacher.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The study programme leads to the professional qualification of the teacher, which corresponds to level 5 of the Latvian Professional Qualifications (5.PKL), level 5 of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (5.LQF) (<https://www.nki-latvija.lv/en/lqf>) and level 5 of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF 5) (in Latvian only):

http://www.nki-latvija.lv/content/files/EKI-limenu-apraksti_1.pdf

The study programme content complies with Professional standard "Teacher" (2020).

<https://registri.visc.gov.lv/profizglitiba/dokumenti/standarti/2017/PS-138.pdf>. The compliance is also confirmed in annexes 3.2.1.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The descriptions of study courses and the study materials are prepared in Latvian – the language in which the study programme is being implemented. The description complies to and contains all the information according to regulation requirements set forth in Section 56.1, Paragraph two and Section 56.2, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme complies with requirements confirmed by SAR Annex 3.1.2. Diploma and supplement_Preschool teacher. Also, awarded diploma complies with Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 202 "Procedure for Issuing State Recognised Higher Education Documents" <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/256157-kartiba-kada-izsniedz-valsts-atzitus-augstako-izglitiba-apliecinosus-dokumentus>

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Teaching staff proficiency in the official Latvian language is confirmed by SAR annexes "2.3.7. Overview of teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study field "Education and pedagogy"" and "STATEMENT National language skills.docx".

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The samples of study agreements attached to the SAR (annex 2.1.4. Agreement on Studies) comply with Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 70 "Mandatory provisions in the study agreement" <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/152072-studiju-liguma-obligati-ietveramie-noteikumi>

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Confirmed by SAR annex 2.1.4. Cooperation agreements, in case that DU suspends implementation of the short cycle professional higher education study programme "Preschool Teacher", University of Latvia undertakes to provide opportunities to continue studies in the short cycle professional higher education study programme "Preschool Teacher" (41.)

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Confirmed by SAR annex named CONFIRMATION compensation guarantee for students.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Compliance of the short-cycle professional higher education study programme "Preschool Teacher" with other regulations is confirmed by SAR annex 3.2.1. Compliance with MK not_569_Preschool teacher.docx where compliance with Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers of September 11, 2018 No. 569 "Regulations on education and professional qualifications necessary for pedagogues and procedures for improving the professional competence of pedagogues".

Assessment of the requirement [8]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The evidence in SAR and its annexes, confirmed by the interviews, observations, and the analysis of the documents presented to the panel during the the visit confirms that the short-cycle professional higher education study programme "Preschool Teacher" complies with the requirements set forth in the Law on Higher Education Institutions and other regulatory enactments of the Republic of Latvia.

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

The short-cycle professional higher education study programme "Preschool Teacher" fulfills the requirements corresponding to the study programme of short-cycle and is possible to be implemented in all declared full-time and part-time implementation options in Latvian language in Daugavpils. The most important improvements should be made in some subjects' to ensure consistency of learning outcomes with the content of the subject; international/intercultural dimension should be embedded into the study programme to enrich the experience of students with international approach. The following are the main strengths of study programme "Preschool

Teacher": the study programme learning outcomes include public needs and needs of the educational system in terms of the development of general competencies or transversal skills that would help the person to adapt to the ever-changing society and labor market needs and environment and would promote change and development in the educational ecosystem; high demand of the graduates within the educational system of the country and employment rates; cooperation with local and foreign education institutions for internships of student; both full-time and part-time implementation options have more than the minimum number of students to ensure the profitability of the study programme; the programme is delivered by the teaching staff exceeding national legal requirements for the short-cycle professional higher education study programmes.

Evaluation of the study programme "Preschool Teacher"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Excellent

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Preschool Teacher"

Short-term recommendations

1) Review and improve the content of study subjects by ensuring a logical connection between the intended learning outcomes and the topics set for their achievement, the time allocated to the topics and proportionality to the corresponding learning outcomes by the beginning of next 2025-2026 academic year.

2) Draft, approve and implement the action plan with measurable indicators for the promotion of internationalization within the study programme focusing on the internationalization at home for the working students (summer schools; visiting foreign lecturers and researchers; blended intensive mobility; online mobility; bilateral, multilateral agreements on short internships abroad, etc.) by the beginning of next 2025-2026 academic year.

Long-term recommendations

II - "Teacher" ASSESSMENT

II - "Teacher" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1.

The aim of the study field "Education and Pedagogy" is to prepare highly qualified, competent, excellence-oriented teachers in the field of education throughout Latvia, providing them with appropriate knowledge, skills and competences in accordance with EU requirements, using the results of fundamental and practical research in education science. (SAR p. 15). One of the tasks of the study field is related to the direction and development of DU: "to prepare teachers who will be agents of sustainable change and activists in the local community, building a Latvian and European society open to change, based on theoretical knowledge and the acquisition of fundamental, applied research skills." (SAR p.17). Based on the study programme's goal "To provide professional bachelor's studies in teacher education, promoting the development of the teacher's general and

professional competence in accordance with the professional standard "Teacher" in the fields of study chosen by the student." as well as based on the strategic view (see DU vision) "DU functions as an excellence centre in the fields of mathematics, physics, nano-materials, material engineering, biology, regional studies, literature, art, and education science", experts have acknowledged that there is a compliance of the first-cycle professional higher education bachelor's study programme "Teacher" with the study field "Education and pedagogy".

During the site visit in the meetings with the DU management representatives and employers it was possible to detect that stakeholders are equally interested in continuing the tradition of teacher education in DU as regional higher education institution ensuring the demand for teachers who "are prepared to implement a paradigmatic change of approach from information transfer to competence acquisition, based on the guidelines of the ESF project "Competence approach in learning content" and the State Educational Content Center's initiative Skola2030". It is stated in the Self Assessment Report (see p. 15) that "Teacher training has been carried out at DU for more than a hundred years, producing intelligent, educated and civically active education professionals in close correlation with the development of research and science in Latvia and the world." Experts acknowledge this as a positive aspect that also on the level of local political strategic documentation education is highlighted as an important factor: "The Daugavpils City General Education Strategy 2018-2025 outlines measures aimed at achieving the highest possible level of education quality at all stages of education: pre-school, primary, secondary, interest education, inclusive education and adult education." (SAR p.16).

SAR Annex 3.2.1.1. represents that the first-cycle professional higher education bachelor's study programme "Teacher" is developed in compliance with the Cabinet Regulation of 13 June 2023 No. 305 "Regulations on the State Standard for Higher Vocational Education" as well as with the Standard of the teaching profession (2020) (SAR Annex 3.2.1.2.) and Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers of September 11, 2018 No. 569 "Regulations on education and professional qualifications required for pedagogues and procedures for improving the professional competence of pedagogues" (SAR Annex 3.2.1.).

2.1.2.

The title of the study programme and the professional qualification complies with the requirements in listed regulations: MK no. 305 (13.06.2023.) "Regulations on the standard of state professional higher education", MK regulations no. 322 (13.06.2017.) "Rules on Latvian education classification", Teacher profession standard (agreed on by the tripartite cooperation sub-council for professional education and employment on 12.06.2020. The professional qualification of the assigned teacher corresponds to the 6th level of the Latvian professional qualification (6. PKL), the 6th level of the framework structure of Latvian qualifications (6. LKI)

The classification code 42141 of the professional bachelor's study programme "Teacher" is as well in accordance with MK regulations no. 322 "Rules on Latvian education classification": "42" - "First cycle (second level) professional higher education (sixth level professional qualification and professional bachelor's degree), applicable after general or vocational secondary education; "141" - "Teacher Education") (SAR p.306).

The duration of full-time studies is four years, part-time studies - four years and six months. (SAR Annex "Application for evaluation of the study direction Education and Pedagogy").

The implementation language of the study programme is Latvian which is reasonable as the area of pedagogy is based on national specificity although the study programme would attract more

international students and there would be more opportunities for internationalization of the study programme if at least part of it was implemented in English.

The goal of the study programme is focussing on the teacher education which promotes the development of the teacher's general and professional competence respecting the specific choice student makes out of the many possibilities of specialization offered. The corresponding tasks are focussed on the requirements of the labor market; ability to integrate the content of educational sciences and learning areas into practice; research competence development offering the further education possibilities in master's level in Latvia and abroad, presuming the ongoing improvement of professional skills. (SAR, p.302).

The learning outcomes - knowledge, skills and competences - as it is stated in the SAR are interrelated with the goal and tasks described above. It is recognised in the SAR, that "The achievable results of the study program are formulated in accordance with the European qualifications framework (EKI) and the 6th level of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (LKI) and the standard of the teaching profession".

The admission requirements for applicants are - secondary education and entrance exam, taking into account a successful assessment in the centralized exams (CE) in Latvian, the first foreign language, mathematics, the average assessment in profiling subjects (e.g., social and civics teacher: year grade in Latvian and world history or social studies and history; English teacher: year mark in English), which must be no lower than 7 points, except, if the CE has been taken in this subject and a passing grade has been obtained. The total amount of points in the competition is formed in accordance with the specified formula. It is appreciated that there are specified rules for persons who received secondary education up to 2004 (not including), in foreign countries or persons with special needs, this ensures the possibility for every possible applicant to participate in the competition.

It is stated in the SAR that "The admission criteria for the study programme are designed to reveal the applicant's vision of the reasons for choosing the teaching profession, professional motivation, the teacher's mission and professional activities, the ability to discuss current events in education and society", which includes 2 extra parts in the entrance exam - in written and oral forms. This practice is recognised by experts as a personalized and individualized approach. During the oral part of the examination the study programme's choice is discussed as well as previous learning experience; current events in education and culture; readiness for studies.

Extra points are given to Latvian Republic and international Olympiads 1-3 place winners, students scientific and creative work competition laureates and other type of excellences in accordance with the chosen study direction (e.g., "Junior Achievement - Young Enterprise Latvia" competition winners - if the sub-program "Social knowledge and history" is chosen.).

There is an approved procedure and criteria for the admission requirements elaborated - The admission rules at Daugavpils University available on the website of DU.

2.1.3.

It is stated in the SAR that during the reporting period, since the inclusion of the first-cycle professional higher education bachelor's study programme "Teacher" in the accreditation page of the study field (included on June 7, 2023, decision No. 2023/03-SPI), the following changes were made to the parameters of the study programme:

- The name - "First cycle professional higher education" is used - based on the regulations of the

Cabinet of Ministers of June 13, 2023 No. 305 "Regulations on the standard of state professional higher education".

- Structural changes within the DU - the place of implementation of the study programme now is - "Daugavpils University Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences" (Daugavpils, Vienības iela 13, Parādes iela 1).
- The number of credit points - in some study courses was revised, but the scope of the study programme was not changed.

There are no objections against these changes which are reasonable and justified.

There has been a transition implemented from the Latvian CP system to the ECTS system based on the DU Rector's order on the transition to ECTS. In full-time studies, 1 Latvian credit point (CP) corresponds to 40 academic hours, of which 16 hours are contact hours, while 1 ECTS corresponds to 26.7 academic hours, of which 10.7 are contact hours, which is 40% of the intended amount. The remaining part of the amount of study work is the student's independent work (SAR p. 216).

2.1.4.

It is a well-known fact that Latvia is experiencing an enormous lack of teachers for basic and secondary education, and it was acknowledged as the problem of the Latgale region during the meeting with the representative of the Educational Content Department of the Daugavpils Board of Education. That is one of the reasons why the study programme "Teacher" is justified by the goal of the education policy of the Republic of Latvia, updated in the "Education Development Guidelines 2021-2027" (22.06.2021) and which is based on "a modern, high-quality educational offer oriented towards the development of skills highly valued in the labor market" (SAR chapter 3.1.3.). It was acknowledged during the meeting with the employers - principals of the local schools - that the average age of the teachers in the labor market is 48-50 years, there is no competition for the position to become a teacher at schools. One of the necessities schools are experiencing - teachers with ability to work with students with special needs (there is a course of 6 ECTS "Inclusive and special education" Part A, see SAR Annex 3.2.1.), teachers of foreign languages to substitute Russian language as the second foreign language in basic education starting from the study year 2026./2027. There is a specialization of German language teachers in the Study Programme, but there are no students during the reporting period who would have chosen this specialization (see SAR Annex 3.1.4. Statistical data on students in the professional bachelor's study programme "Teacher" (42141)), so the problem is not going to be solved within the next forthcoming three years. Thinking about the future development of the Study Programme, experts foresee there is a niche open for new specializations of other European languages to widen the opportunities to choose from.

As it is stated in the SAR - "during the reporting period, the number of students in the "Teacher" study programme has remained relatively stable" (SAR subchapter 3.1.4. and Annex 3.1.4. Statistical data on students in the professional bachelor's study programme "Teacher" (442141)) - 52 students (Full and Part time) in study year 2021./2022., 64 students (Full and Part time) in study year 2022./2023., 66 students (Full and Part time) in study year 2023./2024. with a positive tendency.

It is clearly visible that there is a demand for budget funding as the proportion of students studying for personal funding is decreasing: 27 budget funded students vs 25 personally funded students in study year 2021./2022, 52 budget funded students vs 12 personally funded students in study year 2022./2023. and 55 budget funded students vs 11 personally funded students in study year 2023./2024. (SAR Annex 3.1.4.).

It is specified in the SAR that in April of study year 2022/2023, due to the closure of professional bachelor study programme "Teacher" (D139B), 16 students were re-registered in the study programme for full-time studies for the 6th semester, 7 students for part-time studies for the 6th semester, 14 students for part-time studies for the 8th semester in the specialization "Health and Physical activity". In June of study year 2022/2023, due to the closure of the professional bachelor study programme "Music", 3 students were re-registered in the program for full-time studies in the specialization "Music".

When analyzing the number of admitted students by specialization, experts have discovered that the most popular specialization in this study programme is - "Health and physical activity" (82 CP): 43 students (Full and Part time) in study year 2021./2022., 47 students (Full and Part time) in study year 2022./2023., and 52 students (Full and Part time) in study year 2023./2024. There are 12 students studying in the specialization "Mathematics" (82 CP) (admitted in the period of 3 study years from 2021./2022 till 2023./2024.), 5 students studying in the specialization "Computing (50 CP) and Mathematics (CP)", 9 students studying in the specialization "Design and Technology (50 CP) and Computing (32 CP)". It means 26 students till now are going to be a support for the STEM area study subjects after the graduation. There are 7 students studying in the specialization "Music" (82 CP) and 7 students studying in the specialization "Latvian Language and Literature" (82 CP).

So there are no students matriculated in the specializations "Social and Civic Field" (82 CP) , "English Language" (50 or 32 CP), "Physics" (50 CP), "Biology" (50 or 32 CP), "Chemistry" (50 CP), "Geography" (50 CP), "Field of Natural Sciences" (32 CP) and "German Language" (32 CP).

It is unfortunate that there are no students studying in the area of natural sciences as there is a great technological potential and great investment in the research infrastructure in DU as it was visible during the tour of the facilities. It is widely recognised that there is a lack of teachers of Biology, Physics, Chemistry not just in the Latgale region but throughout Latvia. DU has admitted this as a problem and plans to "offer a wider range of informative events to introduce potential students to the offered specializations, such as scientific events (conferences, seminars), Open Door Days, within the framework of which students of the program conduct educational and attractive activities for all interested parties and introduce the program content and specifics, Informative days and exhibitions, Scientists' night, where students lead various creative workshops and master classes, etc." (SAR subchapter 3.1.4.)

Experts agree based on their knowledge to the opinion expressed in the SAR and supported during the meeting with employers that in order to support students living in cities and counties and increase the number of future teachers, many municipalities offer students municipal scholarships based on high success rates, appointing the need for specific specializations.

During the reporting period, there is a dropout of students - 45 students, of which 34 are full-time students and 11 are part-time students. The reasons researched are: the employment of students, (it was discussed during the meeting with students (full-time students choose to start working at the end of the first year of study, combining them with studies), family circumstances, health problems, financial difficulties. It was discussed during the meetings with the Study Programme director, students and graduates that to reduce student dropout, students are offered support in the study process, including individual counseling, lecture planning, and individual consultations. Overall conclusion is that the support system works well as almost every student is already combining the studies and the work.

It is stated in the SAR, that "DU also operates the Social Support Programme of the Student Council

(SP), within the framework of which successful full-time students have the opportunity to receive a discount on the rent of the service hotel”.

There are 12 graduates till now in the Study Programme who graduated in the winter of study year 2023./2024.

2.1.5. N/A

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

Based on the analysis of the documentation and meetings during the visit, experts have agreed that there is a compliance of the first-cycle professional higher education bachelor's study programme "Teacher" with the study field "Education and Pedagogy". The title of the study programme, the classification code, the professional qualification, the bachelor's degree complies with the defined scientific field name and qualification requirements in the obligatory regulations. The title of the study programme, the classification code, the professional qualification complies with the defined scientific field name and qualification requirements in the obligatory regulations. The learning outcomes - knowledge, skills and competences - are interrelated with the goal and tasks. The implementation language of the study programme is Latvian and it is reasonable although more opportunities for internationalization of the study programme (by implementing part of the study programme in English) would attract more international students to the study field.

There is an approved procedure and criteria for the admission requirements elaborated. It is appreciated that there are specified rules for persons who received secondary education up to 2004 (not including), in foreign countries or persons with special needs, this ensures the possibility for every possible applicant to participate in the competition.

The corrections made to the study programme's parameters within the assessment of the study field are justified and supported by experts.

It was acknowledged during the meeting with the employers that the average age of the teachers in the labor market in Latgale region is 48-50 years, and there is no competition for the position to become a teacher at schools, that is why the first-cycle professional higher education study programme "Teacher" is highly appreciated as the solution to overcome the crisis in the job market.

Strengths:

- 1) Stakeholders are equally interested in continuing the tradition of teacher education in DU as a regional higher education institution ensuring the demand for highly qualified teachers.
- 2) Written and oral forms of entrance exams provide DU with the opportunity to recognise the individual needs and motivation of the future student.
- 3) The number of students in the study programme has remained stable and slightly increased.
- 4) The specialization "Health and physical activity" (82 KP) has been the most popular among students and plays the leading role in the sense of providing the job market with prospective students of Sports.

Weaknesses:

- 1) The level of internationalization of the study programme is minor.
- 2) There are no students in specialization "The German teacher" (32 CP) although there is a high demand for teachers of the second foreign language to substitute Russian. As well there are no students matriculated in the specializations "Social and Civic Field" (82 CP), "English Language" (50 or 32 CP), "Physics" (50 CP), "Biology" (50 CP), "Chemistry" (50 CP), "Geography" (50 CP), "Field of Natural Sciences" (32 CP).

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1.

Analyzing the content of the study Programme (SAR Annex 3.2.1. study plan) it is possible to see that teacher education which corresponds to the demands of latest changes in the study content in relation to the concept “Skola 2030” is implemented. As this is stated in the SAR (SAR chapter 3.2.) “the programme corresponds to the principle of flexibility - the programme is designed in such a way that the students obtain an extended qualification that will allow them to implement full-time work”.

It is important from the perspective of the job market to equip future teachers with the competence and diploma to allow them to work a full workload at one educational institution without a necessity to work at several schools to collect the necessary number of work hours.

There are 5 specializations of 82 CP/123 ECTS included: Mathematics teacher (Area of study: Mathematics), Social and civics teacher (Area of study: Social and Civic), Latvian language and literature teacher (Area of study: Language), Music teacher (Area of study: Cultural understanding and self-expression in art), Health and physical activity teacher (Area of study: Health and physical activity). In part-time face-to-face studies, the specialization of Music teacher (the field of Cultural understanding and self-expression in art) is not implemented.

There are 8 specializations of 50 CP/75 ECTS included: Biology teacher, Physics teacher, Chemistry teacher, Geography teacher (Area of study: Natural sciences), Mathematics teacher (Area of study: Mathematics), Computer teacher, Design and technology teacher (Area of study: Technology), English language teacher (Area of study: Language).

There are 7 specializations of 32 CP/48 ECTS included: Biology teacher, Nature science teacher (nature science and physics or chemistry or geography teacher) (Area of study: Natural sciences), Mathematics teacher (Area of study: Mathematics), Computer teacher, Design and technology teacher (Area of study: Technology), English language teacher, German language teacher (Area of study: Language).

There is a choice offered for the students to choose whether they want to acquire the study content at basic education level or general secondary education level, e.g., students can choose combinations of specialization in Mathematics 82 CP/123 ECTS (there are 7 students who have chosen this specialization (see SAR Annex ANNEX 3.1.4. student statistics)) or Mathematics 32 CP/48 ECTS in combination with Computing (50 CP/75 ECTS) (there are 5 students who have chosen these two specializations (SAR Annex ANNEX 3.1.4. student statistics)).

As stated in the SAR, students in field specializations can learn the content and methodology of one or more subjects.

By learning the content of 82 CP/123 ECTS and 50 CP/75 ECTS specializations students acquire the competence to teach the content learned in the specialization at the general level (basic school), optimal and highest level (secondary school) according to the national general secondary education standard; while learning 32 CP/48 ECTS gives the competence to teach at the general level according to the national basic education standard.

If analyzing the structure of the study programme, one can come to a conclusion that the content of the study programme consists of study courses in the amount of 160 CP/240 ECTS and that is in

compliance with the National Education Standard. The content of the study programme does not differ in full-time and part-time studies. The amount of CP/ECTS per semester and number of academic hours per week are planned in accordance with the state regulations, as stated in the SAR: "Full-time face-to-face studies - 20 CP/30 ECTS per semester and no less than 40 academic hours per week are planned. In part-time face-to-face studies, 18-19 CP ECTS per semester and less than 40 academic hours per week are planned." (SAR p. 315).

The common part (Part A) for all students of the study programme is 72 CP/108 ECTS (SAR Annex 3.2.1.), which consists of:

- General educational study courses in the amount of 20 CP/30 ECTS, including the Business professional competence building courses (6 CP/9 ECTS in total), State, civil and environmental protection course (2 CP/3 ECTS), An introduction to education for sustainability for development (2 CP/3 ECTS), Information technology in education (4 CP/6 ECTS)) and which contribute to the implementation of the standard of the teaching profession in accordance with the professional knowledge, skills and competences necessary for the performance of professional activity tasks.
- Theoretical basic courses and information technology courses of the industry in the amount of 20 CP/30 ECTS. Experts highly value the fact that the study course "Social-emotional learning" (2 CP/3 ECTS) is included in the A Part as well as Management of class work (2 CP/3 ECTS) and Inclusive and special education (4 CP/6 ECTS), ensuring a continuous connection with the work environment and topical needs of the job market as acknowledged during the meeting with the employers, "which ensures the acquisition of professional knowledge, development of skills and improvement of competence necessary for the performance of professional tasks provided for in the standard of the teaching profession, and the acquisition of a bachelor's degree in teacher education" (as stated in the SAR, p.316).
- Practice of professional qualification in the amount of 20 CP/30 ECTS, consisting of 5 parts (SAR Annex 3.2.4.1.). The practice regulations have been prepared in accordance with the following regulatory documents: Regulations about Country professional the highest of education standard (MK 13.06.2023. regulations No. 305), Regulations on studies at DU (approved at the DU Senate meeting on 03.04.2024, protocol No. 5), The standard of the teaching profession (agreed Professional of education and employment tripartite cooperation sub-councils 2020 year at the June 12 meeting, protocol No. 5) and corresponding descriptions of practice study courses. Experts agree upon conclusion that the tasks included in each type of a practice (Teacher practice I (Observation of the learning process and identification of the physical and e-environment of the educational institution) – 2 CP/3 ECTS; Teacher practice II (Practice of managing classroom work) – 2 CP/3 ECTS; Teacher practice III (Teaching and class work planning and (selected field subject) management practice in primary education) – 6 CP/9 ECTS; Teacher's practice IV (Practice of organizing the learning process at the basic and optimal level) - 6 CP/9 ECTS; Teacher practice V (Interdisciplinary and research teaching practice) – 4 CP/6 ECTS) are consistent, contextual and successive.
- State examination: bachelor's thesis of 10 CP/15 ECTS and qualification exam - 2 CP/3 ECTS.
- Free choice study courses in the amount of 6 CP/9 ECTS.

Research competence of the future teachers is enhanced with the help of several types of activities: theoretical course "Research in education" (4 CP/6 ECTS); elaboration of Term papers (I and II) in Part A (in total 4 CP/6 ECTS); Term paper III (Limited Elective Courses) (2 CP/3 ECTS) for specializations of 82 CP/123 ECTS and 50 CP/75 ECTS; Development of bachelor thesis (I and II) in part State Examination (10 CP/15 ECTS in total).

Researching the content of study course descriptions (SAR Annex 3.1.2.) experts agree that "the content and expected results of the study program are oriented towards professionalism, competence acquisition and sustainability, as well as the ability to carry out research activities.

During the site visit in the meeting with the graduates it was discussed what type of competences, specific skills or knowledge was missing after they graduated and became certified teachers. Graduates admitted that deeper insight in the electronic journal E-klase or MyKoob would be appreciated, as well as more time spent on cooperation skills's development with parents. When asked, students admitted that only some of them had used the opportunities of ERASMUS mobility.

As it is stated in the SAR, "The study programme is considered completed if the student has completed all the study courses provided for in the study programme, defended the teacher's practices, as well as developed and presented his bachelor's thesis (10 KP/15 ECTS) and passed the qualification exam (2 KP/3 ECTS) to the state examination commission". The evaluation of study results is determined by the evaluation criteria and examination forms specified in the study courses (SAR Annex 3.1.2.).

During the conversation with students they acknowledged that teaching staff is inspiring them to continue their studies in the academic master's study programme "Education Sciences" or additionally study higher-level study courses or content in another field of study after they graduate.

It was asked during the meetings with the different target groups how the content of the study programme ensures the student's readiness to work at school in accordance with the Latvian education reform project "School2030", especially the skills to implement the interdisciplinary study content in cooperation with teachers from other study areas as the study plan's B part "Limited Elective Courses" predicts students to focus on the content of his/her chosen specialization (e.g. Latvian language and literature or Mathematics) and there are no courses which focus on the topic of integration or interdisciplinary study content specifically. Experts received the answer from the teaching staff and students as well that the principle of integration of the study content of different study subjects is used whenever students have to create the study plan as this is one of the tasks in Teacher Practice. Experts have found that this type of a task is included in "Teacher practice V (Interdisciplinary and research teaching practice) - 4 CP/6 ECTS" at the 4th year of study (SAR Annex 3.2.4.1.) as stated:

"17.2.2 To improve the skill of analyzing the progress of the interdisciplinary and research learning process in order to adopt good practices and develop one's own methodological competence.

17.2.3 In cooperation with teachers-mentors, get involved in the planning of an interdisciplinary learning process for the implementation of the achievable results provided for in certain field standards."

Employers admitted that graduates and students who have already started working as teachers do not experience any type of difficulties with cooperation skills with other teachers.

It was possible to detect the focus on the competence enhancement of implementation of interdisciplinary study process in study courses like "Inclusive and special education".

2.2.2. N/A

2.2.3.

It is stated in the SAR that "In the implementation of the first-cycle professional higher education study programme "Teacher", the content of all study courses is oriented towards the active participation of students in the process of acquiring knowledge and skills" (SAR p.317). The balance between theory and practice in study content of teacher education is always a topical issue as discussed during the meetings with teaching staff and students. The good news is that all parties have acknowledged that they are thriving for the opportunity to adapt the study process to their

interests and learning needs, implementing the individualized and personalized approach in the study process. Teaching staff mentioned during the site visit the form they use during their courses - visits to educational institutions to observe the real life process, investigate and gain the work-based knowledge as the bond between DU and local educational institutions (schools, preschools, vocational education institutions (e.g., in sports area) is strong.

Methods like “solving real pedagogical problems” and “modeling learning situations” have been mentioned during the meeting with students in connection with study courses focusing on classroom management and problem solving during the educational process.

When asked about the possibilities to organize online learning within the study courses, students admit that although this is a great opportunity for students who live far away, combine studies and work, they prefer face-to-face lectures, seminars, as communication with other students is also a fruitful experience.

Students and graduates have admitted that they appreciate the Study Programme director's and teaching staff members' openness and readiness to be flexible for individual learning needs of students which seems to be a specifics of regional University. This harmonizes with the statement in the SAR, that “The studies are based on the student's independence, while providing the lecturer's guidance and support - the scope and content of the students' independent work” (SAR p.318). The students' prior knowledge, previous experience and students' different learning styles are taken into account.

Seminars, discussions, student presentations, tests, essays, research, surveys, interviews, tests, exams, etc. are used in mid-term and final exams of study courses (SAR p.318).

Experts have come to the conclusion that student-centred learning and teaching principles are implemented in the study process of the Study Programme. A student-centered approach is implemented in accordance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) adopted in 2015, standard 1.3. DU has given examples (SAR p.319):

- “takes into account and respects the diversity of student contingents and their needs, creating suitable learning paths;
- takes into account and uses different ways of implementing programs according to the possibilities of students;
- uses diverse pedagogical methods according to the circumstances;
- promotes the student's desire for independence, while at the same time providing the guidance and support of the teaching staff;
- promotes mutual respect in the student-teacher relationship;
- follows appropriate procedures for resolving student complaints.”

It is stated in the SAR that “mobility of students is promoted (recognition of study results), they are encouraged to get involved in research and social events led by academic staff” (SAR p.319), but taking into account that almost every student is already working as a teacher parallelly their studies, this encouragement has not succeeded very well. Till now 12 students have used this opportunity. 8 students went on 14 mobility visits with the goal to have practice in the sports area at the same institution: Lithuania, Zarasai Sports Club "Zarasai". 3 students went on mobility visits to Lithuania: Visagino kūrybos namai, and 1 student went to Igaunija, Ltd. Kanstet. There are no mobility visits for other specializations till now. (SAR Annex 2.5.3. Data on the outgoing mobility of students in the study field "Education and pedagogy").

An e-studies implementation system and methodology is used; informative support is provided in the e-environment for students of all forms of study (placement of study materials in the e-study environment Moodle) which was presented to the experts during the visit.

Completion of study courses is evaluated at the end based on the amount and quality of acquired knowledge, acquired skills and competence in accordance with the planned study results (provided in the study course description (SAR Annex 3.1.2.)). The study results are evaluated according to two indicators: qualitative assessment – grade on a 10-point scale; quantitative assessment – the number of credit points according to the scope and importance of the study course.

2.2.4.

The purpose of teacher practice is to educate a qualified and creative teacher, promoting the connection of theoretical knowledge with practical activities and developing students' general pedagogical and subject-specific competencies (SAR, p.320).

Practice of professional qualification in the amount of 20 CP/30 ECTS consists of 5 parts (SAR Annex 3.2.4.1.):

- Teacher practice I (Observation of the learning process and identification of the physical and e-environment of the educational institution) – 2 CP/3 ECTS;
- Teacher practice II (Practice of managing classroom work) – 2 CP/3 ECTS;
- Teacher practice III (Teaching and class work planning and (selected field subject) management practice in primary education) – 6 CP/9 ECTS;
- Teacher's practice IV (Practice of organizing the learning process at the basic and optimal level) – 6 CP/9 ECTS;
- Teacher practice V (Interdisciplinary and research teaching practice) – 4 CP/6 ECTS).

Experts agree upon conclusion that the tasks included in each type of a practice (are consistent, contextual and successive).

As stated in the SAR Annex 3.2.4.1.: “The supervisor of the practice is appointed by the director of the study program at DU. Practice manager - The teacher mentor is appointed by the head of the educational institution at the place of practice.”. Students have acknowledged that they had an opportunity to contact their lecturers and supervisors when questions arose.

Students complete the documentation of pedagogical practice in electronic and/or paper form in accordance with the requirements of the study course. Assessment provided by the teacher-mentor and the documentation of pedagogical practice is handed in to the DU practice manager before the final practice conference.

Criteria for the quality management of study programme practice: support for the professional development of teacher mentors; practice evaluation and feedback to practice education institutions and lecturers; improvement of practice organization.

During the internship, DU teaching staff, internship managers cooperate with teacher mentors, visit students in educational institutions, observe the lessons led by students (see the regulations on internships at DU and the sample internship contract in SAR Annexes 3.2.4.1 and 3.2.4.2.).

There are 12 employers' agreements of intent on providing internships for students within the educational institutions of these districts (Daugavpils, Preiļi, Dagdas, Krāslavas, Ilūksnes, Rēzeknes, Līvānu, Balvu, Ludzas, Jēkabpils and Gulbenes districts) (SAR Annex 2.5.1.).

The practice regulations have been prepared in accordance with the following regulatory documents: Regulations about Country professional the highest of education standard (MK 13.06.2023. regulations No. 305), Regulations on studies at DU (approved at the DU Senate meeting on 03.04.2024, protocol No. 5), The standard of the teaching profession (agreed Professional of education and employment tripartite cooperation sub-councils 2020 year at the June 12 meeting, protocol no. 5) and corresponding descriptions of practice study courses.

It was discussed during the meetings if the students gained new experience during the practice as many of them already work as teachers. The target groups answered that there was a division between the student's work and student's learning in the practice.

2.2.5. N/A

2.2.6.

There is a state final exam - development and defense of a bachelor's thesis as a result of the completion of the first-cycle professional higher education study programme "Teacher". It is evaluated on a 10-point scale. The defense for full-time students is in the 4th study year at the end of the 8th semester, and for part-time students - in the 5th study year at the end of the 9th semester. (SAR Annex 3.2.1.). The development and design of bachelor's theses is regulated by the "Methodological instructions for the development and design of bachelor's theses" (SAR, p.322).

Till now part-time students' first bachelor theses in the specialization "Health and Physical Activity" have been defended in the study programme in the study year 2023/2024. The topics cover target groups of primary, basic and secondary education.

The topics of students' final theses reflect the topicalities of "learning needs of learners, implementing the competence approach in the learning content and actualizing diverse teaching and learning techniques, methods and approaches." in the area of swimming skills, orientation skills, self-defense skills, development of endurance, basic shooting skills, soccer game technique as well as topics related to the socio-psychological climate of the school sports team, motivation and basic life skills, physical health improvement, students' interest in physical activities and healthy lifestyle habits, the use of movement games in the formation of physical activity habits.

The head of the commission and half of the composition of the commission are professionals from the education sector - employers or their representatives to evaluate the quality of the bachelor thesis. The evaluation consists of the average grade of all commission members for the bachelor thesis, the reviewer's grade, the evaluation of the student's presentation during the defense procedure and the answers to the questions of the commission and those present (SAR, p.323). Evaluation criteria are available in the methodological instructions for the development and design of bachelor's theses according to the Regulations on studies at Daugavpils University.

It was possible for the experts to see the bachelor's thesis defended and presented in the Library. There is a suggestion to focus more on the sources in European languages as the latest research results are not available in Russian language.

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

The Study Programme's content corresponds to the demands of paradigm shift in relation to the concept "Skola 2030". It is important from the perspective of the job market to equip future teachers with the competence and diploma to allow them to work a full workload at one educational

institution without a necessity to work at several schools to collect the necessary number of work hours.

Students and graduates have admitted that they appreciated the teaching staffs' and administration readiness to be flexible for individual learning needs of students which seems to be a specifics of regional University.

Till now part-time students' first bachelor theses in the specialization "Health and Physical Activity" have been defended in the study programme in the study year 2023/2024.

Strengths:

- 1) The study programme is flexible allowing students to obtain an extended qualification that will allow them to implement full-time work. Students in field specializations can learn the content and methodology of one or more subjects.
- 2) The study course "Social-emotional learning" (2 CP/3 ECTS) is included in the A Part as well as Management of class work (2 CP/3 ECTS) and Inclusive and special education (4 CP/6 ECTS), ensuring a continuous connection with the work environment and topical needs of the job market as acknowledged during the meeting with the employers.
- 3) The tasks included in each type of internship are consistent, contextual and successive. There is a strong network between DU and educational institutions in regions to ensure the internship.
- 4) Research component is essential and visible in the activities offered within the bachelor's study programme.
- 5) Visits to educational institutions within the study courses to observe the real life study process, investigate and gain the work-based knowledge.
- 6) Students feel supported, they get assistance, and the student "voice" is heard.
- 7) The content of the study programme ensures the student's readiness to work at school in accordance with the Latvian education reform project "School2030", e.g. the skills to implement the interdisciplinary study content in cooperation with teachers from other study areas; ability to work with students with special needs.

Weaknesses:

- 1) There is a sign that more deeper insight in the electronic journal E-klase or MyKoob would be appreciated by students, as well as more time spent on cooperation skills's development with parents.
- 2) Students are not using the opportunities provided by ERASMUS mobility programme in full spectrum.
- 3) There is a tendency observed in the Bachelor's thesis to use sources available in the Russian language although the latest research results are mostly published in English and other European languages.

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1.

During the site visit experts were provided with the possibility to visit the study facilities of DU at both buildings: Parāde iela 1 and Vienības iela 13. Experts saw classically equipped classrooms for providing lectures in bigger or smaller groups, as well as specific highly qualitative laboratories and research centers for carrying out research in the area of STEM. It is mentioned in the SAR (see p. 38) that ERDF project “Development of research infrastructure in smart specialization areas and strengthening of institutional capacity at Daugavpils University” in the period of 2017-2020 was implemented to support areas - mathematics, physics, nanomaterials, engineering and biology which correspond to the needs of teachers of Mathematics, Biology, Physics, Geography. As experts were told the study process of specializations in the field of Natural Sciences (biology, chemistry, physics, geography, natural sciences) is organized in the auditoriums and laboratories of the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Health Care and the Institute of Life Sciences and Technologies, providing students with the opportunity to learn the content of study courses and perform laboratory work.

It is unfortunate that there are no students studying in the area of natural sciences as there is a great technological potential and great investment in the research infrastructure in DU as it was visible during the tour of the facilities. It is widely recognised that there is a lack of teachers of Biology, Physics, Chemistry not just in the Latgale region but throughout Latvia.

The appropriate study environment for teachers of Computing is provided to acquire the study content connected with Robotics. This supported the allegation in the SAR (3.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme) that “the equipped computer classrooms for those studying computer science specialization ensure the learning of study courses in the field of specialization”.

Thinking about the foreign language teacher specializations, there are auditoriums with simultaneous translation booths provided (Latvian language and literature, English language, German language). It is said that they are also used for the provision of guest lectures.

As there are many students who have chosen the specialization of a “Health and physical education” teacher, it is important to provide the necessary equipment and environment for study and research. It is written in the SAR, that “In the DU training and sports complex at Kandavas street 1, which is used for the implementation of the specialization “Health and physical activity teacher”, students have access to a sports hall, a gym, an indoor swimming pool, a wrestling hall, a gym with modern exercise equipment, equipped with modern sports equipment athletics arena. Students can practice in various sports disciplines and strengthen their knowledge in health education issues” Experts did not visit this sports complex.

It was possible to see the environment and equipment necessary for acquiring the study content of “Music teacher” specialization.

Analyzing the opportunities for the research competence development within study courses “Research in Education” and “Information Technology in Education” (Study plan in SAR Annex 3.2.1), it is recognized that (see the Report “Resources and Provision of the Study Programme”) such infrastructure is used during the study process and accessible for students to use for their independent applied research projects: DU CISCO System Networking Local Academy computer class with new access technology; technical resources of the DU Multimedia Center; computer classes with SPSS program package for data processing; technical resources of the Information Technology Center of DU; copying machines; visual presentation equipment; video filming, video editing equipment, audio equipment. Research materials, scientific publications, including Web of Science and Scopus publications, archives (SAR p. 37).

“The computer classrooms are also provided with the necessary software for learning research methods (MS Office, SPSS, GIS, etc. data visualization tools and apps), which is used for the study courses.”

As the decision was made to “to balance the student workload in the class schedule and in some cases to provide combined forms of study for part-time students” (SAR, p. 34), not exceeding 50% of the lessons in the study programme remotely, experts see that there is a necessity to continue to upgrade the premises of DU with the latest technological video and audio developments (e.g., 360-degree tracking camera) to ensure the possibility for students and teachers to work in a hybrid format.

It was explained that DU provides access to more than 100,000 subscribed e-resources in various branches of science. When visiting the library experts noticed the latest publications of Routledge Publishing in the area of education, and experts were told that teaching staff is invited to hand in the list of new literature they need for their study courses to update them every year and during the meeting with the teaching staff the representatives approved this fact. “Requests for the purchase of books are regularly (every academic year) reviewed and approved by the DU Budget Commission, thus providing a mechanism for the purchase of the latest titles in the DU library” (SAR p. 41).

Experts suggest to follow the newest publishings for pupils’ books in all the study subjects which are offered for schools to acquire corresponding to the new Basic education and Secondary education Standards. Lately new editions in Biology, Mathematics etc. are available. This would help future teachers to be ready to use these materials at schools when they enter the Internship/start working at schools.

In Table 3.3.1. (SAR chapter 3.3.1.) it is stated that there are 10 057 books and 6 158 serials and periodicals available for the professional bachelor's study programme "Teacher". DU has provided experts with the thematic division, e.g., for the teachers of mathematics there are 1 326 items provided, for the teachers of natural sciences (Biology, Physics, geography, chemistry) – 1 828 items; as the field of technology education is quite new, it is understandable that for now there are just 74 items available, but hopefully it will grow; in the area of methodology of cultural understanding and self-expression in art there are 2 107 items available; in the teaching methodology in the language field there are 2 107 items available (Latvian language methodology and Russian language methodology, and general foreign language and second language teaching methodology, there is no information allocated for the English as a foreign language teaching methodology); in the area of social and civic education there are 821 items available; it should be noted that there are just 382 items available for the specialization of health and physical activity, although there are a lot of research available in English in this area, experts would like to suggest to focus on this aspect as there are many students who have chosen this specialization.

There is information provided that there are 15510 copies accessible for the students and teaching staff. There are 747 items in the area of teacher’s professional activity and 1 225 items for psychology for teachers available.

During the site visit in the meeting with the students it was possible to conclude that they appreciated that “the library offers students and teaching staff the opportunity to use the subscribed electronic information resources (databases, e-journals) also outside the DU computer network by logging in with a username and password” (SAR p.326).

Overall it was concluded that the Library's infrastructure and services provided are of very good

quality. During the visit the representative of the Library acknowledged that DU is researching the statistics regularly on how the databases available are used in the subscription period as well as the satisfaction level of students and lecturers.

During the tour of facilities experts noticed that the environment is adapted to persons with special needs, for persons with functional impairments, especially the building in Parāde 1, e.g., there is a computer for reading books with a text magnifier program and height-adjustable table in the reading room; there are lifts for persons with movement disabilities; projection devices and sound amplifying equipment are installed for visually impaired and hearing impaired students. Information is available as well on the homepage of DU (see: <https://du.lv/en/about-us/environmental-accessibility/macibu-korpuss-parades-iela-1/>). There is information in Braille on the class number plates all throughout the building, elevator buttons with Braille, as well as provided audio information about the reached floor in Vienības 13 (see <https://du.lv/en/about-us/environmental-accessibility/macibu-korpuss-vienibas-iela-13/>).

It is appreciated that the environment of the study process is accessible for every student and also for the young parents.

2.3.2.

N/A

2.3.3.

There are three sources for funding the full-time and part-time studies of the first-cycle professional higher education study programme "Teacher" at DU: funds from the state budget, DU grants (DU's own revenues) and funds contributed by the students themselves or other sources. According to the SAR (see chapter 3.3.3) "the costs of the study program were calculated using the DU financial instrument developed by the Finance and Accounting Department of DU for determining the costs of study programs and calculating profitability".

Total cost for studies per one student is: EUR 7276.15 (Full time studies) / EUR 6548.54 (Part time studies). There are components presented taken into account by DU when calculating the cost of a study place in the "Teacher" study programme:

- the salary fund (Full time student: EUR 3816.15/Part time student: EUR 3434.54) and the employer's GST (Full time student: EUR 900.23/ Part time student: EUR 810.21);
- business trips (Cost of missions per full time student: EUR 146.15/ Part time student: EUR 131.54). DU pays for travel expenses related to participation in scientific events and research. (See Report p. 47);
- materials, energy resources and inventory costs (Full time student: EUR 742.15/Part time student: EUR 667.94);
- books, journals (Full time student: EUR 185.79/Part time student: EUR 167.21), equipment purchase and investment costs (Full time student: EUR 408.24/Part time student: EUR 367.42);
- costs for social security of students (Full time student: EUR 251.98/Part time student: EUR 367.42);
- there is also a component of Services per one study place (Full time student: EUR 825.46/Part time student: EUR 742.91).

The minimum number of students in a group to ensure the profitability of the study programme is 11 students. If looking at the number of students admitted it is noticeable that the number of students in a group is appropriate, except there is a group of part time students matriculated in 2023 (personal funding) of 10 students. Analyzing the number of students per specialization, only the

specialization of teachers of Health and Physical activity has met the criteria - minimum 11 students per group - in the last three years (SAR Annex 3.1.4).

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

The appropriate study environment for teachers of all the specializations is ensured. Overall it was concluded that the Library's infrastructure and services provided are of very good quality. The computer classrooms are provided with the necessary software for learning research methods and applying them. It is appreciated that the environment of the study process is accessible for every student, also with special needs, and also for the young parents.

There are three sources for funding the full-time and part-time studies of the first-cycle professional higher education study programme "Teacher" at DU: funds from the state budget, DU grants and funds contributed by the students themselves or other sources.

Analyzing the number of students admitted in the study programme, it is noticeable that the number of students in a group is appropriate during the last three years.

Strengths:

- 1) The study process of specializations in the field of Natural Sciences (biology, chemistry, physics, geography, natural sciences) is organized in the auditoriums and highly qualitative laboratories of the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Health Care and the Institute of Life Sciences and Technologies.
- 2) The information resources available to the users of the Library of the DU and study infrastructure is sufficient and systematically expanding in quality. There is a wide range of databases subscribed to by DU as well as other scientific resources.
- 3) The environment is adapted to persons with special needs, for persons with functional impairments.
- 4) The financial state of the study programme is stable as there is the state budget subsidy provided. The minimum number of students in a group (except for specializations) ensures the profitability of the study programme, especially for the budget funding.
- 5) There is a great technological potential and great investments made in the research infrastructure in STEM area laboratories at DU, which would support the study process of Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Natural Sciences teachers.

Weaknesses:

- 1) Not all of the newest publishings for pupils' books in all of the study subjects which are offered for schools to acquire the study content corresponding to the new Basic education and Secondary education Standards are available. There is a minimal number of items available for the students of specialization of Health and physical activity in English.
- 2) There are not enough technological video and audio developments (e.g., 360-degree tracking camera) to ensure the possibility for students and teachers to work in a hybrid format.
- 3) The number of students per specialization as a group does not meet the criteria - minimum 11 students per group, - only the specialization of teachers of Health and Physical activity has met the criteria.

Assessment of the requirement [6]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Material resources, infrastructure and support system is compliant with the profile of the study programme and provides possibilities to acquire the qualification in the practice and research based learning for students. (SAR chapter 3.3. pp. 324-329).

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1.

Based on the SAR Annex 3.2.1 and document "Compilation of quantitative data on the scientific/ applied research [...]" (SAR Annex 2.2.4) there are 102 teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programme - 15 professors, 1 visiting professor (Lithuania), 12 associate professors, 2 visiting associate professors, 22 assistant professors, 1 visiting assistant professor, 5 leading researchers, 6 researchers, 1 research assistant, 17 lecturers and 13 visiting lecturers, 7 visiting assistants.

58 elected lecturers involved in the programme's study courses have a doctor's scientific degree (56,86%), 18 elected lecturers have a master's level scientific degree in the field of science corresponding to their specialization.

Based on the information included in the document "Compilation of quantitative data on the scientific/ applied research of the academic staff involved in the implementation of the study direction "Education and pedagogy" 2018-2023" (SAR Annex 2.4.4) - teaching staff with education, scientific competence and qualification corresponding to the course content were involved in the implementation of study courses, e.g., PhDs and masters in Philology are involved in the implementation of the specialization "Latvian language and literature", PhDs and masters in the field of Arts are involved in the implementation of the specialization "Music" (SAR 3.2.1.).

It is a strength that visiting associate professor from abroad is attracted to the study programme, as it is in a case of specialization "Health and physical activity". She is lecturing 6 courses in cooperation with 3 colleagues from Latvia.

2.4.2.

The reasons why the changes of the teaching staff were carried out are: teaching staff members with PhD or MA were added to some courses, in some cases people stopped working at DU (Part A); in some cases guest lecturers were replaced by elected ones, in some cases – guest lecturers were invited to become a part of a study programme.

Changes were made within such specialization: "Teacher of Mathematics", "Teacher of Music", "Teacher of Design and technologies and computer science", "Teacher of Physics", "Teacher of Biology", "Teacher of Chemistry", "Teacher of Biology ", "Teacher of Chemistry ", "Teacher of Social and civil sphere" and "Teacher of German language" (SAR chapter 3.4.2).

It seemed so that changes in the composition of the teaching staff did not affect the quality of studies, as the academic and professional qualifications of the recruited teaching staff correspond to

the specifics of the study courses and the field of scientific research.

2.4.3.

N/A

2.4.4.

It is stated in the SAR (see chapter 3.4.1) that: "During the reporting period, more than 230 studies were published in the Scopus and Web of Science databases, as well as more than 65 publications that are indexed in other publications". Experts researched three materials provided: List of publications (SAR Annex 2.2.4.), CVs of academic staff and the document "Compilation of quantitative data on the scientific/ applied research of the academic staff involved in the implementation of the study direction "Education and pedagogy" 2018-2023" (SAR Annex 2.4.4). There are teaching staff's representatives who are very active in the area of scientific publications, e.g. 44 (area of STEM), 31 (area of STEM), 24 (area of Music education), 22 (area of psychology), 10 (area of sports) scientific publications indexed in Web of Science/SCOPUS databases and many other scientific publications in other peer-reviewed publications. But there are quite a few academic staff members who are in the process of developing such a level of publications.

Experts highly value that DU has their own scientific journal: "Journal of Teacher Education for Sustainability" in the electronic version: <https://sciendo.com/issue/JTES/25/2>. The journal is rated with SCImago Journal Rank (SJR) of 0.420, which places it in the Q2 quartile among journals devoted to education (SAR p. 57).

To create more opportunities for teaching staff to develop publications, DU provides the financial support for research grants.

Administration of DU and teaching staff members informed experts that there is a system created to support teaching staff to participate in conferences, publish the results of research.

"Teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programme improve their professional qualifications by participating in international conferences, seminars, internships, international and national research projects , as well as by publishing their scientific research in journals and conference proceedings included in the Scopus and Web of Science databases. During the reporting period, more than 230 studies were published in the Scopus and Web of Science databases, as well as more than 65 publications that are indexed in other publications." (SAR chapter 3.4.1).

Experts were glad to hear that teaching staff took part in ESF project "Strengthening the capacity of the academic staff of the Daugavpils University field of study "Education, pedagogy and sports" in areas of strategic specialization" (No. 8.2.2.0/18/I/005), doing a 200-hour internship in general education institutions" (SAR p. 330) which somehow compensates the fact that only few are working at schools, - so they got the view of the implementation of the interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary study process, etc. It is stated in SAR (p. 330) that "extensive practical experience has been accumulated by working for several years in general education institutions, thus ensuring the unity of theory and practice in the study process, actualizing teaching and educational work issues in pedagogical practice for the students during the study process".

2.4.5.

There are different types of cooperation implemented in DU. Many courses in the study programme "Teacher" are implemented by 2 or more lecturers (SAR Annex 3.2.1), not just in Part A - e.g., "Teacher's professional activities in basics", Psychology for teachers", "Teaching and learning", but

also in Professional specialization courses - "Didactics of the Latvian language", "Creative writing and text type", "Mathematical analysis and its methodology", "Artistic project self-management", "General and age physiology", "World history: Ancient times", "English aspect teaching methodology and learning strategies", "Web technologies", "General ecology", and many other study subjects. It is a good practice to have several partners for one study course and during the meeting with the teaching staff it was possible to clarify the style of cooperation they practice to complement each other to make the study content more attractive for the students. But there is one specialization of 32 CP "German language" where only one researcher Dr.philol., Mg.paed. is lecturing all the study courses (SAR Annex 3.2.1.). That would be suggested to attract other specialists as well, although we do not have any doubts concerning the qualification and competence of this specific lecturer.

Another form of cooperation: within the framework of the Erasmus+ project, for creative workshops or guest lectures.

It was told within the meeting with employers and students and academic staff that DU is an institution that provides the methodological support and academic content for local educational institutions, offering open lectures, courses, possibilities to visit and work in laboratories. The teaching staff also jointly participates in the management of extra-lecture events for students, for example, in the management of "Scientists' Night", "Open Door Days" activities, organizing and leading scientific conferences, etc.

Students acknowledged that they feel heard and noticed during the study process, their individual needs are met which is one of the reasons they have chosen this university.

Experts want to emphasize that one of the very effective forms to enhance international cooperation to raise the level of internationalization of a study program - it is the mobility of teaching staff.

Experts were provided with the document (SAR Annex 2.5.3.) "Statistical data on outgoing mobility of academic staff for 2018-2023 in the study field "Education and pedagogy" which we compared together with Annex 3.2.1 and document "Compilation of quantitative data on the scientific/ applied research [...]" (SAR Annex 2.2.4). Unfortunately, it took a while to analyze these three documents to make sure data is calculated correctly. Taking into account that there are 78 elected staff members in this study programme, 47 lecturers went for teaching or professional development mobility abroad, it makes 60,26%. There are 24 non-elected (visiting lecturers) involved in the implementation of a bachelor study program "Teacher", only 3 lecturers went for mobility abroad, it makes 12,5%. There is no information provided about what is the outcome from these mobility visits - e.g., how many incoming visiting professors came to DU, being invited by teaching staff.

It must be noted that lecturers represented such content areas during their mobility gaining international experience and perspective: lecturers from Part A, specializations: Latvian language, English language, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Music, Health and physical activity, Social and civic field, Computing, Design and technologies. There are no mobilities for the specializations: German language, Physics, Geography.

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

58 elected lecturers involved in the study programme's study courses have a doctor's scientific degree (56,86%), 18 elected lecturers have a master's level scientific degree in the field of science corresponding to their specialization. Changes in the composition of the teaching staff did not affect the quality of studies, as the academic and professional qualifications of the recruited teaching staff correspond to the specifics of the study courses and the field of scientific research. There are teaching staff's representatives who are very active in the area of high value scientific publications, but there are quite a few academic staff members who are in the process of developing such a level of publications. There is a system created at DU to support teaching staff to participate in conferences, publish the results of research. 47 out of 78 elected staff members in this study programme (60,25%) went for teaching or professional development mobility abroad, only 12,5% of non-elected lecturers used this opportunity. Lecturers from Part A and specializations: Latvian language, English language, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Music, Health and physical activity, Social and civic field, Computing, Design and technologies took part in mobility. There are no mobilities for the specializations: German language, Physics, Geography.

Strengths:

- 1) The Study Programme is secured with highly qualified academic and teaching staff. DU invests in supporting their individual research interests and professional development.
- 2) The practice when several lecturers collaborate in the development and implementation of one study course shows the interdisciplinary approach.
- 3) A visiting associate professor from abroad is attracted to the study programme, in specialization "Health and physical activity".
- 4) DU has their own scientific journal "Journal of Teacher Education for Sustainability", which is rated with SCImago Journal Rank (SJR) of 0.420, which places it in the Q2 quartile among journals devoted to education.

Weaknesses:

- 1) In the specialization "Teacher of German language" there is only one lecturer who is lecturing all the study courses which is not the best practice as it does not provide the diversity and different perspectives for students within these specializations as it is in others.
- 2) International cooperation in a form of mobility is inactive for non-elected lecturers.

Assessment of the requirement [7]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The qualification of the academic staff of the study programme fully comply with the requirements of the laws and regulations.

(SAR Annex 2.2.4; SAR chapter 3.2.1., CVs of academic staff, SAR chapter 3.4.1, SAR Annex 2.5.3.)

2.5. Assessment of the Compliance

Requirements

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The content of the study programme consists of study courses in the amount of 160CP/240ECTS (Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers of June 13, 2023 No. 305 "Regulations on the State Professional Higher Education Standard". Study Course "State, civil and environmental protection" (2 CP/3 ECTS).

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The study programme's content complies with a valid professional standard, see ANNEX 3.2.1.2. Compliance of the professional bachelor's study program "Teacher" (42141) with the professional standard (Standard of the teaching profession (2020).
<https://registri.visc.gov.lv/profizglitiba/dokumenti/standarti/2017/PS-138.pdf>)

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The descriptions of the study courses (SAR Annex 3.1.2 Study Course Descriptions) include all of the structural components which are in compliance with the requirements set (the Law on Higher Education Institutions, Section 56 (1) Paragraph 2, 56 (2), Paragraph 2.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme complies with requirements according to SAR Annex 3.1.2. "Examples of diploma and supplement_PBSP Teacher" provided.

Diploma to be awarded complies with Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 202 "Procedure for Issuing State Recognised Higher Education Documents"

<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/256157-kartiba-kada-izsniedz-valsts-atzitus-augstako-izglitiba-apliecinosis-dokumentus>

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Except for a guest professor from Lithuania, other teaching staff are native native speakers or with Latvian level of C1 or B2 (SAR Annex 2.3.7. Overview of teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study field "Education and pedagogy", Annex STATEMENT National language skills.docx).

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

According to the SAR Annex 2.3.7. "Overview of teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study field "Education and pedagogy" 5 lecturers who are involved in the realization of the specialization "English language" (SAR Annex 3.2.1.) have the C2 English competence level. It is not an applicable criteria for other teaching staff members as the study programme is implemented in Latvian language.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The sample of study agreement (SAR Annex 2.1.4) complies with Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 70 "Mandatory provisions in the study agreement"
<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/152072-studiju-liguma-obligati-ietveramie-noteikumi>

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

There are agreements provided with other higher education institutions if the implementation of the study programme is terminated (SAR Annex 2.1.4. Cooperation Agreements). In case that DU suspends implementation of the first cycle professional higher education study programme "Teacher", University of Latvia undertakes to provide opportunities to continue studies in the first cycle professional higher education study programme "Teacher" (42).

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Statement issued to the Academic Information Centre and signed by Rector DU.
(SAR Annex (no number) "CONFIRMATION Compensation guarantee for students")

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Assessment of the requirement [8]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The study programme meets all requirements of national regulations.

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

General conclusions on the fulfillment of the requirements corresponding to the study programme, indicating whether such deficiencies have been identified that cannot be eliminated during the 2-year accreditation period, providing a conclusion on the possibility of implementing the study programme in all declared implementation options (for example, full-time intramural form, part-time distance-learning etc.) in all applied implementation languages (for example, Latvian and English) and in all applied implementation places (especially applicable if the programme is implemented in branches). The most important weaknesses and strengths identified in the study programme.

The professional bachelor's study programme "Teacher" continues the tradition of teacher education in DU as a regional higher education institution ensuring the demand for highly qualified teachers. Stakeholders are equally interested in continuing the tradition of teacher education in DU as a regional higher education institution ensuring the demand for highly qualified teachers.). The number of students in the study programme has remained stable and slightly increased but there is great concern about the fact that there are still many specialization modules which have no students enrolled, especially in STEM, although, there is a great technological potential and great investments made in the research infrastructure in STEM area laboratories at DU, which would support the study process of Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Natural Sciences teachers.

The content of the study programme ensures the student's readiness to work at school in accordance with the Latvian education reform project "School2030", e.g. the skills to implement the interdisciplinary study content in cooperation with teachers from other study areas; ability to work with students with special needs. Employers provide mentorship and are highly interested in

receiving the graduates and students who are invited to start gaining work experience while studying.

The Study Programme is secured with highly qualified academic and teaching staff. DU invests in supporting their individual research interests and professional development. A visiting associate professor from abroad is attracted to the study programme, in specialization “Health and physical activity” which is a great support for the internationalization of studies, but the number of mobilities of students and teaching staff should be maximized in all of the specializations. Students are not using the opportunities provided by ERASMUS mobility programme in full spectrum; International cooperation in a form of mobility is inactive for non-elected lecturers.

Students and graduates have admitted that they appreciated the DU teaching staffs’ and administration readiness to be flexible for individual learning needs of students which seems to be a specifics of regional university. Students feel supported, they get assistance, and the student “voice” is heard.

Evaluation of the study programme "Teacher"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Teacher"

Short-term recommendations

- 1) Implement additional targeted recruitment activities to attract students for the specializations which are highly in demand in the job market, but which do not have students yet: “The German teacher” specialization (32 CP), “Social and Civic Field” (82 CP), “English Language” (50 or 32 CP), “Physics” (50 CP), “Biology” (50 CP), “Chemistry” (50 CP), “Geography” (50 CP), “Field of Natural Sciences” (32 CP), as well to meet the criteria - minimum 11 students per group, to ensure the profitability: by the end of this study year 2024-2025 to influence the results of the next recruitment cycle for the study year 2005-2026.
- 2) Continue to purchase newest published pupils’ study books in all the study subjects which are offered for schools to acquire the study content corresponding to the new Basic education and Secondary education Standards. As well, purchase more books, journals etc. materials for specialization of Health and physical activity: by the beginning of the next 2025-2026 academic year.
- 3) Attract more lecturers in the specialization “Teacher of German language” to provide the diversity and different perspectives for students within this specialization as it is in others: by the beginning of the next 2025-2026 academic year (if students are recruited).
- 4) Incorporate more deeper insight in the electronic journal E-klase or MyKoob in the study content as well as more time spent on cooperation skills’s development with parents: by the beginning of the next 2025-2026 academic year.
- 5) Develop recommendations for students for their Bachelor thesis to use more sources in English and other European languages: by the beginning of the next 2025-2026 academic year.

Long-term recommendations

1) Continue to upgrade the premises of DU with the latest technological video and audio developments (e.g., 360-degree tracking camera) to ensure the possibility for students and teachers to work in a hybrid format.

2) Enhance the level of internationalization of the Study Programme through these methods: attract and involve international students to widen the diversity of opinions within the study process; increase the number of mobilities of students; increase international cooperation in a form of mobility, especially for non-elected lecturers, and elected lecturers for all the specializations to raise the number of incoming lecturers.

II - "Primary School Teacher" ASSESSMENT

II - "Primary School Teacher" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1.

First cycle professional higher education study programme "Primary Education Teacher" envisages acquisition of a professional bachelor's degree and sixth-level professional qualification in teacher education with the right to work as a primary education teacher for grades up to 6 in the Latvia general education system (SAR, p. 233-235). The relevance of DU study programme "Primary Education Teacher" to the study field "Education and Pedagogy" is determined by the necessity to implement and develop the study programme, which graduates are highly demanded in the Latvia education system. The study programme "Primary Education Teacher" comply with the aim of study field "Education and Pedagogy": to provide development of professional pedagogues by implementing competitive and high-quality, internationally comparable professional higher education and qualification of teacher by acquiring the necessary professional competencies, which are determined by the standard of the teaching profession, for work in the first stage of primary education. (SAR, p. 233)

2.1.2.

The title of the study programme, the professional bachelor's degree in teacher education and the professional qualification of teacher are logically interrelated (SAR, p. 233-235). Aim of the study programme (to ensure the provision of a competitive and high-quality, internationally comparable professional higher education and qualification of teacher by acquiring the necessary professional competencies, which are determined by the standard of the teaching profession, for work in the first stage of primary education, SAR, p. 233) is logically linked with the title, degree and qualification of the study programme.

General secondary education and an admission requirement, taking into account the average yearly grade in the secondary education document, which must not be lower than 7 points is required to be admitted to the first cycle professional higher education study programme "Primary School Teacher". If the average yearly grade is lower, applicants can take additional examinations. The lowest average mark threshold is 6 (SAR, p. 235).

Study programme intended learning outcomes are formulated as knowledge, skills and competences which are in line with Latvian and European qualification framework (LQF and EQF) Level 6. The first cycle professional higher education study programme "Primary Education Teacher" has 9 intended learning outcomes. 2 out of 9 intended learning outcomes are subject knowledge related, 3 out of 9

are professional skills related and 4 are teacher's competences related learning outcomes (SAR annex 3.2.1. "3.2.1_Mapping of study courses_Primary School Teacher_EN.xlsx").

The first cycle professional higher education study programme "Primary Education Teacher" learning outcomes are related to relevant competence and skills needed in the labor market, especially in the field of inclusive education, student-centered approach and transversal skills, all of them related to study programme aims and objectives of the study field "Education and Pedagogy".

Study programme implementation duration complies with the requirement that first cycle professional higher education study programme and sixth level professional qualification corresponding to the sixth level of the Latvian Qualifications Framework is obtained by studying for not less than 4 years. Implementation of a study programme in Latvian language is reasonable and justified by the demand of primary education teachers in the educational system of Latvia and its Eastern region.

2.1.3.

Changes were made in the description of the study programme and in the annexes in connection with the changes in the names of the faculty and department at Daugavpils University. The content of the study programme was updated according to modern requirements in education and teacher training (SAR, p. 236). Also changes have been applied in the study programme for transition from Latvian CP system to ECTS recalculating contact hours and independent work hours representing ECTS.

Based on requirements there has been implemented new elective course Practice IV (6CP/9ECTS) alternatives - "Pedagogical practice of a preschool teacher" and "Teacher's pedagogical practice in inclusive education". DU has developed a procedure of recognition of the short-cycle professional higher education study programme "Preschool teacher" (41141) and registration of study courses in amount of 80CP/120ECTS to provide opportunity for further studies in the first level professional higher education study programme "Primary Education Teacher". Changes were also made in the sequence of the implementation of Term paper and Professional Qualification Practice in full-time and part-time face-to-face studies.

There have been changes also in study course amount and content based on recommendations and decisions of DU.

This shows that the study programme implementers monitor national legal changes and labor market needs and carry out updates in order to comply with national legislation, as well as improvement of the study programme is made based on expert recommendations.

2.1.4.

Lack of pedagogues is a common challenge in Latvia and the meetings with representatives of employers during the site visit shows that there are regular vacancies in primary education in Daugavpils city and there is a continuing demand for teachers in primary education in municipalities of the Latgale region. Based on statistics and interviews with students most of them are employed during their study process and this provides clear demand for specialists in the labor market. It is also necessary to notice that the first cycle professional higher education study programme "Primary Education Teacher" provides opportunity for all the previous graduates of short cycle preschool teacher study programme for further studies and from 31 re-registered students 26 of them have been employed in preschools in study year 2022/2023 (SAR, p. 257-258).

The concept of the study programme includes highly appreciated practices. Regional employers provide students with wide opportunities to have practice in preschools and primary education as

well as mentors for this process. Employers are interested in cooperation during students' internships in order to attract new professionals. Significant attention is foreseen for inclusive education although students during interviews strengthen the necessity for more study content in the field of inclusive education and class management / parent relations topics.

The dynamics of the number of students by study years shows the increase of student number from 11 in 2020-2021 till 80 in 2023-2024. Graduates of the study programme have the opportunity to work in public or private pre-school education institutions (annex 3.1.4. "Statistical data on the students in the "Primary School Teacher" study programme"). Yet it can be noticed by experts that employers and students use the structure of the study programme as an extended life-long learning option for students who graduate short cycle programmes, increasing costs and use of teaching staff for partly overlapping study courses.

2.1.5. N/A

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

The title of the study programme, the degree and the professional qualification are interrelated. The aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements fall within the breadth of what could be expected from a professionally-oriented first-cycle higher education study programme. The study programme is monitored with the aim to update the parameters of the study programme in accordance with legal requirements and experts recommendations.

Strengths:

- 1) The study programme learning outcomes include public needs and needs of the educational system in terms of the development of general competencies or transversal skills that would help the person to adapt to the ever-changing society and labor market needs and environment and would promote change and development in the educational ecosystem.
- 2) Increasing number of students.
- 3) Demand of the graduates within the educational system of the country and employment rates.

Weaknesses: not identified

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1.

The content of the first cycle professional higher education study programme "Primary Education Teacher" is relevant and complimentary, it reflects the development trends in the education and ensures preparing specialists, which are in demand by the permanent development of educational system in Latvia, as well as global trends, which point out the increase of teachers who apply not only innovative and multidisciplinary teaching and learning approaches, but also have an understanding of the goals of sustainable education and sustainable development of professional competence (SAR, p. 261-271). Experts have noticed that provided specializations meet needs of graduates and employers and allow to develop student interests based on the study process (special education, preschool methodology, etc.).

The compulsory content of the study programme consists of 160CP/240ECTS:

- Courses that provide an understanding of studies and the integration of the content of the study courses (general education and entrepreneurial professional competence-building study courses) -

- 84 ECTS; Courses providing professional competences (theoretical and professional specialization courses) - 99 ECTS;
- Internships - 30 ECTS;
- State examination - 18 ECTS;
- Free elective courses - 9 ECTS.

The choice, content and scope of study courses, as well as the content of internships relevant to the qualification to be obtained, are aligned with the Teaching Profession Standard (2020). The study content of the study programme is structured sequentially into study courses and practices, which ensure the gradual acquisition of competence, and is directed towards the fulfillment of study outcomes and the integration of students' theoretical and practical experience. Study courses of the study programme complements professional pedagogical education with the knowledge and understanding in the field of law („Legal aspects of the pedagogical process”), security and safety (“State, civil and environmental Protection”), psychology („Psychology for teachers”), management („Educational management”, “Entrepreneurship and project development”), etc. and reflects the mission of higher education in general. Yet some study courses are overlapping and need to be developed within the science field and with clear and achievable learning outcomes (especially study courses „Educational management” and “Entrepreneurship and project development”) (SAR, p. 263). Professional specialization courses are designed in accordance with the curriculum areas developed by the project "Competence Approach to Curriculum" (School 2030): language, social and civic, cultural awareness and self-expression in art, technology, natural sciences, mathematics, health and physical activity (Cabinet Regulation No 747; <https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/303768-regulations-regarding-the-state-basic-education-standard-and-model-basic-education-programmes>).

Although the titles of the study courses meet the requirements of the basic education standard (Regulations Regarding the State Basic Education Standard and Model Basic Education Programmes), in some cases there are concerns as to whether the content of the study course fully ensures the acquisition of the necessary skills for the educator. For example (SAR annex 3.2.1. “Study course descriptions_Primary Education Teacher”), the study course “Field of Technology: Design and technologies I” is taken in the framework of specialized courses for grades 1 to 3 in the field of technology. According to the standard of education, this course should cover content related to the result to be achieved “2.3. The use of programmable devices and computer networks and the management of memory devices”, but the course description does not reveal such an association in the course calendar. Assessed successively for the field of technology grades 4-6 course study course “Field of technology: Computer science” was reviewed. It was concluded that teaching resources are used as teaching aids before the standard is issued (years 2011-2016), thus raising concerns as to whether students are familiar with the current range of teaching resources in educational institutions. This also was noticed in interviews with students during the site visit where they expressed that during studies students do not have access to digital resources available at schools (e-klase.lv, soma.lv, maconis.lv).

First cycle professional higher education study programme “Primary Education Teacher” corresponds to the Cabinet Regulation of 13 June 2023 No. 305 "Regulations on the State Standard for Higher Vocational Education" and to the Teacher's Professional Standard.

2.2.2. N/A

2.2.3.

According to the descriptions of the study courses there is a vast variety of teaching and learning

methods (e.g. lectures, practical classes, creative seminars, role-playing games, discussions, master classes, study projects, exercises, analysis of cases and problem situations, project development, individual and group work, analysis of audiovisual materials, practical workshops, simulations, open lectures by experienced professionals; SAR, p. 274) and assessment methods (e.g. tests, oral and written exams, group work, presentation, independent work, and other forms of assessment available in the e-learning environment Moodle, etc.) used in the study process, which contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the courses and the study programme, taking into account the principles of student-centered teaching and learning, e.g. meeting with students revealed that at the beginning of each course, the teacher explains the purpose and learning outcomes of the course; there is a strong focus on interactive learning methods to work with others, brainstorm, discuss, play roles, make decisions and undertake responsibility; teaching staff consults with students on their satisfaction, expectations and evaluation of the quality of studies. Discussions with the representatives of students and teaching staff confirmed that students are engaged in the discussions during the lectures and seminars; guest lectures from educational institutions bring the case studies and involve students in practical problem solving, including research work. Students pointed out that the development of students' practical skills is the streaming line within the programme „Primary education teacher“.

The procedure for assessment of students' knowledge, skills and competences at DU is determined by the "Regulations on Studies at Daugavpils University" (approved on 03.04.2024, Minutes No.5), complying with the basic principles and procedures for assessment of education at the respective study level defined in the Cabinet of Ministers' regulations. The study course descriptions demonstrate a diverse approach to assessing students' knowledge and skills. Specialization courses often use a test system that provides for the practical work that forms the portfolio common to the course. Interviews with students during the site visit confirm that they have been introduced to test methods at the start of their course. Overall, the content and volume of examinations correspond to the content of the study course curricula and make it possible to check the level of achievement of knowledge and skills of students.

Teaching and learning is organized in accordance of student-centered approach: students confirm their diverse situations are respected and a personalized approach to the study process is possible. What's more, interviews with faculty members during the site visit showed their willingness to provide support to students also outside the formal framework of their studies, providing an opportunity for individual counseling for learning study content.

2.2.4.

The internships is carried out in accordance with regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers of June 13, 2023 No. 305 and in accordance with the Regulation on professional qualification practice at Daugavpils University (SAR, p. 276-277); it is ensured that the practice is at least 30 credit points, and by observing the specifics of the first level professional higher education study programme "Primary education teacher" practice according to the three optional modules (Professional competence in preschool methodical work; Diversity competence in inclusive education; Content and learning approaches in the study fields in preschool education) content (SAR, p. 276). There are provided 4 practices (SAR, p. 278-283): 1) Practice I for getting to know the learning process practically, mainly by observing and analyzing it (3 ECTS); 2) Practice II "Primary school teacher (grade 1-3)" (9 ECTS); 3) Practice III "Primary school teacher (grade 4-6)" (); 4) Practice 4 by choosing above mentioned specialization of practice. Internships are linked to the study courses, which are sequenced in the study plan according to the internships (observation, practical internship, specialization). Internships ensure the development of students' knowledge, skills and competence in accordance with the objectives of the study programme and the real needs

of the educational institutions.

DU provides an opportunity to have a tripartite training practice agreement between DU, the educational institution and trainee with clear settlement of duties for each party. There has been a wide range of education institutions that provide internship opportunities. Some interns further continue their professional work in these institutions. Discussions with representatives of employers have shown that the knowledge and skills acquired by students meet the professional requirements and organisations' needs.

In interviews with students during the site visit, experts were convinced that in the implementation of the internships DU provides opportunities for students already employed to be able to practice in other classes, groups or other educational institutions, thus separating the needs of the student study process from the professional work.

2.2.5. N/A

2.2.6.

The topics of the final thesis of students conform to the tasks of the study programme and the results to be achieved (development of reading skills in Latvian language classes; cooperation between parents and teachers for the development of pupils' literacy, etc., SAR, p. 285). The average grade of the final thesis (9) shows a high contribution of students to the development of the final works (SAR, p. 285).

At the same time, within the framework of the study programme, most of the students choose to develop a final thesis related to the pre-school topics (data based on January 2024 statistics; SAR, p. 285), which is partly due to the fact that students continue the study process after the acquisition of the short cycle pre-school education study programme. Only 6 students choose the subject of final work in the context of the primary education specialization topics, which shows that the continuation of pre-primary education has a higher demand than primary education yet and impacts networking and specialization options in field of primary education.

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

The content of study courses included within the scope of the study programme is diverse, ensures comprehensive development of students' competence in combination with the necessary specialization in primary education. The plan for the implementation of study courses is appropriate and mutually integrated. A diverse student-centric approach and examination solutions are ensured during the study process. At the same time, the descriptions of individual courses indicate the need to update or improve them, especially as regards the content included in the standard of education and the learning tools to be used in the course.

Strengths:

1) Internship realization support system has been developed and implemented, involving local governments and educational institutions and ensuring the possibility of specialization in accordance with the interests of the student.

Weaknesses:

1) The content of the study course and study resources has to be adapted to actual learning process practice of educational institutions - existing resources partly exclude digital learning platforms and management systems that are mandatory in primary education.

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1.

The study programme benefits from active engagement in scientific work by academic staff. Lecturers regularly publish research findings, contributing to both scholarly publications and methodological materials relevant to primary education. Access to research publications enhances the curriculum, and integration of scientific research in teaching aligns with the objectives of fostering a scientifically grounded education approach (SAR, p. 286-287) and providing necessary scientific provision for the study process.

The DU library offers students access to a wide range of resources, including over 100,000 e-resources and specialized monographs, aiding research and study. The DU Information System (DUIS) and the Moodle e-study platform provide students and staff with digital access to updated course materials, scientific literature, and communication tools. The university also provides additional learning materials through collaborations, such as with the Latvian Language Agency. Library provides a wide opportunity of scientific and study materials in Russian, yet study courses are based on learning materials of 2010 - 2016 years (before education reform) - provision current to date scientific and study materials should be improved (annex 3.2.1.Study course descriptions_Primary Education Teacher).

The study programme utilizes well-equipped facilities at multiple DU locations (SAR, p. 290), such as auditoriums with multimedia capabilities, computer labs, and specialized equipment for practical training in natural sciences and technology courses (also see section 1.3. of this report). Notably, DU has created an accessible environment for students with special needs, ensuring the study premises are inclusive (elevators, UD marks, etc.). The modernized infrastructure, funded partially by European funding, provides specialized classrooms, equipment for audio and visual learning, and children's playrooms, supporting diverse learning requirements especially during site visit experts noticed that STEM science study equipment is available for pedagogy students, integrated approach leads to deeper knowledge of science subjects.

2.3.2. N/A

2.3.3.

The financial structure includes collaboration with DU's Financial and Accounting Department to manage study programme costs effectively, ensuring sustainability. However, financial limitations, such as the dependency on state funding, may present challenges for continuous updates to resources and infrastructure, potentially impacting study programme sustainability.

The study programme's financial model indicates that a minimum enrollment of 11 students each for full-time and part-time studies is required to maintain study programme profitability (SAR, p. 293). This threshold ensures stable funding while accommodating resources necessary for high-

quality delivery. The study programme sets tuition fees at €1,600 for full-time and €1,500 for part-time students annually, with discounts available, as specified on DU's website (<https://du.lv/gribu-studet/studiju-maksa-un-atlaides/>). These fees are incorporated into student agreements, covering the entire study period and ensuring transparency and predictability in costs. In collaboration of municipalities there is provided municipal funding for reducing tuition fees for students employed by these municipalities.

Financial resources ensure quality through a calculated cost-per-student model (e.g., approximately €7,276 per student), covering staff salaries, missions, services, and resources like books, equipment, and materials. This allocation is designed to sustain programme quality and manage operating costs effectively (SAR, p. 292).

In 2015 DU provided implementation of the project "Improving the quality of Daugavpils University study programs and ensuring environmental accessibility", which was co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) (SAR, p. 291). Implementation of the project has been significant to provide necessary infrastructure for society inclusion aspects. Most of modernization and infrastructure development projects are realized by EU funding (site visit 24th of September, 2024).

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

Implementation of the study programme is ensured on the basis of the financing of the state budget and tuition fees. Existing funding makes it possible to ensure the implementation and sustainability of programmes, but at the same time depends significantly on fluctuations in student numbers, thus affecting the development potential of the DU study programme.

There are appropriate resources for the study process (materials, library, ICT), but there might be improvements needed that could increase study quality.

Strengths:

1) The university's ability to attract external funding has made it possible to ensure infrastructure modernisation and resources are responsive to study needs.

Weaknesses:

1) High financial dependency on student numbers limits DU's long-term development opportunities.

Assessment of the requirement [6]

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Graduates of the Primary Education teacher study programme indicated that during the study process there is a shortage of learning materials availability (including digital learning platforms in soma.lv, skolo.lv). Assessing the available information on learning materials that are included in study course descriptions, as well as expert teams observations of the library during the site visit, it was noticed that majority of available learning materials for Primary education teacher study programme are published before 2020. It is important that, in the framework of education reform, by changing the approach to integrated and interdisciplinary content, as well as the competence approach directly at the Primary education stage, teaching materials have to

provide substantial support for the introduction of this approach, as they connect the pre-school level in which such learning material are not used till the grade 7 - 12 education level, which is more academically supported by the availability of learning materials due to specialization in learning subjects.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1.

Study programme implementation is provided by docents (37%), lecturers (30%) and associated professors (13%). In total, 46 teaching staff are involved in the study program: of the 38 elected teaching staff, 5 are professors, 6 associate professors, 14 docents, 9 lecturers, 3 senior researchers, 1 researcher, of which 29 have a doctor's degree, and 9 have a master's degree (SAR, p. 296).

The study programme is designed to combine theoretical knowledge with practical expertise. Many lecturers have significant experience within the Latvian education system, bringing real insights into classroom management, inclusive education, and curriculum design. Additionally, teaching staff engage actively in ongoing professional development, including participation in international projects like ERASMUS+ and NORDPLUS, which enriches their exposure to modern educational methodologies (SAR, p. 293). Some lecturers are involved in substantial educational reform projects, such as the European Social Fund's "Competence Approach in Teaching Content" project, which has enhanced the programme's alignment with competency-based education.

DU challenge is maintaining up-to-date practical experience among academic staff, particularly as many are deeply involved in research rather than classroom teaching. During interviews with teaching staff it was confirmed that the majority of them are not having practice opportunities at general education institutions except guest lectures. Sustainable system of practice could benefit in the integration of practical examples into coursework. Additionally, while the staff has access to professional development, increasing workload pressures could limit their participation in these activities and thereby impact ongoing improvements in teaching quality. The university should prioritize resources for continuous professional engagement and possibly offer incentives to support faculty balancing research, teaching, and professional development, especially by motivating teaching staff to keep professional practice within the study programme. During interviews at the site visit it was noticed that there should be an opportunity for increasing the level of English to provide access to current science findings in the Education Science field otherwise this raises concerns about DU capability to provide science based didactics in study process.

Overall, the qualification and experience of the first cycle professional study programme teaching staff are well-suited to deliver a high-quality study programme, effectively preparing students for the demands of primary education. Regular participation in research, policy-making, and professional teaching activities ensures that the study programme remains relevant and aligned with both national and international educational standards.

2.4.2.

The study programme employs a mix of full-time, elected, and guest lecturers. Full-time staff agreements last six years, promoting stability, while visiting lecturers, hired for their specialized expertise, offer short-term contributions that support specific course needs, enhancing the study programme's practical relevance (SAR, p. 297). Notable additions to the teaching team, such as experts in inclusive education and natural sciences, reflect the study programme's responsiveness

to evolving educational needs and reinforce students' exposure to diverse teaching practices and perspectives (SAR, p. 298).

The teaching staff has enhanced their competencies through regular engagement in professional growth activities, which includes international mobility and research. This involvement has enabled the incorporation of modern pedagogical methods, making the curriculum increasingly relevant to contemporary educational standards (SAR, p. 298). Yet experts notice that incoming mobilities of foreign teaching staff is not sufficient to provide added value of internationalization.

A key risk lies in maintaining these high standards amidst turnover, as the study programme has recently experienced changes in teaching staff due to employment terminations (SAR, p. 297). During interviews with teaching staff experts gained evidence that financial obstacles (necessity to combine different positions to earn sufficient salary) determine the necessity of combined employment positions with direct impact to salary of the staff.

2.4.3. N/A

2.4.4.

The materials provided by DU (List of publications (see SAR annex 2.2.4. List of publications.pdf), CVs of academic staff (see SAR annex CV_ENG.zip) and the document "Compilation of quantitative data on the scientific/applied research of the academic staff involved in the implementation of the study field "Education and pedagogy" 2018-2023" (see SAR annex 2.4.4. Quantitative data on scientific work)), states that in total during the reporting period more than 200 studies were published in the Scopus and Web of Science databases, as well as more than 100 publications indexed in other journals and confirms that teaching staff who is teaching in the first cycle professional higher education study programme "Primary Education Teacher" have necessary amount of publications published in peer-reviewed editions, including international editions.

The teaching staff in addition to their academic work at the university, have active practical experience working in general education schools (SAR, p. 294).

2.4.5.

The faculty holds semesterly meetings among lecturers from various departments, such as the Faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, and Health Care, to review course outcomes and integrate updates. These discussions cover syllabus adjustments, content quality, and student support needs, which include specific considerations like resources for independent work and content for mid-term exams. Working groups are formed as necessary to address these topics systematically, ensuring continuous alignment with the evolving needs of the field (SAR, p. 233-234).

Faculty collaboration emphasizes a student-centered methodology by developing courses with learning outcomes. This approach encourages students' active engagement in their learning, promoting self-evaluation. Students and faculty interact to ensure course content is relevant and understandable. The DU Quality Management Policy further incorporates student feedback in the study process, allowing students to contribute to curriculum improvements, thereby supporting study programme cohesion and effectiveness (SAR, p. 234). Still it is necessary to determine a clear system of participation of DU student surveys as in interviews with students during the site visit experts noticed low involvement of students in this process (23rd and 24th of September, 2024) - the systematic approach of SP evaluation by students leads to common teaching staff involvement in development of SP and evaluation of results on SP level, not only mandatory study course.

The study programme maintains strong ties with local employers and educational institutions, which provides insights into labor market demands and helps shape a relevant curriculum. This has been significantly noticed during interviews with employers. DU partners with educational institutions in Lithuania, Poland, and Spain to enhance the competencies of primary education students and faculty.

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

DU ensures the involvement of the necessary teaching staff in the quality of implementation of study programmes, organizing co-operation both in an academic and organizational levels. Teaching staff have been provided with support for their professional development within the DU. Guest lecturers are assigned to implement the missing competencies. There is unused potential of attracting foreign lecturers in the field of pedagogical science. The set of financial conditions limits strategic opportunities to attract researchers and lecturers for long-term and provide predictable long-term employment conditions for existing teaching staff.

Strengths:

1) Model of teaching staff cooperation, mutual integration between study programmes in research projects ensures transfer of knowledge and support during education reforms.

Weaknesses:

1) Employment uncertainty affects the ability of teaching staff to implement their academic or scientific initiatives, given the high correlation between remuneration and external sources of funding.

2) There is no established regular system of teaching staff professional development through workplace practice where every member of teaching staff has regular practice within his /her study course in primary education.

3) Student involvement in evaluating the content of the study programme courses is low and students do not have clear motivation of providing feedback so that teachers can assess the improvements needed in their courses.

Assessment of the requirement [7]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Qualification of the teaching staff meets conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements set out in the respective regulatory enactments (SAR, p. 293 - 300; 2.4.4. Quantitative data on scientific work).

2.5. Assessment of the Compliance

Requirements

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The content of the study programme is designed according to the Cabinet of Ministers

Regulation No 305 of 13 June 2023 "Regulations on the State Standard of Professional Higher Education", the compliance confirmed by SAR Annex 3.2.1 "Compliance with the state education standard Primary Education Teacher".

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The study programme leads to the professional qualification of the teacher, which corresponds to level 6 of the Latvian Professional Qualifications (6.PKL), level 6 of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (6.LQF) (<https://www.nki-latvija.lv/en/lqf>) and level 6 of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF 6) (in Latvian only:

http://www.nki-latvija.lv/content/files/EKI-limenu-apraksti_1.pdf

The study programme content complies with Professional standard "Teacher" (2020).

<https://registri.visc.gov.lv/profizglitiba/dokumenti/standarti/2017/PS-138.pdf>. The compliance is also confirmed in annexes 3.2.1. "Compliance with professional standards Primary School Teacher".

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The descriptions of study courses and the study materials are prepared in Latvian – the language in which the study programme is being implemented. The description complies to and contains all the information according to regulation requirements set forth in Section 56.1, Paragraph two and Section 56.2, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education. Yet there are missing objectives of modules.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme complies with requirements confirmed by SAR Annex 3.1.2. Diploma and supplement example_Primary Education Teacher_FT_PT.

Also, awarded diploma complies with Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 202 "Procedure for Issuing State Recognised Higher Education Documents"

<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/256157-kartiba-kada-izsniedz-valsts-atzitus-augstako-izglitiba-apliecinosus-dokumentus>

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Teaching staff proficiency in the official Latvian language (C1 or B2) is confirmed by SAR annexes "2.3.7. Overview of teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study field "Education and pedagogy"" and "STATEMENT National language skills.docx".

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The samples of study agreements attached to the SAR (annex 2.1.4. Agreement on Studies) comply with Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 70 "Mandatory provisions in the study agreement" <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/152072-studiju-liguma-obligati-ietveramie-noteikumi>.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Confirmed by SAR annex 2.1.4. Cooperation agreements, in case that DU suspends implementation of the professional higher education study program "Primary Education Teacher", University of Latvia undertakes to provide opportunities to continue studies in the professional higher education study program "Primary Education Teacher" (42).

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Confirmed by SAR annex named CONFIRMATION compensation guarantee for students.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Compliance of the professional higher education study programme "Primary Education Teacher" with other regulations is confirmed by SAR annex Compliance with the state education standard_Primary Education Teacher_EN.docx and 3.2.1. Compliance with professional standards_Primary School Teacher_EN.docx where compliance with Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers of September 11, 2018 No. 569 "Regulations on education and professional qualifications necessary for pedagogues and procedures for improving the professional competence of pedagogues".

Assessment of the requirement [8]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Study programme is implemented within requirements set forth in the Law on Higher Education Institutions and other regulatory enactments.

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

The study programme is implemented in close cooperation with employers, especially by monitoring the needs of employers and students. Study programme provides opportunities for students with short-cycle education for increase of qualification and wider opportunities in the labour market. Graduates recognize significant knowledge and skills that they have gained during the study process as crucial fundamentals for their work at schools.

The Study programme is realized with necessary accuracy to basic education standard needs although there is a lack of current up-to-date resources for effective study and scientific research process. Although the content of the study programme responds to employers' needs, interviews with students indicated that the existing provision is not fully adequate for the provision of educational institutions' resources, with the result that students often use other educational institutions' approaches to both pupil learning materials and educational institutions' digital systems. Thus, students who are not employees of educational institutions at the same time are in a situation which is not comparable to those who are already employed in educational establishments. This could in part be offset by a wide range of study materials and the availability of resources in the open access in the DU library, but during the visit experts were presented with resources that have no direct relation to the specifics of primary school age. Consequently, IT is necessary to evaluate and optimize the improvement of the provision of study materials available within the framework of the programme and, in particular, the restoration of library resources in accordance with the new approach based on the competence approach. Study programme demands large resources and a crucial part of it comes from external funding (projects) that do not give opportunity for sustainable development projects in mid-term.

It should be noted that the actual significant number of employees among students significantly limits their opportunities to engage in scientific activities or mobility, and no solution has now been

found to propose alternative solutions in these circumstances that correspond to the limited opportunities of students.

Teaching staff represents competence in multiple education sectors yet there is no regular connection of teaching staff and general education practice that should be supported as mandatory professional development activity. This also would provide clear support of students on case studies and problem identification arising outstanding of study curricula. Given the considerable workload mentioned by teachers in various positions at the university, it is necessary to ensure paid, regular work-based internships in the primary education phase, in particular to strengthen also high-value future research inputs and growth opportunities for students in the programme.

At the same time, the programme makes an important contribution to providing growth opportunities for students who have previously acquired short cycle preschool teacher qualification and, as a result, the university can ensure continuity in the preparing of professionals with broader qualifications.

Evaluation of the study programme "Primary School Teacher"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Primary School Teacher"

Short-term recommendations

- | |
|--|
| 1) Ensure, in cooperation with education sector providers of learning resources, student access to school management and learning resource platforms used in educational institutions with individualized or authorized student access at least for demo use functionality by the beginning of next 2025-2026 academic year. |
| 2) Establish and provide a solution to regular work placement practice in the workload of teaching staff - conducting of study lessons in primary schools in order to ensure the application of their practical experience in the implementation of study programme, by the beginning of next 2025-2026 academic year. |
| 3) Provide systematic involvement of students in evaluation of study programme courses and feedback report for students, by the beginning of next 2025-2026 academic year. |

Long-term recommendations

II - "Educational sciences" ASSESSMENT

II - "Educational sciences" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1.

According to the SAR, p. 206, the Academic Master's study programme "Educational Science" corresponds to the study field, since the creation of the study field "Education and Pedagogy" by the study programmes related to teacher education included in it. The name of the study programme,

the degree to be obtained, as well as the compliance of the parameters of the study programme in achieving the specified results of the study programme is regulated by the classification of education in Latvia.

Educational Science has been defined in the development strategy of Daugavpils University as one of the four priority areas of research. It also is implemented as a development strategy of the study field "Education and Pedagogy", based (among other regulations) on Latvia's Sustainable Development Strategy until 2030. According to the SAR, p. 206, the DU is the largest and most important university in the Eastern Latvian region, whose activities are focused on the development of education, science, culture, innovation and business environment both in the city of Daugavpils, in the municipalities of Latgale and Selia.

This curriculum was developed as a second-cycle higher education study programme with study results and study content formulated in accordance with the European Qualifications Framework. Experts find the content of the curricula well developed: the subjects cover actual educational and societal aspects. Significant part of the curriculum is meant for practice, and also for writing the master thesis. The curriculum ensures the entry of highly qualified specialists into the education system, promotes the implementation of the competency approach in the learning process, as employers acquire teacher-researchers who have acquired the knowledge and skills necessary for pedagogical activity and are capable of generating and implementing innovative ideas in the field of education.

According to the SAR Annex 3.2.1., there are subjects about the theory of education; also ethics, norms, environment, history and philosophy, critical thinking, research methods, scientific research and publishing, psychology and cognitive processes, personality and behavioral, quality of education and interculturality.

Experts met both the alumni, employers and students in the site-visit, and found out that this study programme works well. Schools are pleased with the graduates: the education from DU is practical enough, and helps to cope with the challenges in educational institutions. As there is a lack of teachers in Latvia, most students work in the field during their studies already. Obviously the DU has a significant role in this region, as almost all teachers both in preschools and schools got the diploma from the DU.

Experts can conclude that the study programme complies with the study field - for students and also for the employers.

2.1.2.

According to the SAR, p. 206, the scope of the study programme, duration of implementation, parts of the study program and their scope, mandatory content, basic elements and procedure of evaluation and scope of academic practice, principles of implementation, etc. are regulated by law, and it meets the requirements specified in the regulations. This study programme has been developed in accordance with the development trends of the industry in Europe and the world, with special emphasis on the research activity component. The curriculum is based on the European Commission's thematic group "Professional development of teachers" to the collected recommendations on groups of pedagogical competencies to be developed for teachers in the process of professional development. The outcomes correspond to the aim and tasks of the study programme, which are focused on improving students' professional pedagogical, management and research competence, integrating the latest scientific knowledge and innovative ideas. After studying in "Educational Sciences", a master's degree in educational sciences is awarded, which

corresponds to the seventh level of the Latvian, and also European qualifications framework, as is written in the SAR, p.206.

There are trends in several European countries that professionals who have obtained their previous education in another field, want to achieve the pedagogical competence, and then choose the master's studies in the field of educational sciences. The duration of full-time studies is one year and three months to two years. The 75 ECTS curriculum (short version) admits applicants, who have a first-cycle higher education in pedagogy or in educational science with at least 240 ECTS. Also a successful entrance exam is needed. The 120 ECTS curriculum (long version) accepts applicants, who have a higher education with a completed study programme of at least 180 ECTS. Also the successful entrance exam is obligatory. As this study programme is also implemented in English, for studies in English the knowledge of the English language at least at B2 level is needed.

The long version of this curriculum is kind of 'open' - as it accepts students from different fields, with different educational backgrounds. Experts find this possibility important and useful, especially in this region - quite far from the capital, and very near to the border of the state. It helps to raise both educational competences, and the number of well educated people with master degrees in this area.

The entrance exam consists of a written and an oral part: an essay about actual problems in the field of education, in context of the chosen specialization (about 300-500 words); the oral part consists of discussions, where the candidate's communication and foreign language skills are evaluated - as is written in the SAR, p. 206. The Experts met alumni, who said that the entrance exam was rather difficult.

During the site-visit, experts got an optimistic impression of the curriculum, as the feeling of feedback from students, graduates and employers is positive. For example, a graduate told experts that he is very happy about this education. Despite a small remark: for a student who already has several bachelor degrees, the study programme sometimes was not challenging enough.

2.1.3.

According to the SAR, p. 205, the short-term and long-term recommendations were implemented as far as possible, e.g. international cooperation was expanded - in 2022-2024, foreign specialists from Taiwan, Lithuania, Poland, Switzerland, Finland, Estonia, Great Britain are involved in teaching study courses. But experts have not seen international agreements/contracts: it is hard to describe the essence of those international cooperations.

According to the SAR, p. 205, based on the structural changes made in DU in 2023, changes were made in the description and appendices of the academic master's study program "Education Sciences". For example, (according to the SAR, p. 201), since the start of implementation of „Educational Sciences“ in 2020/2021, students were matriculated in full-time studies, by implementing the specialization "Pedagogy" (study duration - 2 years) - the long study programme form, and the short study programme in four specialization directions: "Educational Management ", "Human behavior and education", "Teaching and learning for proficiency", "Diversity and inclusion in education" (study duration - 1 year and 3 months). The implementation of the recommendations is based on the DU "Study Process Development Plan 2022-2028". On the same page in SAR (p. 205), there is written that since the inclusion of the study programme in the study field, no significant changes were made in the parameters of the study programme.

As is written in the SAR, p. 213, the whole academic staff is involved in improvement-process: after

the approval period of the first study year, the lecturers involved in the implementation of the study programme analyzed and discussed the content of the study courses in the context of the study programme's achievable results in order to more fully ensure their continuity and mutual complementarity. Also students participate in improvement-process of the programme. For example, experts were told in the site-visit that feedback from students is asked and analyzed regularly, and through the programme director corrections will be made, if necessary. The summary of feedback can be found also in the SAR Annex 2.4.4.: students are satisfied with the structure of the study program and the study courses, as well as their distribution by semesters. Shortly: corrections have been effective - for example, all respondents positively evaluated the content of academic practice, which contributes to the development of their research competence, and also note the advantages of the e-study environment Moodle and the ease of its use in the study process, as well as the integration of online platforms in conducting classes, because all academic master's study programmes. Therefore, it can be concluded that the updated study programme provides an opportunity for students to achieve all study results planned in the study programme.

According to SAR, p. 216, in full-time studies, 1 Latvian credit point (CP) corresponds to 40 academic hours, of which 16 hours are contact hours, while 1 ECTS corresponds to 26.7 academic hours, of which 10.7 are contact hours, which is 40% of the intended amount. The remaining part of the amount of study work is the student's independent work.

2.1.4.

The curriculum of "Educational Science" was started in 2020. Only five students matriculated in the 1st year of study. The table 3.1.4.1 from the SAR summarizes information about students matriculated in all study years. According to this info, in the study year of 2023/24, there were 43 students in this study programme, all together. All matriculated students have been budget funded. According to the SAR, p. 210., the number of students in the long version of the study programme (120 ECTS) is a total of 5 students. The short version of the study programme (75 ECTS) has been more engaging for students and specifically in two specializations "Educational management" and "Diversity and Inclusion in Education".

During the last four study years, according to the table 3.1.4.2. of the SAR, 18 people have graduated from the study programme, 15 of whom have graduated from the short version study programme (75 ECTS) in specialization "Educational Management".

From the table 3.1.4.3. of the SAR, one can read that the total number of students, who have not completed their studies for various reasons, is 12: for example, they did not return from academic leave; or due to failure; or by their own choice; and/or because of not completing the study programme. Experts find this number quite big, especially when compared to the number of students in this study programme in general. In May 2024, 2 students are on academic leave (1 student in the 2nd year of 120 ECTS; and 1 student in the 2nd year of 75 ECTS curricula).

The DU has been dealing with the drop out problem: according to the SAR, p. 210, the above-mentioned data, as well as the results of the student survey, show that master's studies require careful organized work on the part of students and lecturers. So, already at the beginning of the 1st semester, there are discussions about the peculiarities of the organization of the study process: the lecturers and the study programme director try to help the master's students purposefully plan and organize their professional activities and studies in the master's study programme (balancing individual and group work). Experts appreciate this method and also the attitude.

In SAR, p. 208, there is the chapter: 3.1.3. Economic and/ or social substantiation of the study

programme, analysis of graduates' employment. Instead of economic aspects the social role of the study programme is analyzed. Experts conclude from this that despite the costs, the local region wins from the curriculum anyway.

As is written in SAR, p. 209, many graduates of "Educational Sciences" are employed in this region in the field of education in preschool, primary school, secondary school, professional education, including sports representatives, coaches, managers. Graduates note that during the study process they significantly enriched their knowledge and competences both within the module chosen by the teacher and in scientific work: during their studies they significantly developed their analytical and research skills, which is an essential result within the study programme.

2.1.5. N/A

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

There are two versions of this curriculum: longer and shorter study programmes. One is suitable for people with not-pedagogical BA degrees, too. The curriculum is quite new and well created. It seems like it has not reached the full potential of popularity yet, as the number of students is not high. The title, code, degree to be obtained, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study programme, as well as the implementation language, are reasonable and justified.

Strengths:

- 1) The master study programme is an important possibility to deepen knowledge about education.
- 2) The open curriculum helps to raise the number of pedagogical staff in the region.

Weaknesses:

- 1) The number of students is small.
- 2) Some additional activities against the dropout are needed.

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1.

The content of the study programme is presented in SAR Annexes 3.2.4. (master study programme plan) and 3.2.1. (mapping of master study programme courses). Changes in the content of study courses (before approval) are made and discussed in the Council of Education and pedagogy of DU. Compliance of study courses with the needs of the labor market and trends in educational sciences is regularly ensured - with the help of employers and alumni, who participate in the development process of curriculum, as was told to experts during the site-visit.

The mandatory part of the study programme includes courses in the field of Education sciences for the study and approbation of theoretical knowledge in the aspect of current problems: "History and philosophy of education in the perspective of the 21st century", "Research I" and "Quality of education". Both in the short and in the long version, 30 ECTS are master's thesis development ("Master's thesis development I" and "Master's thesis development II").

From the SAR, p. 213, one can read that in the long version of the study programme (120 ECTS), students, who have not previously studied pedagogy, take courses of basic pedagogical, management and research competences in the amount of 51 ECTS. Experts find this as a good

practice to have a specific module about the main essence of this study programme.

The course "Academic Practice in Education Sciences I", is taught simultaneously for both the short and long modules. Experts find this as a good practice to optimize the teaching. In addition to the mandatory part of the long programme, there are courses: "Introduction to the studies of Education sciences", "Psychology for education", "Research II".

According to Table 3.2.1.1. (SAR, p. 212), it is also possible to study some courses in smaller credits (3 ECTS): for example, Development of educational materials; Mentoring in education; Organization of technology-enriched learning process; Management psychology. Experts find this as a good practice of flexibility.

Experts were told in the site visit by employers, that graduates of "Education Sciences" have competences demanded in the labor market: they are able to see the education system as part of the global agenda, solve theoretical problems, conduct scientific research, educate society by working with residents of different generations, using information and digital literacy and management skills, develop new methodological materials.

According to the experts, the content of this study programme is well developed.

2.2.2.

According to the SAR, p. 214, the main research directions of "Education Sciences" at Daugavpils University are sustainable education in school, university, branch pedagogy and didactics of the subject. Publications (monographs or scientific articles) of "Education Sciences" faculty members are cited in high-level scientific databases (for example, SCOPUS, Thomson Reuter, ERIH plus, etc.). Also teaching staff involved in the study programme develop and publish methodical materials and teaching aids. Experts were told in the site-visit, that already during the entrance-interview the theme of master theses is discussed. Students can choose it themselves, and/or teachers suggest some aspect of their research fields.

In SAR, p. 216, since the start of the implementation of the study programme in September 2020 until January 2024, 18 master's theses have been defended. In the defense of the master's theses, the master's students demonstrate both knowledge and competences in the field of education: they have deeply and comprehensively studied current problems in educational sciences, using various research methods, analyzing research data and results. According to the SAR, p. 218, an average grade of master thesis is 8.5. This indicates a high level of professional and research training of graduates, which will ensure a more successful integration of graduates into the labor market. Also, the acquired academic education will provide opportunities for further studies at the doctoral level.

2.2.3.

According to the SAR, p.215., all study methods are aimed at the development of independent, critical thinking skills. They promote students' interpersonal communication, ability to work in a group, to resolve conflicts, as well as develop respect for human rights, honesty, creative use of knowledge, mastery of scientific methods of inquiry, curiosity, independence in solving work tasks. Experts were told in the site-visit, that as most students are working in the educational field already, the level of independence is really high. Also, the ability to think critically is important, as the effective use of time is the essence of everything: what to read, how to study, and when to do it - all those aspects need cognitive skills. From the master study programme plan, one can see that in most subjects there are 3-4 teachers. Experts were told in the site-visit, that this is because of students benefits: when there are many professors for one subject, then, at first, it is more

interesting for students, and, secondly, as every teacher is an expert of a fixed field, the content of this course will be deeper.

The aim of using different teaching methods is to maximize the development of cognitive skills, abstract and analytical thinking, development of research competence, and the acquisition of knowledge and skills applicable in professional practice. The implementation of the study programme is organized on the basis of a modern teaching and learning model, as DU has rich experience in teacher education. The study programme uses a variety of working forms and methods that are appropriate to the objectives of the courses and are student-centered. For example, according to the SAR, p.215., those various methods of contact study are: lectures, practical work, seminars, discussions, masterclasses, study projects, case- and problem analysis, project development, individual and group work, analysis of audio-visual materials, video, and practical workshops. During the site visit students confirmed use of those methods, they also stressed that the study is interesting.

During the studies, the study programme's teaching staff are cooperative and supportive, as evidenced by the individual consultations provided to students - as is written in the SAR, p.215. Also, students' initiative, independence and cooperation are encouraged, ensuring a student-centered approach. The organization of the study process and the choice of content are based on the needs and interests of each student, encouraging his/her own conscious and interested activity. For example, students can choose and create the themes of the master thesis themselves, teachers support and supervise the research - as was told to experts in the site-visit.

The diversity of the learners has been taken into account, e.g. work experience, students with disabilities, etc. The study programme management and teaching staff are supportive in dealing with organizational issues of the learning process. All students are provided with equal treatment and access to the resources necessary for work or studies. The work & study issues are dealt with in accordance with the laws of the Republic of Latvia, regulatory enactments, work and study agreements. A wide range of resources (library, modern study equipment, IT infrastructure) is available. Students have the opportunity to use lecture materials, presentations, assignments and other materials prepared by teaching staff in the e-learning MOODLE environment, thus ensuring the quality of the study programme.

The implementation of the study programme is based on a student-centered approach and the development of positive pedagogical relations, involving students in the evaluation of the study process, providing feedback and improving the study programmes, while encouraging them to be independent and responsible in achieving the results of the study process.

2.2.4. N/A

2.2.5. N/A

2.2.6.

In the site-visit the experts were told that a potential student talks about the planned theme of the master thesis already during the admission. During the oral part of the entrance examination, the committee discusses with the potential student about the desired specialization. Then the student is admitted to the chosen specialization. And the theme of the master thesis will be connected to the specialization, too.

Since the start of the implementation of the study programme "Educational Science" in September

2020 until January 2024, 18 master's theses have been defended. In the 2021/2022 study year, the first three master's theses were defended in the chosen specialization direction of the program (75 ECTS) "Educational Management", as well as the first two theses in the specialization of the program (120 ECTS) "Pedagogy". And in the 2023/2024 academic year, 5 master's theses were defended (75 ECTS) in the specialization "Educational Management" chosen by the study programme.

Topics of master thesis (according to SAR p. 217) are about current problems in educational sciences. Experts find the field of research topical and useful. Headlines of the master thesis are, for example: Spiritual well-being of elementary school pupils during the Covid-19 pandemic, Consequences of the distance learning process in Grades 1-3, Factors affecting the remote learning process in Form 9, The creation of a support system for Roma parents to include children in the general educational programs of minorities for primary education, Manifestations of the school as a learning organization approach in educational institutions. General education school teachers' understanding of global educational competence and participation in mobility projects; Organization of training sessions and the educational process to integrate 13-14-year-old footballers into professional football; Manifestation of self-management skills of 5-6-year-old children in the preschool pedagogical; Inclusive education in health and physical activity classes in mainstream secondary schools.

Experts find the themes/research problems topical and well connected to the study field. Only one remark: during the site-visit experts had the possibility to see the defended master theses. In some of them there were a lot of references from the Russian language, instead of other foreign languages.

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

The study implementation methods contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study courses and the study programme. Student-centered learning and teaching principles are considered. The content of the study programme is topical, corresponds to the objectives of the programme and ensures the achievement of learning outcomes, as well as meets the needs of the industry, labor market and scientific trends. Employers are pleased with graduates. The content of this programme covers both education and science. The quality of the master thesis is high, the themes are topical and well connected with pedagogical practices.

Strengths:

- 1) Students' individual needs are taken into account.
- 2) Teachers are supportive.
- 3) The themes/research problems of the master thesis are topical and connected to the study field.
- 4) The average grade of master thesis is 8.5.

Weaknesses:

- 1) In master theses there are too many sources in Russian language, compared to other foreign languages.

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The content of the study programme is topical, the content of the study courses is interconnected and corresponds to the objectives of the study programme and meets the needs of the labor market and scientific trends.

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1.

As the most important resource is a human factor, at first about the intellectual aspect. According to the SAR, p.219, the academic staff are responsible for the quality and evaluation of the study courses of the study programme: develops the study course, prepares its description, implements the study course; recommends study literature and periodicals; maintaining the material base of the study programme. Lecturers and leading researchers of this curriculum ensure the teaching of study courses, the conduct of academic practice in educational sciences and the development of a master's thesis. A study field council is headed by the director of the programme. Functions of this council are:

- develop the study program according to the direction;
- organize a self-evaluation process;
- analyze student's achievements;
- analyze the quality of academic work of the lecturers;
- promote the integration of scientific work in the study program;
- develop & implement the study course;
- recommend study literature and periodicals both to teachers and students;
- take care of the maintenance and renewal of the material base of the program.

Director of the study programme ensures the administration and management of the study programme, in cooperation with the council of the study field and the dean. So is the quality of intellectual resources of this study programme fixed.

The students of this study programme can use all resources of the DU. According to the SAR, p.219, in addition to traditional information resources, DU provides access to more than 100,000 subscribed e-resources in various branches of science. Methodical materials are being developed to expand the diversity of the new study courses. The already existing methodical materials in the MOODLE environment have been updated. During the site-visit experts saw the MOODLE-possibilities, meant both for teachers and students: for example, what is the teachers' view, and how the students can use courses. The principles of the Daugavpils University Information System (DUIS) provide that the study courses of the study programmes will be placed in e-studies (in the MOODLE environment), in which, according to the improvement and addition of the course content, the posted materials will be updated, including the latest scientific and methodical literature in the course descriptions. The e-study environment is also used for student and teaching staff communication, as well as the relevant regulatory acts are available in the DU Information System (DUIS). The main free e-resources are: Current normative act changes of education in the field, Cambridge University Press, EBSCO Academic Search Complete, Education and Culture, Letonics, LETA, Lursoft, LV, Preschool, ScienceDirect, Schools psychology, Schools first name, Scopus, For parents, Web of Science. Experts can conclude that the available material and technical provision allows the high-quality realization of the master study programme "Education Sciences".

The provision of the study process of this study programme mainly takes place in the DU study building at Parades street 1. If necessary, the premises located at Vienības Street 13 and DU Sports Complex at Kandavas Street 1 may be used, too. The auditoriums meet the needs of the study

process, they are equipped with the necessary technical equipment - Experts saw it during the site-visit.

According to the SAR, p. 223., students of this study programme can use various DU rooms: computer classrooms, auditoriums for consultations, meetings, library rooms for literature analysis, preparation of independent and applied research works, as well as specially equipped rooms for organizing conferences, study and extracurricular activities. Experts visited during site-visit many auditoriums and study possibilities in university buildings – rooms are well equipped and suitable for students. For example, the Expert saw an elevator; and in the library there is a specific computer for blind people. Also, the possibility of a free psychological supervisor is available in the campus, as Experts noticed themselves.

According to the SAR Annex 2.4.4. (feedback of students), students of this programme highly value the material and technical base of DU, especially the collection of the DU library. Also, in 2016, in the nomination "Education for all", the DU received the Apeiron award, which shows the quality of the accessibility of the university environment.

2.3.2. N/A

2.3.3.

The financial support provided for the study programmes includes funding from the state budget and DU's own revenues. The sources of financing the study programme are identified, and the financial resources will ensure the implementation of the study programme to achieve the study results. The financial resources are not divided by study areas, but directed to the provision of scientific activity of DU (remuneration of scientific staff, business trip expenses, grant funding, subscription to databases, capital expenses) and scientific institutes.

The costs of the study programme are calculated using the DU financial instrument developed by the Finance and Accounting Department of DU for determining the costs of study programmes and calculating profitability.

In SAR, p. 224-226, there is the information about study fees and costs. Study fees for the "Education Sciences" are set as follows:

Study fees for "Educational Sciences" are set as follows: the short version (1 year 3 months) - 1600 EUR in the 1st study year and 480 EUR in the 2nd study year, 2080 EUR in total; the long version (2 years) - 1600 EUR per study year, 3200 EUR in total.

The minimum number of students in the study program is 5 students, and in the specialization - 3 students - according to SAR, p. 226.

In SAR, p. 224 there is also written that the financial base and costs of the study programme of "Educational Sciences" are appropriate to the needs of the study programme and the implementation conditions, the sources of financing the study programme are identified, and the financial resources will ensure the implementation of the study programme to achieve the study results. Experts agree that the cost calculation for the study programme is made in such a way as to ensure a high-quality study process and ensure a sufficient financial basis for the implementation of the study programme. Full-time face-to-face studies are organized at the expense of the state budget and funds contributed by the students themselves or other legal and natural persons.

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

The study provision, informative provision (including library), material and technical provision comply with specific features and the conditions for the implementation of the study programme, create prerequisites for the achievement of the learning outcomes. In 2016, in the nomination Education for all, the DU received the Apeiron award, which shows the quality of the accessibility of the university environment. Also, students of this programme have no complaints. The funding available to the study programme ensures full implementation of the study process. The study programme has the number of students to ensure the profitability of the study programme and facilitates the development of the study programme.

Strengths:

- 1) Study rooms are well equipped with technical possibilities.
- 2) In the library there are many e-resources and important data-bases.
- 3) Students have the opportunity to use the psychological consultations in the DU for free.

Weaknesses:

- 1) In the library there seemed to be more books in Russian than in English.

Assessment of the requirement [6]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The study provision, scientific provision, informative provision (including library), material and technical provision and financial provision comply with specific features and the conditions for the implementation of the study programme, create prerequisites for the achievement of the learning outcomes and indicate the possibility to ensure a high-quality study process in this study programme.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1.

Members of the academic staff, who are involved in the study programme "Educational Sciences", are highly qualified: there are 4 professors, 4 associate professors, 7 assistant professors, 3 senior researchers, 3 lecturers, 1 associate visiting professor, 2 guest lecturers – practitioners, who balance theoretical and practical issues.

21 persons have been elected to the main job at DU (= 87,5%), of whom 18 have a doctor's degree, and 3 have a master's degree. It enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses.

According to the SAR, p.226, the criteria for the selection of teaching staff are: the qualification set by the regulatory acts; the interests of scientific research correspond to the content of the study programme/course; appropriate language skills; practical experience gained at work in a school or other educational institution; scientific and practical experience; participation in conferences and research projects.

The lecturers, involved in the provision of the study programme, improve their qualifications by

participating in international conferences, seminars, organizing summer schools, as well as by publishing their research in highly valued scientific journals. DU has a long experience in popularizing issues of sustainable education and sustainable development, which is facilitated by cooperation in projects and publishing scientific publications with the UNESCO Chair of DU.

There are several projects, organized by DU, to educate the academic staff: for example, the ESF project no. 8.3.6.2. "Creation and implementation of the education quality monitoring system", under the theme: "Evaluation of the competences of students in higher education and the dynamics of their development during the study period". Also "Using the tool for assessing the competences of students' transitions in the formulation and evaluation of study results". DU teaching staff have actively participated in the European Social Fund project "Competence approach to learning content".

In this study programme, professionals of their special field with practical work experience are involved in the study courses "Leadership of diversity", "Inclusive and special pedagogy solutions for diversity". And, for example, in "Academic practice in educational sciences I" and "Academic practice in educational sciences II" a leading researcher, who is an editor of the scientific journal "Journal of Teacher Education for Sustainability" has been involved.

Active lecturers participate in the teaching and experience exchange programmes offered by the Erasmus+ programme, which promotes their professional competence and sharing examples of good practice, thus contributing to the co-creation of new ideas for future projects with their scientific knowledge. According to the SAR Annex 2.5.2., in this study programme there have been 6 incoming teachers, during the last 5 years. But there also is written that there are no foreign students during the reporting period.

The quality composition of study programme "Educational Sciences" lecturers complies with the requirements defined in the Law on Higher Education Institutions. The qualification of the involved academic staff is appropriate to the specifics of the study programme and the conditions of implementation. Most teachers are Ph.D, which enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses.

2.4.2.

According to the SAR p.228, the recruitment of teaching staff takes place in accordance with the current needs of the study area: in accordance with the development plan, the provision of teaching staff included in the study plan was reviewed. Visiting lecturers are invited to implement a specific study course, and the company contract is concluded with them for one study year or study semester. Visiting lecturers mostly have additional qualifications or practical experience in the field of activity related to the course of study to be implemented. There also were changes in lecturer positions due to election or obtaining a master's/doctorate degree. The study courses "Violence at school", "Inclusive and special pedagogy solutions for diversity", "Expertise in preschool and school pedagogical process" included a guest lecturer, who has valuable practical experience in the field of inclusive education. The lecturers, involved in the implementation of the study programme, are simultaneously working on different levels: at bachelor's, master's and doctoral level.

According to the SAR, p. 229, the professional and scientific capacity of the teaching staff confirms the ability to motivate students with the help of their own personal experience.

Experts were told in the site-visit that one problem in this study field is the relatively high age of the academic staff. Experts analyzed the available data of teachers in this programme (see SAR Annex:

CV_ENG, where some CV-s are missing), and found out that the average age of the academic staff of this programme is about 57 years.

2.4.3. N/A

2.4.4.

Experts analyzed the list of teaching staff publications (see SAR Annex List of publications.pdf), but encountered some obstacles. The list of publications of the academic staff, unfortunately, are not by alphabetical order. Also pages have no numbers, which significantly complicated the work with this 186-pages-long document, if looking for some particular name. Also, some titles are not translated: for example the concept 'vadošā pētniece' is unknown to experts outside of Latvia.

The members of the academic staff are active authors. From the SAR Annex (CV_ENG) one can read, for example, that during the reporting period one professor has 180 publications (incl. in conference proceedings); one assoc. prof. wrote about 40 articles, participated in 16 conferences, and was involved in 10 projects.

Most publications have more than one author – the experts like this kind of cooperation. For example:

Capulis, S., Dombrovskis, V., Guseva, S., & Korniseva, A. (2023). Trend Analysis of Professional Competences of Sports Teachers and Coaches. *Pedagogika-Pedagogy*, 95(8), 1054-1069. <https://doi.org/10.53656/ped2023-8.5> (WOS).

Davidova, J. & Kokina, I. (2019). Implementation of knowledge management in a higher education institution to improve the internal quality of education. In L.Gomez Chova, A. Lopez Martinez, & I. Candel Torres (Eds.), *ICERI Proceedings: 12th International Conference of Education, Research and Innovation* (pp. 2850-2857). Seville, Spain: IATED Academy. ISBN: 978-84-09-14755-7; ISSN: 2340-1095 Indexed in: Web of Science.

Iliško, Dz, Badjanova. J, Ignatjeva, S., Zarina, S. (2018). The process of integration of the returnee immigrant children in the home country: Expectations and Reality. *Proceedings of the International ICERI Conference: 11th annual International Conference of Education, Research and Innovation. Seville (Spain). 12th - 14th of Nov., DOI: 10.21125/iceri.2018.1256.*

The educational background, work experiences and scientific activity of the academic staff in this study programme is excellent. According to the Annex nr. 2.4.4. (The quantitative data on scientific work), the number of teachers' publications, projects, expert performances, monographs, editing is impressive. Experts find those statistics, presented in the Table Compilation of quantitative data on the scientific / applied research of the academic staff involved in the implementation of the study dissection "Education and pedagogy" 2018-2023, about the Academic staff, elected by DU, perfect.

Experts conclude that the members of the academic staff for this study programme are active authors.

2.4.5.

According to the SAR p.231, and also to the site-visit, DU has close ties with employers and their organizations, knows the demand of the labor market, develops and implements educational programmes that meet the needs of the Latvian economy.

In cooperation with the Lifelong Learning Center of DU, the teaching staff was involved in providing

further education needs, promoting the professional and personal growth of each individual according to their abilities and wishes. In 2023, the teaching staff has successfully provided continuing education for employed persons within the framework of the ESF project 'Improving the professional competence of employed persons', in cooperation with the municipality of Daugavpils. As well as provided further education in data analysis and report preparation for practicing teachers and researchers; in personal data protection (IT), IT security and other aspects of digital competence; in business and other contexts.

The teaching staff of the study programme collaborate:

- deciding on activities related to the organization and management of the study process;
- analyzing the study content;
- planning and organizing scientific events (also for students); cooperating in the research field (conducting joint research within projects, writing joint publications, participating in scientific conferences, etc.).

From the study programmes one can see that many subjects are taught by several teachers. Also, scientific publications often have more than one author. All those aspects ensure the achievement of the aims of the study programme and the interconnection of study courses within the study programme. There also are good contacts and cooperation with alumni and graduates. For example, in the site visit experts also met a graduate, who has been invited to the school by teachers, to share the information about the professional growth to students.

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

The qualification of the teaching staff members enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses. A mechanism for mutual cooperation of the teaching staff ensures the achievement of the aims of the study programme and the interconnection of study courses within the study programme. The members of the academic staff published in peer-reviewed editions, including international editions.

Strengths:

- 1) 87,5% of the academic staff have been elected to the main job at DU.
- 2) Visiting lecturers are invited to implement a specific study course.
- 3) The professional and scientific capacity of the teaching staff confirms the ability to motivate students with the help of their own personal experience.
- 4) The members of the academic staff are active authors.
- 5) The DU has close ties with employers and their organizations.

Weaknesses:

- 1) The average age of the academic staff is rather high.

Assessment of the requirement [7]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The qualification of the academic staff ensures the achievement of the aims of the study programme and the interconnection of study courses within the study programme.

2.5. Assessment of the Compliance

Requirements

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The scope of the study programme, duration of implementation, parts of the study programme and their scope, mandatory content, basic principles and procedure of evaluation and scope of academic practice, principles of implementation, etc. are regulated by the Cabinet Regulations No. 240 "Regulations on the State Academic Education Standard". (SAR, p. 206; Annex 3.2.1. Compliance with National standart_AMSP Education sciences.docx).

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The study course description in the English and Latvian language can be found in SAR Annexes. (3.1.2.Studiju kursu apraksti_AMSP Izglītības zinātnes.zip and 3.1.2.Study course descriptions_AMSP Education sciences.zip) and they correspond to the Law on Higher Education Institutions, Section 56 (1) Paragraph 2, 56 (2), Paragraph 2.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The sample of diploma complies with Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 202 "Procedure for Issuing State Recognised Higher Education Documents" (SAR Annex 3.1.2.Diploma and supplement_AMSP Education sciences.zip).

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements set by the law, according to the Annexes "2.3.7. Basic information about teaching staff" and "STATEMENT_Article 55_AMSP Education Sciences".

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The Latvian language knowledge among the academic staff is acceptable: SAR Annex 2.3.7.: Basic information about teaching staff and Annex Statement: national language skills.doc.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

According to the SAR Annex 2.3.7.: Basic information about teaching staff and Annex: Statement-foreign language B2 skills, the teaching staff members involved in this study programme, have at least B2-level knowledge.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The sample of the study agreements complies with the regulations: SAR Annex: 2.1.4.: Agreement on studies.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

In the SAR annex 2.1.4.Cooperation agreements, there is the confirmation that students will be provided with opportunities to continue their study programme in other institution. In case that DU suspends implementation of the master study programme "Educational sciences", University of Latvia undertakes to provide opportunities to continue studies in the master study programme "Educational sciences" (45).

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The DU has provided confirmation that students are guaranteed compensation for losses if the

study programme is not accredited:

Annex: CONFIRMATION: Compensation guarantee for students. doc.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Assessment of the requirement [8]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The study programme complies to all requirements of national regulations.

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

Experts find this study programme well established, with some remarks. The content of the curriculum is excellent; students, graduates and employers are pleased with the quality of the study programme. The subjects in this curriculum are well connected to society, school, and educational problems in general. But there still is some space for improvement, which can be organized in the near future. Expert panel also support the implementation of study programme "Educational sciences" (45142) in English. Both of these study programmes increase the internationalization of studies of Education sciences, by greater attraction of foreign students and visiting professors, and developing a globally-minded personality capable of acting responsibly within educational systems, both nationally and globally.

The weaknesses and strengths identified in the study programme are:

STRENGTHS:

1. 87,5% of the academic staff have been elected to the main job at DU.
2. The professional and scientific capacity of the teaching staff confirms the ability to motivate students with the help of their own personal experience.
3. The members of the academic staff are active authors of scientific publications.
4. The DU has close ties with employers and their organizations in the region.
5. Study rooms are well equipped with technical possibilities.
6. In the library there are many e-resources and important data-bases.
7. Students have the opportunity to use the psychological consultations for free.
8. Students' individual needs are taken into account.
9. Teachers are supportive.
10. The master themes/research problems are topical and well connected to the study field.
11. The average grade of master thesis is 8.5.
12. The master study programme is an important possibility to deepen knowledge about education.
13. The open curriculum helps to raise the number of pedagogical staff in the region.

WEAKNESSES:

- 1) The number of students is small.
- 2) The dropout is big.
- 3) In the library there seemed to be more books in Russian than in English.
- 4) In master theses too many sources are in Russian language, compared to other foreign languages.
- 5) The average age of the academic staff is rather high.

Evaluation of the study programme "Educational sciences"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Educational sciences"

Short-term recommendations

- | |
|---|
| 1) Emphasize to students the importance and increase their use of English language literature in preparing the final thesis: implemented within 1 year. |
| 2) Increase the literature in English as in the library the literature in English could be presented better (compared to the books in Russian language): implemented within 1 year. |
| 3) Consider adding some additional tasks for students on different levels, as some students already have more than one bachelor degree: considered within 1 year. |

Long-term recommendations

- | |
|---|
| 1) Increase the engagement of doctoral students into the teaching process and encourage them to continue their involvement in academic activities after graduation. |
| 2) Develop a strategic plan to increase the number of students enrolled in the programme. For example, consider a dedicated module about topical education issues, which could attract students to continue their studies at Masters level. |
| 3) Develop a strategic plan to reduce student drop-out in the study programme. |

II - "Teacher" ASSESSMENT

II - "Teacher" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1.

The goal of the first-cycle professional higher education study programme "Teacher" is to equip students who hold a Bachelor's degree, first-cycle professional higher education, or an equivalent degree in a relevant non-pedagogical field with the skills and qualifications required for a teaching career. This study programme enables students to acquire the teacher qualification according to the "Teacher" professional standard in one of the teaching specializations. It prepares them to undertake professional teaching roles across all educational levels and types. The study programme aligns with the broader objective of the "Education and Pedagogy" field: to train highly qualified, skilled, and excellence-driven teachers across Latvia, offering them essential knowledge, skills, and

competencies that meet EU standards, and drawing on foundational and applied educational research results. (SAR, p.133) This particular study programme helps teachers to acquire the knowledge and skills they need to apply their previously acquired academic knowledge and professional skills in an educational institution.

DU implements the study programme in cooperation with the University of Latvia, RTU Liepāja Academy and "Teaching Force", supervised by the Ministry of Education and Science. The project "Teaching Force" is implemented within the framework of the European Social Fund co-financed project No 8.2.1.0/18/I/004 "Innovative research-based study programmes of the University of Latvia in the field of study "Education, Pedagogy and Sport"" (SAR, p.138).

2.1.2.

The purpose of the first cycle professional higher education study programme "Teacher" is to develop the competence necessary for pedagogical activities and obtain a teacher's qualification in accordance with the professional standard "Teacher". The title of the study programme is "Teacher", study programme code and the professional qualification to be obtained are regulated by external normative acts. The learning outcomes of the study programme are interrelated and relate to the acquisition of theoretical knowledge about educational sciences, the development of skills and personal competences such as critical teaching and cooperation with other teachers (SAR, p.133).

Admission requirements are bachelor's degree or first-cycle professional higher education or equivalent higher education in the chosen field of study in the appropriate field of science and an entrance examination (SAR, p.130). The criterion is implemented at the required level. Although a teacher would ordinarily be qualified through a bachelor's level study programme, this study programme was created in the context of a shortage of teachers in many parts of Latvia, especially in the peripheral regions.

The study programme's mission is to address the urgent shortage of teachers in Latvia's urban and rural schools, and Daugavpils University is addressing this issue in the Latgale and Sēlija region. Similar practices are being implemented by other "Teaching Force" partner universities. The scope of the study programme and the admission criteria reflect the need to study mainly courses in educational sciences and the specificities of the teaching profession rather than to acquire in-depth knowledge in the chosen specialised subject.

The duration of the study programme is 1 year and that is reasonable due to the admission requirements for prior higher education. The scope of the study programme consists of the compulsory content of the study programme consists of 42 CP (63 ECTS), structured into theoretical courses (6 CP/9 ECTS), professional specialisation courses (4 CP/6 ECTS), elective courses (2 CP/3 ECTS), internship (20 CP/30 ECTS) and the state examination - thesis development and defence (10 CP/15 ECTS) (SAR, p.134).

The study programme is taught only in Latvian, which is understandable due to the need to increase the number of teachers nationally.

2.1.3.

Short-term recommendations from previous licensing process have been enacted. Changes in terminology and regulatory framework such as: the name of the study field has been changed to "Education and Pedagogy", the name of the study programme has been clarified to "First cycle professional higher education study program "Teacher"", the type of study programme has been clarified to "first cycle study programme of professional higher education", due to the transition to the ECTS system the scope of the study programme has been increased by 2 CP (3 ECTS) and total

amounts to 42 CP (63 ECTS), due to the structural reforms of DU, the name of the faculty has been changed to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (SAR, p.128-129).

It is to be highly appreciated that DU has been able to adapt to the new legal circumstances and offer different official languages of the European Union for aspiring foreign language teachers (e.g. Swedish, French, Spanish) (SAR Annex 3.2.4. Study_plan_short_Teacher).

Latvian will no longer be necessary for minority education institutions (it will have to be changed in the course curriculum, unless there is a plan to attract foreign students who would study one foreign language and Latvian as a foreign language).

2.1.4.

The leading role of the University of Latvia in the student enrolment process of the project "Teaching Force" has created unfavourable conditions for Daugavpils University in terms of the number of students compared to the total number of students in the project "Teaching Force".

The study programme has been implemented since 2020/2021, when 16 students were enrolled, in 2021/2022 - 9 students, 2022/2023 - 5 students, 2023/2024 - 8 students (SAR Annex 3.1.2. Statistical data on students_short_Teacher), 2024/2025 - 4 students (it was mentioned during the visit). The number of students in 2022/2023 and 2024/2025 raises concerns about the economic justification and cost-effectiveness of the study programme. In addition, in more than half of the cases, the student studies their specialisation individually, as other students have not applied for a particular specialisation in a given year. The positive aspect is the possibility of individual learning and the individualisation of the study process, but this is also a significant negative aspect because it is not possible to use methods that require you to work in a group and learn the details from the practical experience of others.

Employment is not an obstacle in this study programme, as all students work in educational institutions alongside their studies for an optimal workload that can be combined with their studies in DU (SAR, p.142).

In Latvia, 51% of teachers are over the age of 50, indicating that half of the teaching workforce will need to be replaced within the next decade. In recent years, there has been no significant shift toward younger generations in the teaching profession, so based on current change management trends, a gradual generational transition is anticipated. While this transition may not happen quickly, it will be crucial to equip the next generation of teachers for future educational demands (SAR, p. 136).

There has been a change from the original coordinator of the "Mission Possible" project programme, as the "Mission Possible" project programme has ceased to exist. Instead, three universities coordinate the activities: the University of Daugavpils, the University of Latvia and RTU University of Liepāja. These universities cooperate in the "Teaching Force" project programme, which is run by the Ministry of Education and Science. The University of Latvia plays a leading role in this cooperation and organises the admission process (SAR, p. 139).

Joint activities are held with students from other universities, cooperation with other higher education institutions contribute to a common understanding of the process of study. It is evident that the joint cooperation and the programme "Teaching Force" provide a different approach to the traditional learning process, which starts in the summer before the academic year and ends in the summer. The biggest disadvantage is visible in the student admission process, where Daugavpils

University is allocated a very small number of students (in this academic year only 4 students out of more than 100 students from in the all Partner Universities whole programme). In addition, students study in different specialisations, so on the one hand the learning process is more individualised, on the other hand the small number of students does not allow the use of different learning methods and they learn them only theoretically.

2.1.5. N/A

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

Based on the analysis of the documentation and meetings during the visit, experts have agreed that there is a compliance of the first cycle professional higher education study programme "Teacher" with the study field "Education and Pedagogy".

The title of the study programme, the classification code, the professional qualification complies with the defined scientific field name and qualification requirements in the obligatory regulations. The duration of study programme are two semesters or one year and the implementation language of study programme is Latvian. The learning outcomes - knowledge, skills and competences - are interrelated with the goal and tasks.

The corrections made to the study programme's parameters within the assessment of the study field are justified.

Strengths:

1) The study programme is developed within the framework of the project "Teaching Force" of the Ministry of Education and Science in cooperation with the University of Latvia and RTU Liepaja Academy. The study programme offers a jointly developed study content, while DU offers an individual approach to the learning process.

2) Daugavpils University's first cycle professional higher education study programme "Teacher" is much needed to curb the problem of teacher shortages in the region and proactively tackle the issue of ageing in teachers profession. Also the study programme is vital for educational ecosystem for the Eastern Latvia region.

Weaknesses:

1) In order to promote the growth of the number of students and the improvement of the learning process, it is necessary to set a minimum number of students in the second cycle higher education programme "Teacher". More important than the selection of more capable and excellent teachers is the availability in the rural areas.

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1.

The specialised study courses are structured in line with curriculum areas established by the ESF project "Competence Approach to Curriculum" ("School 2030") and outlined in the national primary education standard. These areas include natural sciences, mathematics, languages, technology, cultural awareness and artistic expression, social and civic studies, and health and physical activity (Cabinet Regulation No. 747). Likewise, the courses align with the areas specified in the national general secondary education standard (Cabinet Regulation No. 416) (SAR, p. 143). The purpose and results for study programme are according to study field and state professional higher education standard. The duration and scope of the study programme are appropriate according to the ECT points.

The study process is divided into different courses, which also includes a diploma thesis and a pedagogical practice. The compulsory content of the study programme consists of 42 CP (63 ECTS), structured into theoretical courses (6 CP/9 ECTS), professional specialisation courses (4 CP/6 ECTS), elective courses (2 CP/3 ECTS), internship (20 CP/30 ECTS) and the state examination - thesis development and defence (10 CP/15 ECTS). The seminars and practical work in all the courses far exceed the lectures (with the exception of "State, Civil and Environmental Protection", where there are only lectures, and "Educational Psychology", "Educational Management" and "Legal Aspects of the Pedagogical Process", where half the contact hours are lectures and half are seminars). In these courses, lectures represent only one quarter of the total contact hours.

Mandatory and additional courses available are according to state professional higher educational standard. Additional courses include mandatory course "State, civil and environmental protection" and module for building business professional competence "Study courses for building business professional competence: Entrepreneurship and project development", also "Educational management" and "Legal aspects of the pedagogical process".

Compliance with state standard and professional standard. Unified criteria for evaluating learning outcomes. According to meeting with experts, representatives of employers recognise that students have good digital skills, are able to evaluate their work and are oriented towards lifelong learning. According to SAR (p.144), every academic year the content of the study programme's courses is refreshed to reflect industry needs, labour market demands, and current scientific developments. Alignment with labour market trends and professional standards is maintained through collaboration with employers and by engaging professionals and senior methodologists to deliver the study courses.

The study programme meets the requirements, however, according to the Development plan of the study field "Education and pedagogy" at DU for the study year 2023-2028 second goal of Sustainable education that includes topics such as sustainable development and green competencies are not included in the study courses and learning outcomes of study process (except for the course "State, civil and environmental protection"). It is not necessary to create a separate course, but it is necessary to include it more widely in the study process (students would benefit most from including it in a specialized course, but DU is free to choose the best approach to implement it in the study process).

2.2.2. N/A

2.2.3.

The study programme is carried out following a work-based learning model, where students build their teaching competence both within the academic environment and through hands-on experience as teachers in their specific subject area at schools. This involves four days spent in the workplace, with studies conducted on Fridays and Saturdays. During the summer induction in the final two weeks of July, an intensive study period occurs over 10 working days, amounting to 80 academic hours (or 26.66 hours per ECTS) (SAR, p. 146).

The study process includes various methods such as traditional and interactive (role plays, as in the course Izgl4026, "Methodology of Teaching Social and Civic Studies"; situational analysis and simulations, as in Izgl4002, "Educational Psychology"; and applied games, such as in Izgl4020, "Methodology of Teaching Foreign and Second Languages: Teaching English and Latvian as Second Foreign Languages"). Additionally, laboratory and practical work are integral to courses like Izgl4008, "Methodology of Teaching Natural Sciences and Biology". Video materials and multimedia

technologies are also incorporated into the study process (SAR, p. 147).

Student and alumni representatives during the site visit recognised that the study process is student-centred, which leaves experts no doubt about learning and teaching principles that are in the best interest of students. Low drop-out rates, opportunity to individualise in-person, online or blended learning possibility and indicate favourable conditions for the study process.

Professional specialisation courses are delivered in a personalised approach because of small groups and supportive attitude from teaching staff. Courses "Educational Psychology", "Educational Management" and "Legal Aspects of the Pedagogical Process" are taught together with students from other study programmes, so it would be useful if specialised courses in teaching methodology could also be taught together with students from other programmes or universities within the same programme, at least parts of the course.

2.2.4.

The study programme follows a work-based learning approach, so the pedagogical internship is a crucial component of the studies. This is evidenced by the allocation of 20 CP/30 ECTS for the internship out of the programme's total 42 CP/63 ECTS. The internship is divided into two parts: (1) Izgl4003 Pedagogical Internship I (10 CP/15 ECTS) in the first semester, and (2) Izgl4004 Pedagogical Internship II (10 CP/15 ECTS) in the second semester (SAR, p. 152). The internship is realised with an agreement between Daugavpils University, the student's workplace and the student (SAR Annex 3.2.4. Practice regulations_short_Teacher).

The inclusion recommendations for this study programme (Nr. 2.1) already pointed to problems with funding for mentor teachers in education institutions, which are being addressed as long-term recommendations. Regulations on pedagogical practice with the qualification "Teacher" and the report on pedagogical practice I and II provide the necessary framework on the organisation of the practice, the rights and obligations of the student, the evaluation procedure and objectives.

From the point of view of the organisation of the process, finding an educational institution where the teachers of the specific subjects could work and participate in internship was identified as a problem. It is not always possible to teach a specific subject in an educational institution that is close to the student's place of residence. During the meeting with experts, a student indicated that he himself was required to look for an educational institution where he could work in order to implement the work-based learning programme.

2.2.5. N/A

2.2.6.

The topics of students' final theses are relevant to the study field and are in particular relevant to study programme linking to professional activity at a specific grade level and in a particular subject. Several of the diploma theses are related to the development of critical thinking, the development of students' self-directed learning and other topical methods and issues in educational sciences closely related to the competence-based learning approach.

The grades in these dissertations are extremely high, with an average of over 9 marks (SAR table 3.2.6.1, p.157). It is not evident that such excellent work is regularly presented at scientific conferences or additionally published. In this case, either the evaluation criteria should be strengthened or consideration should be given to supplementing the work with outstanding performers.

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

The content of study courses are interconnected, correspond to the objectives of the study programme and ensure the achievement of learning outcomes and complies with national regulations. There are issues with teacher-mentor programme for internships and finding workplace for new students that are being addressed.

Strengths:

- 1) Students, alumni and employer representatives agree that study process is student- centered that ensures low student drop-out rate.
- 2) The study process focuses on seminars and practical work rather than lectures. Unified criteria for evaluating learning outcomes have been developed.
- 3) Students and employers appreciate the quality and flexibility of studies. Teaching staff selflessly help students in the study process, which contributes to the well-being of students. Study process is student-centred and individualized in study courses for specialisations.

Weaknesses:

- 1) Specialised courses are taught individually or in very small groups of students.
- 2) Lack of learning outcomes on sustainable development. This topic is an important objective according to the Development plan of the study direction "Education and pedagogy" at DU for the study year 2023-2028.

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1.

HSZF will provide the necessary support staff to manage the study programme's administration. Teaching staff from HSZF, HSZI, and DVAF are responsible for overseeing and evaluating the quality of the study programme's course delivery by: (1) designing and developing study courses and preparing course descriptions; (2) delivering the study courses; (3) recommending up-to-date literature and periodicals; and (4) maintaining the programme's material resources. The Study Programme Director is responsible for the programme's administration and management, working with the Board of the field of study and the Acting Dean of HSZF. Together, they contribute to quality monitoring, programme self-evaluation, the integration of research and teaching, and the organisation of the study process (SAR, p. 159).

Information resources are available both on-site and electronically for remote use. Library opening hours are adapted to the needs of students and materials are available in both Latvian and foreign languages. Previous years' theses can be viewed on site. As seen during the experts' site visit, current literature is regularly ordered, both in hard copy and in scientific databases.

The principles of Daugavpils University Information System (DUIS) foresee that the course materials of study programmes (that are yearly updated) are placed in the e-learning environment (MOODLE),

but the possibilities of Google Drive can also be used for the creation of a collaborative environment and the placement of course materials (SAR, p. 160). In the course of the study programme's validation, support materials (manuals) for students for the conduct and analysis of pedagogical practice, as well as guidelines for the development of a diploma thesis were developed.

Some classrooms are equipped with technical solutions for distance learning or hybrid models, while others are equipped with material equipment that is not required for a specialised course, such as simultaneous interpretation equipment in the linguaphony room, licensed software in computer rooms for programming, automated design systems, basic robotics training kits, SwanSoft CNC Simulator software. During the experts' site-visit, the classrooms were shown. Students with functional disabilities are also provided with elevators and every student is offered psychological and career support. Technology teachers can use models for basic robotics, there are laboratories for scientific work, a Green Classroom and a Winter Garden.

2.3.2. N/A

2.3.3.

Only the study places financed by the state budget are provided for the students of this first cycle professional higher education study programme "Teacher". Scholarships for students were provided as funding from the Ministry of Education and Science in the amount of EUR 300.00 since the year 2024. The trend is for financial support to increase (SAR, p.161).

The basic funding of the study place of the study programme ensures a qualitative study process and sufficient financial basis and cost-effectiveness for the implementation of the study programme, provided that at least 3 students will be enrolled in the individual specialisations offered by DU and chosen by the students. According to the statistics in SAR (table 3.1.4.1., 3.1.4.2., 3.1.4.3., 3.1.4.4., p. 139.-141) none of the specialisations (except for two occasions) had 3 or more students.

The number of students in 2022/2023 and 2024/2025 raises concerns about cost-effectiveness of the study programme. The critical shortage of students may have negative consequences for the future of the study programme. It is necessary to agree on the minimum number of students in the study programme together with the University of Latvia, RTU Liepāja Academy and the project "Teaching Force".

The proposed calculation of financial security and profitability does not inspire confidence in the financial basis, which would provide for a little more than 10 thousand euro for all expenses this year and ensure the profitability for DU.

According to SAR (p.169), in the 2023/2024 academic year, 6 lecturers are employed in the study programme, who lead theoretical and professional specialization courses in the field, while 5 lecturers are engaged as supervisors and/or reviewers of diploma theses. The number of active students in the 2023/2024 study year is 8, i.e. 0.73 students per one lecturer. This year, the study programme has 4 students, so the proportion of number of students and the teaching staff is even more cost-ineffective.

In order to promote the growth of the number of students, the cost-effectiveness of the study programme and the improvement of the learning process, it is necessary to set a minimum number of students in the second cycle higher education programme "Teacher" (46141). As the study programme is taught jointly with other universities and the total number of students is approximately 100, a minimum number of students should be set for the opening of the study

programme. During the discussion with the study programme director, a minimum of 7 students was mentioned, but it is recommended to have a higher minimum number of students. More important than the selection of more capable and excellent teachers is the availability in the rural areas. As the process is organised by the University of Latvia from the capital city, it could negatively impact regional teachers possibilities. The possibility of cooperation in part of the specialised courses could be considered with students of the same specialisation from other universities or with students from the Bachelor's programme "Teacher".

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

The provisions for study process create prerequisites for the achievement of the learning outcomes. The main source of funding is state funding and the government also provides scholarships for students, which is showing an increasing trend. The financial justification provided may be questioned with such a small number of students.

Strengths:

- 1) Digital resources are actively used in the study process offered by DU. Various specialised tools and equipment are available if needed for the student's learning process.
- 2) Financial basis is fully provided by state funding, all students receive scholarships and additional salaries, so their financial situation may be better than relatively other students at the same stage of their education.

Weaknesses:

- 1) The number of students raises concerns about the financial sustainability of the study programme.
- 2) There are too many teaching staff members for each student.

Assessment of the requirement [6]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

All the necessary resources are available to ensure the study process and to achieve the learning outcomes set by the study programme.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1.

The teaching staff of the study programme include 38 teaching staff in the period from 2020 to 2023, but their real involvement in the study process depends on the results of student selection and the presence or absence of one of the offered specializations. Currently, in total, 35 teaching staff are involved in the study programme: of the 26 elected teaching staff members, 3 are professors, 4 associate professors, 7 assistant professors, 7 lecturers, 3 leading researchers, 2 researchers, of which 19 have a doctorate degree, and 7 have a master's degree, while 9 of the non-elected teaching staff, 7 are visiting lecturers with a master's degree and 2 visiting assistant professors with a doctoral degree (SAR, p.163).

There is a concern about the renewal of the teaching staff. Teaching staff in this study programme are well qualified and competent. To guarantee the high-quality and innovative execution of the study programme, specific criteria were established for selecting the teaching staff involved in the study programme. This ensures that the courses are taught by highly qualified educators with recognized expertise in both scientific and methodological work, as well as acknowledged specialists in their respective fields, who demonstrate innovative potential and leadership abilities. The primary criteria for selecting teaching staff include the qualifications of the teaching staff member must comply with the standards outlined in relevant laws and regulations (SAR., p.163-164, Annex CV_ENG). However, to promote academic career development in the study field "Education and pedagogy" this study programme could use more teachers who have started their careers as academics.

2.4.2.

Accordingly, to SAR (p. 166), there are only three situations when there have been changes in the teaching staff and that do not negatively affect the quality of the implementation of the study programme. Teaching staff who left the study programme were replaced by other teaching staff or invited from other DU departments. This allows to maintain the usual learning environment with minimal changes for the students.

The experts were convinced that academic staff strongly emphasise work-based learning and reinforce pedagogical skills for students. The provision of the academic staff involved in the study programme requires a strong orientation towards innovations in the field of education, ensuring the connection of theory and practice in order to effectively encourage the acquisition of a teacher's professional competence in the study process (SAR, p.166). Therefore, changes in the teaching staff do not have a negative impact on the study process.

2.4.3. N/A

2.4.4.

The leading lecturers in the study courses all have several scientific publications indexed in Web of Science/ SCOPUS databases or other peer-reviewed publications. Professors almost all have at least 20 publications of this kind, and Associate Professors almost all have at least 10 peer-reviewed scientific publications. For some faculty members there is no data or no indication of the number of peer-reviewed publications. In this case, it was not necessary to analyse the CV of the person concerned to find out about their practical experience. All teaching staff members that were checked not only met but also exceeded the minimum requirements for practical experience. (SAR Annex 2.4.4. Quantitative data on scientific work, CV).

Teaching staff are qualified and participate in scientific research and all the faculty members involved in the study programme have participated in the implementation of various teacher education programmes, accumulating rich experience in the development and teaching of courses of study in the field of education sciences, subject area methodology, and conducting teaching practice.

DU faculty members were provided with a unique opportunity to participate in the ESF project "Strengthening the Capacity of Academic Staff of Daugavpils University Study Area "Education, Pedagogy and Sport" in Strategic Areas of Specialisation" (No 8.2.2.0/18/I/005), internship for 200 hours in educational institutions, including Daugavpils 3rd Secondary School, which is a pilot school of "Skola2030", as well as Daugavpils City Education Administration, thus gaining experience in the working environment (SAR, p.163).

2.4.5.

Structured collaboration of teaching staff occurs through collaborative planning, regular meetings and discussions where they reflect on the study process, address challenges, and work towards process improvements. This collaboration takes place not only through in-person meetings but also via digital platforms and tools, including virtual collaboration software like Zoom and Microsoft Teams, as well as shared resources such as Google Drive.

As part of the implementation of the study programme, regularly in October and January, the teaching staff together with the students participate in the introductory conferences of pedagogical practice, where current questions about the course of practice, observing lessons and evaluating practice are discussed together. On the other hand, in January and May, the teaching staff together with the students and teacher-mentors, inviting also the curators of the improvement groups, participate in the final conferences of the pedagogical practice, analyzing in detail what has been done. (SAR, p.167)

An important goal of the Cooperation and internationalisation section of the Development Plan is to increase international mobility, which was also included in the recommendations from previous expert team (during the study programme inclusion in the study field evaluation). There is an increase in this matter, but it needs to be pursued, even though it might be difficult in the current study programme, which involves studying and working in parallel.

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

The qualification of the teaching staff not only complies with the requirements but are very high for study programme of this level. Experience in scientific research and participation in projects enhance the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes in the study courses. Changes in the composition of teaching staff do not negatively impact the students. Publications in peer-reviewed publications and databases far exceed the minimal requirements. There are a number of opportunities for academic staff to collaborate in mutual cooperation, which are actively exploited, both face-to-face and remotely, as well as through joint projects.

Strengths:

1) More than half of the teaching staff have doctoral degree and most of the teaching staff have a significant body of scientific publications, participation in scientific conferences and projects.

Weaknesses: not identified

Assessment of the requirement [7]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Teaching staff qualification exceed the minimum requirements for the study programme (SAR Annex 2.4.4. Quantitative data on scientific work, CV).

2.5. Assessment of the Compliance

Requirements

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The study programme complies with the State professional education standard (Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 305 of 13 June 2023 "Regulations on the State Standard of Professional Higher Education", SAR p. 175 and Annex 3.2.1.Compliance with National standart_short_Teacher.docx).

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The study programme complies with the professional standard of the teacher, which corresponds to level 6 of the Latvian Professional Qualifications (6.LKI). The study programme content complies with Professional standard "Teacher" (SAR p. 138 and Annex 3.2.2.Compliance with Professional standart_short_Teacher.docx).

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Study course descriptions and materials are prepared in Latvian, the language in which the study programme is delivered. The descriptions meet all regulatory requirements and include all necessary information as specified by the regulations in Section 56.1, Paragraph two and Section 56.2, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (SAR Annex 3.1.2.Study course descriptions_short_Teacher.pdf).

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme complies with Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 202 "Procedure for Issuing State Recognised Higher Education Documents" (SAR Annex 3.1.2. Diploma and supplement_short_teacher).

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programme are proficient in Latvian according to Statement of Acknowledgement of DU (SAR Annex "STATEMENT National language skills.docx").

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The samples of study agreements comply with Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 70 "Mandatory provisions in the study agreement" (SAR Annex 2.1.4. Agreement on Studies).

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Confirmed by SAR annex 2.1.4. Cooperation agreements, in case that DU suspends implementation of the study programme University of Latvia undertakes to provide opportunity to continue in their study programme (SAR Annex COOPERATION AGREEMENT on undertaking mutual obligations in ensuring the implementation of study programs).

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The requirement complies according to Compensation guarantee for students (SAR Annex CONFIRMATION Compensation guarantee for students.docx).

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Assessment of the requirement [8]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Study programme complies with all requirements in the law and regulatory enactments.

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

The first-cycle professional higher education study programme "Teacher" at DU offering a one-year study programme in Latvian has been positively evaluated by experts for its alignment with the "Education and Pedagogy" study field. Designed as part of the Ministry of Education and Science's "Teaching Force" project, the programme was developed in collaboration with the University of Latvia and RTU Liepaja Academy. It addresses the critical shortage of teachers in Latvia, particularly in the Eastern regions, and provides a personalised approach to learning, which students, alumni, and employers appreciate.

The study process is notably student-centred, emphasising seminars and practical work over lectures. While state funding and scholarships provide additional support, enhancing students' financial stability that contributes to low drop out rates. Furthermore, over half of the teaching staff hold doctoral degrees and possess significant research experience, adding depth to the academic experience.

The challenges that study programme faces are low student numbers and they should be addressed in a long-term approach. To support the study programme's viability, a minimum enrolment for the second-cycle programme is recommended, especially to ensure that rural areas have a sufficient number of qualified teachers. The integration of sustainability goals into learning outcomes, as per DU's 2023-2028 development plan, is another area for potential improvement.

Evaluation of the study programme "Teacher"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Excellent

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Teacher"

Short-term recommendations

- 1) In accordance with the Development plan of the study field "Education and pedagogy" at DU for the study year 2023-2028, the possibility of complementing the learning outcomes with goals of sustainable developments must be considered until beginning of 2026.

2) Develop a strategy to increase the number of students for the study programme, so that specialised courses are taken by more than one person in a group in at least half of the cases until 2026/2027 study year.

3) Develop specialised teaching methodology courses in whole or in part with other study programmes or partner universities to improve cost-effectiveness and increase networking opportunities for students until 2026/2027 study year.

Long-term recommendations

1) In cooperation with the University of Latvia, RTU Liepāja Academy and the project "Teaching Force", increase the number of students that are enrolled in the study programme, which should not be less than the minimum number set by the study programme.

II - "Educational Sciences" ASSESSMENT

II - "Educational Sciences" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1.

The compliance of the Joint Doctoral Study Programme (hereafter "JDSP") "Educational Sciences" (51142) with the "Education and Pedagogy" Study Field is determined according to the SAR (Sections 3.1.1 & 3.1.2) by the necessity to develop and implement the specific joint doctoral academic study programme that is based on the educational policy planning documents of the Republic of Latvia and this is also confirmed by the university's hundred years of experience in the teachers training. Current issues and actuality in the field of Latvian education policy are made topical and strengthen the areas of strategic specialization of DU. It has a special meaning in this region of Latvia but also in Latvia as a whole due to its joint nature with the participation of the RTU Liepāja Academy, the University of Latvia, DU and Rezekne Academy of Technologies.

Hence, the JDSP "Educational Sciences" has been developed and is implemented in accordance with the development trends of the field and doctoral studies in Europe and the world, taking into account the recommendations of the World Bank researchers (2017, 2018) to introduce doctoral level studies in the Latvian higher education system, emphasising that the aim of doctoral studies is the development of young researchers and the promotion of innovation based on original research both at the individual institution level and at the national level. The implementation of the JDSP "Educational Sciences" contributes to the overall objectives of the field of study "Education and Pedagogy" at different levels by ensuring excellence-oriented, internationalised and interdisciplinary high-level studies and scientific integration, specialising in several competitive areas, focusing on the internal mobility of doctoral students and increasing the research capacity of the university. The study programme authors have also considered the study field, increasing the quality of studies and ensuring research-based studies identifying nine (9) results of the programme: three (3) in Knowledge areas, three (3) in Skills areas, and three in (3) Competence areas.

2.1.2.

As clearly indicated in the SAR, Section 3.1.2, the Study Quality Commission's decision No.2022/27-SPI on the inclusion of the JDSP "Educational Sciences" in the field of study states that the JDSP

"Educational Sciences" is "relevant, meets the objectives of higher education in Latvia, its establishment and necessity is clear and justified at the national, regional and international level, it is consistent with the field of study and forms a new concept for doctoral studies in the field of educational sciences".

In addition, the JDSP:

- was developed in accordance with the information report of the Ministry of Education and Science "Proposals for conceptual new competency-based teacher education in Latvia", and is implemented in four Latvian universities (DU in partnership with LU, RTU LA and RTA).
- is in line with the trends of the Bologna Process, or the emergence of a single European higher education area, as it is designed as a third cycle study programme with study outcomes formulated in line with the European Qualifications Framework.
- is in accordance with external regulations, i.e. with Article 55.1 of the Law on Higher Education of the Republic of Latvia Joint Study Programme, with the Law "Amendments to the Law on Scientific Activities" (in force from 29.07.2022), with the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation of 27 September 2022 No 595 "Regulations on Latvian Science Sector Groups, Science Sectors and Sub-Sectors" (in force from 30.09.2022).

The title "Educational Sciences", code (51142), aim and objectives, as well as the study results to be achieved during the study, including the study programme module results, the degree "Doctoral Degree of Science Doctor of Science (Ph.D.) in Social Sciences" to be obtained are interrelated, correspond to the field of study and the eighth EQF level (Cabinet Regulations No 322 "Regulations on Latvian Classification of Education"), which is the doctoral study level and a consecutive continuation of bachelor and master studies.

The scope and duration of the study programme, the compulsory content, the parts of the programme and their scope, the basic principles and procedures of evaluation, the principles of implementation, etc. are regulated by the Law on Higher Education institutions of the Republic of Latvia, the Regulations on Opening and Management of Study Fields and Study Programmes of DU (approved at the Senate meeting on 31 August 2020), Regulations on Studies at Daugavpils University (approved at the DU Senate meeting of April 3, 2024), as well as the Order of the Cabinet of Ministers (hereafter Cabinet of Ministers) No 345 on the Conceptual Report "On Introduction of a New Model of Doctoral Studies in Latvia" of 25 June 2020.

The admission requirements for the doctoral applicants, the amendments made in Article 57 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions have been taken into account, the goals, tasks and achievable results of the study programme have been respected, and the experience in the world, in European countries, including Latvia, has been used to ensure the opportunity to learn the fields of educational sciences doctoral study programme for both specialists who have acquired previous education and professional experience in educational sciences/pedagogy, as well as other fields: the humanities, social sciences, arts, medicine, sports or natural sciences.

The volume and duration of the JDSP "Educational Sciences" is 144 CP/216 ECTS and corresponds to the achievement of the specified study programme results (Article 57 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions). The study programme is implemented in full-time studies over three years. After defending the doctoral thesis, the Doctoral Degree of Science Doctor of Science (Ph.D.) in Social Sciences is awarded, which opens up opportunities for international research in the field of social sciences in accordance with the post-doctoral research programme (post-doctoral studies).

Finally, as pointed out in the Report section 2.2.3, the implementation languages (Latvian and

English) despite being reasonable and justified in reality is not implemented in all partner universities.

2.1.3.

The corrections made to the "Educational Sciences" JDSP's parameters within the assessment of the study field are analyzed, justified and are supported. In more specific, on the basis of the short-term recommendation included in the previous evaluation expert report to align the study programme goals, objectives and achievable results, changes were made to the achievable results of the study programme by reducing their number from 23 to 9: three (3) in Knowledge areas, three (3) in Skills areas, and three in (3) Competence areas. The revised study programme's results were agreed at the meeting of the Joint Study Programme Council (RTU Liepāja Academy, LU, DU, RTA) on 23 October 2023 (Minutes No PPMF-31-58/1).

In addition, based on the changes made in Article 1, Clause 7 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions, when switching to the European credit point system and in accordance with the requirement to express credit points in whole numbers, eleven (11) justified changes were made in the content of the JDSP "Educational Sciences". Changes to the joint DSP were approved at the same meeting of the Joint Study Programme Council, as well as at 78 the meeting of the DU Study Council (Minutes No. 6 of March 24, 2023).

Finally, based on the amendments made to the Law on Higher Education Institutions (Article 57. Cycles of higher education to be implemented at the university, duration and scope of studies), the admission requirements of JDSP "Educational Sciences" were supplemented by including the second cycle of higher education.

Due to the structural reforms implemented by DU, the location of the study programme has changed since 2023/2024 and the JDSP "Educational Sciences" is now implemented at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.

2.1.4.

In SAR, Section 3.1.3, experts learned that the implementation of the JDSP "Educational Sciences" aims to be in line with the prerequisites for quality, innovation-oriented doctoral study programmes including the Salzburg Principles and Recommendations, as well as with the current trends in Europe of cooperation between several higher education and research institutions in the development of quality, research-based, doctoral research-oriented and science communication enhancing study environment, targeted, sustainable use of resources, infrastructure, as included in the report "On Implementation of a New Doctoral Education Model in Latvia".

The JDSP "Educational Sciences" is the only doctoral level study programme in educational sciences in Latvia implemented by four Latvian universities from 2020: DU, LU, RTU LA, RTA. The JDSP "Educational Sciences" is aligned with the policy planning documents of the Republic of Latvia, such as the Latvian Sustainable Development Strategy the Latvian National Development Plan 2021-2027, the Latvian Science, Technology Development and Innovation Guidelines 2021- 2027, the Latvian Education Development Guidelines 2021-2027 "Future Skills for Future Society", the Conceptual Report "On the Introduction of a New Doctoral Model in Latvia".

The study programme is based on the experience that each university has accumulated in the implementation of previous doctoral programmes in education. The "Educational Sciences" parts of the JDSP are implemented in all participating partner universities, thus ensuring resource sharing and synergies between the different competences of the universities at doctoral level.

Graduates of JDSP "Educational Sciences":

- acquire competences in demand in the labour market at the eighth educational level of the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) and employability opportunities at the level of basic group 1. of the Classification of Professions of the Republic of Latvia (professions whose main tasks are related to the development and formulation of state policy, development of external regulatory acts, organisation of state and enterprise policy and its implementation measures) and 2. at the level of the basic group (professions whose main tasks are related to work requiring a high level of theoretical and professional knowledge and the ability to solve theoretical problems).
- Along with academic knowledge, analytical skills and social skills, also acquire information and digital literacy, management skills, the ability to see the education system as part of the global agenda and, through it, to influence processes in society.
- Contribute to the renewal of scientific and academic staff, given the aging of academic staff in European higher education.
- play an important role in the development of academic careers.
- generate ideas and translate them into new knowledge, but also promote and strengthen their dissemination by building networks of collaborators based on interdisciplinary innovation, uniting the academic and industry communities in representing the public interest and solving social problems and enhancing its well-being.
- have a wide range of job opportunities in any institution that plans, transforms and systemically implements the growth of an organisation and its community groups through a variety of targeted professional development activities (including being employed outside academia - in business, public administration, the service sector and education, in both research-related and non-research-related roles).
- can take up positions related to education policy-making in Latvia, including those related to curriculum development in general and vocational education, monitoring its implementation, coordinating methodological support, and assessing the quality of education.
- can participate at the local government level in the development of educational strategies, the implementation and coordination of methodological work, the administration of general education institutions and the provision of education.
- are potential authors and reviewers of modern textbooks and resources.
- work in the field related to education, performing both professional activities as a teacher and academic and research activities in various Latvian educational or education-related institutions, such as Daugavpils University, Daugavpils Latgale Industrial Technical College, Daugavpils Technology and Tourism Technical College, Stanislav Broks Daugavpils Music School, Daugavpils Football School, Latvian Language Agency, etc.
- can go after completing the programme to study in European Union programmes such as ERASMUS+, which promote professional development and offer exposure to global issues in education.
- are eligible to engage in postgraduate (postdoctoral) research projects.

The DU alumni survey confirms that the study programme's objectives and tasks are in line with the market and societal requirements.

The first intake of students to the JDSP "Educational Sciences" took place in the academic year 2020/2021 and the first graduates are expected in 2023/2024. Since the launch of the JDSP, the number of PhD students of the JDSP "Educational Sciences" at DU has increased from 8 to 19, the number of foreign students has increased significantly - in 2023/2024 9 out of 19 students are foreign and study in English. DU JDSP "Educational Science" has the highest number of full-time foreign students in social sciences.

2.1.5.

As pointed out in SAR, Section 3.1.5, the development and implementation of the JDSP "Educational Sciences" is justified. According to OECD data for 2017, Latvia has a very low share of PhD holders in the population (0.3% in Latvia, 1.1% on average in other OECD countries). Thus, a strong and competitive doctoral study programme like JDSP "Educational Sciences" can be considered a priority for Latvian higher education. Thus, as this was also explained to the Expert Panel during the onsite visit, the JDSP "Educational Sciences" was established in accordance with the informative report of the Ministry of Education and Science "Proposals for conceptually new competency-based teacher education in Latvia" (2017), which envisaged the establishment of one joint doctoral programme in educational sciences in Latvia to ensure resource sharing and synergy between different competences of universities at doctoral level, as well as to facilitate internal mobility of doctoral students and increase research capacity of universities both in Riga and in the regions of Latvia.

In addition, the development and implementation of the JDSP "Educational Sciences" ensures a quality study process. The JDSP "Educational Sciences" provides opportunities to its doctoral students to acquire different competences and skills at the four (4) partner universities which is in line with the objective "Quality of education and effective management of the education system" of the Latvian National Development Plan 2021-2027, Action Line "Quality, Accessible, Inclusive Education". Based on the information received during the on-site visit, it seems, however, that in practice, doctoral students have minimal reasons and opportunities to utilize the joint nature of the study programme and the fact that they can utilize the study programme's staff, resources, infrastructure, etc. are those of the four (4) universities of the consortium, and utilize only the DU opportunities and provisions.

The establishment of the JDSP "Educational Sciences" occurred through the merge of the four doctoral study programmes previously implemented at the partner universities, revising and updating their content and format, thus modernising the doctoral study programme in the field of educational sciences. LU is the leading partner in the JDSP "Educational Sciences" and implements it together with partner universities.

The Council of the JDSP "Educational Sciences" is composed of 8 representatives from all the partner universities. The Chairperson of the Council is the Study Programme Director of the University of Latvia and the Vice-Chairperson of the Council is a professor from DU. In order to ensure swift decision-making and to organise the successful implementation of the programme, a JDSP Council has been established in each university (at DU a seven-member JDSP Council is established). The jurisdiction of the DU JDSP Council include the organisation of the admission process, the approval of thesis supervisors and thesis topics, the evaluation of doctoral students' annual individual work reports and other matters. Despite the existence of the Joint Council of the JDSP "Educational Sciences", based on the information received during the on-site visit, the four (4) universities work highly independently from each other in the offering of the study programme.

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

The JDSP "Educational Sciences" has been developed and is implemented in accordance with the development trends of the field and doctoral studies in Europe and the world, taking into account the recommendations of the World Bank researchers (2017, 2018). It complies with the formal requirements set by the Latvian Law and other by-side legislation in order to meet the requirements of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). In the creation of the study programme all required documents are taken into account. The JDSP "Educational Sciences" meets the objectives of higher education in Latvia, its establishment and necessity is clear and justified at the national, regional

and international level, it is consistent with the field of study and forms a new concept for doctoral studies in the field of educational sciences. The aim, title, objectives, learning outcomes, and degree of the study programme are defined and interrelated with the learning outcomes of the study courses.

Strengths:

- 1) The JDSP "Educational Sciences" is the only doctoral level study programme in educational sciences in Latvia implemented by four Latvian universities.
- 2) The number of PhD students of the JDSP "Educational Sciences" at DU has increased from 8 to 19, the number of foreign students has increased significantly - in 2023/2024 9 out of 19 students are foreign and study in English. DU JDSP "Educational Science" has the highest number of full-time foreign students in social sciences.

Weaknesses:

- 1) While students may be able to access resources from all four universities, in practice they utilize only the DU opportunities and provisions, not utilizing the study programme's staff, resources, infrastructure, etc. of the four (4) universities of the consortium.
- 2) Despite the existence of the Joint Council of the JDSP "Educational Sciences", the four (4) universities work highly independently from each other in the offering of the study programme.

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1.

The content and courses of the JDSP "Educational Sciences" as presented in the SAR, Section 3.2.1 are topical and are aimed at achieving the study programme's learning outcomes which are in line with the short-term recommendation in the previous evaluation expert report to align the programme's aims, objectives and outcomes. The structure of the study programme is logical and is aimed at achieving its goal: the development of the doctoral student's research and academic competence in educational sciences for independent and innovative research activities, the development and elaboration of theories of educational sciences, improvement of pedagogical practice at different levels of education in Latvia and internationally, independently elaborating and publicly defending a doctoral thesis research that contains original scientific research results and provides new knowledge in educational sciences.

The JDSP "Educational Sciences" is 144 (216) CP, and has a study duration of three years. In each of the 6 semesters, students study 24 (36) CP. The content of the JDSP "Educational Sciences" is arranged in compulsory courses (102 (153) CP), elective courses (34 (51) CP) and optional (PhD school) courses (8 (12) CP). According to the study plan of the Joint Study Programme (RTU LA, LU, DU, RTA), the content of the mandatory part (102 (153) CP) consists of:

- dissertation (64 (96) CP); publications and participation in scientific conferences (20 (30) CP);
- study courses in the field of educational sciences (12 (18) CP) - this part of the programme includes study courses in the history and theories of education, methodology of educational sciences, scientific writing, as well as educational psychology.
- doctoral examinations: doctoral examination in English (2 (3) CP), doctoral examination in the field of educational sciences (2 (3) CP) and doctoral examination in the sub-field of educational sciences (2 (3) CP) - 6 (9) CP in total.

The restricted option is 34 (51) CPs. It consists of:

- general skills courses (20 (30) CP (previously 18 CP). These are compulsory elective courses in

research ethics, scientific communication, project management, university didactics. This part of the programme also includes an assistantship (10 (15) CP, previously 8 CP).

- study courses in educational sciences - optional modules (14 (21) CP). The programme includes five elective modules: at the University of Latvia - Inclusive Education and Technology Solutions in School and University; at the RTA - Special Education and Social Pedagogy; at RTU LA - Preschool Education and Primary Education; at DU - School and University Education for 87 Sustainable Development.

The study programme also includes an optional module "Didactics of Teaching Subjects" with the aim of providing doctoral students with the opportunity to develop their doctoral research in the sub-fields of educational sciences such as didactics of biology, didactics of physics, didactics of chemistry, didactics of mathematics, as well as didactics of other teaching subjects. The optional part (8 CP) includes participation in think-tanks or equivalent experience in foreign universities or research institutions.

Doctoral students in the JDSP "Educational Sciences" can choose one of the five following compulsory elective modules according to their research interests (as presented in the Study Programme Annex 3.2.1 Study Plan):

Module 1. Didactics of teaching subjects (implemented by LU and DU)

Module 2. Inclusive education and technology integration in school, university and adult education (implemented by LU)

Module 3. Education for sustainable development in school and university (implemented by DU)

Module 4. Special and social pedagogy (implemented by RTA)

Module 5. Pre-primary and Primary Pedagogy (implemented by RTU LA).

After completing a module, students take a PhD examination in one sub-discipline of educational sciences corresponding to the thematic grouping reflected in the modules (it is stated, for instance (see SAR, Section 3.2), that after one of the compulsory elective modules above, the PhD student can choose to take an exam in school, university, adult or sector pedagogy). Each module has defined aims, objectives and study results. To demonstrate how aims, objectives and study results are presented, please see below for instance, how Module 1. Didactics of teaching subjects is presented:

Aim of the module: to improve the doctoral student's research and academic competence in subject didactics for independent and innovative research activities, development and elaboration of theories of educational sciences, improvement of pedagogical practice.

Module objectives: 1. to implement research-based studies by promoting the acquisition and use of theoretical and empirical research methodologies in the didactics of teaching subjects. 2. to develop current research directions in didactics of subjects in the context of Latvian, European and world research in educational sciences, facilitating the creation of new knowledge, approval of research findings and their transfer into the practice of educational 3. to promote scientific communication and the presentation and publication of doctoral students' research results in recognised journals in the field of subject didactics in Latvia and 4. to organise and promote cooperation between the doctoral student and the supervisor in the field of didactics of academic.

Module study results:

Knowledge: Understands theoretical and empirical research methods and methodologies in the field of didactics and in the interface with other disciplines, interdisciplinary approach to research;

Skills: Systematically analyses and interprets concepts, theories and current issues in education policy and pedagogical practice relevant to didactics of teaching subjects in a local and internationally comparative context, independently evaluates and makes an informed choice of research methods appropriate for scientific research in educational sciences;

Competences: He/she is able to put forward innovative research ideas, independently and critically analyse and evaluate complex research problems relevant to the didactics of teaching subjects, contributing to the broadening and deepening of knowledge in the field of educational sciences and offering a perspective view of the future development of various aspects of education.

After the module, it is possible to choose an examination in subject didactics according to the student's scientific specialisation in a particular subject area. The module includes the 4KP course "Contemporary Didactics in Theory and International Practice", which is a free elective course that provides an assimilation of study courses taken outside the JDSP 88 "Educational Sciences" (e.g. a study course taken as part of international mobility, such as ERASMUS+). On the basis of the short-term recommendation of the JDSP "Educational Sciences" evaluation committee report, the course "Development of Didactic Theories" (2 (3) CP) has been removed from the module and the course "Current Issues in Developmental Psychology" (2 (3) CP) has been included. The changes have been approved by DU in accordance with the "Regulations on Opening and Management of Study Directions and Study Programmes of Daugavpils University".

As indicated in Annex 3.2.1 DSP "Izglītības zinātnes" studiju plāns/DSP "Educational Sciences" study plan, out of the 216 ECTS of the whole Joint Doctorate Study Programme, DU provided/offers 90 ECTS in total. In more specific, DU offers:

- 4 Study Courses (implemented only by DU). Total: 18 ECTS
- 8 Part B Limited Elective Courses: General Courses (Compulsory Courses) (total: 30 ECTS)
- 1 Optional Module (Module 1 Didactics of Study Subjects)-implemented by both DU and LU (21 ECTS)
- 1 Optional Module (Module 3 Education for Sustainable Development at School and University)-implemented by both DU and LU (21 ECTS).

In addition, the Ph.D. Thesis (in case it is developed) is defended at DU. The Ph.D. Thesis Development counts for 126 ECTS.

The PhD in Educational Sciences is considered successfully completed if the doctoral student has completed all the study courses provided for in the programme, passed three doctoral examinations (in English, in the field of educational sciences and in the sub-field of educational sciences), as well as developed and presented the manuscript of his/her doctoral research to the Doctoral Council in Educational Sciences in the doctoral thesis discussion (pre-defence), obtaining a total of 144 (162) CPs. A doctoral dissertation or thesis, 2) a scientific monograph (a peer-reviewed scientific book devoted to the study of a single topic of importance in the field of education), 3) a set of at least three scientific articles published in journals indexed in Web of Science or SCOPUS databases; the articles must cover the entire doctoral research.

The JDSP "Educational Sciences" is considered successfully completed if the doctoral student has completed:

- all the study courses provided in the study programme;
- passed three doctoral examinations (in English, in the field of educational sciences and in the sub-field of educational sciences);
- developed and presented the manuscript of his/her doctoral research to the Doctoral Council in Educational Sciences in the doctoral thesis discussion (pre-defence), obtaining a total of 144 (162)

CPs.

- submitted a dissertation or thesis;
- submitted a scientific monograph (a peer-reviewed scientific book devoted to the study of a single topic of importance in the field of education);
- submitted a set of at least three scientific articles published in journals indexed in Web of Science or SCOPUS databases; the articles must cover the entire doctoral research.

The requirements of completion of the doctoral degree are equivalent with doctoral expectations in the EHEA.

2.2.2.

The awarding of the doctoral degree according to the SAR, Section 3.2.2. is based on the achievements and knowledge of the field of educational sciences, based on the current developments and research in the field, in accordance with the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No.668 of 25 October 2022 "Amendment to the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation of 16 April 2013 No. 202 'Procedures for issuing state-recognised higher education qualifications', awarding the degree of Doctor of Science (Ph.D.) in social sciences.

In addition, the JDSP "Educational Sciences" corresponds to the classification of branches and sub-sectors of science as defined in the Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia on Latvian groups of branches of science, branches and sub-sectors of science No 595, 27.09.2022.

DU JDSP "Educational Sciences" academic personnel:

- carry out important scientific activities for research at the Latvian and international level in several sub-fields of educational sciences, for example, sustainable education, preschools, schools, universities, branches, adult pedagogy and subject didactics;
- develop scientific publications, implement research projects and ensure the transfer of knowledge to educational practice in diverse thematic areas;
- are experienced in working in inter-university, including foreign, and interdisciplinary research teams, for example, preparing publications, implementing projects, organizing doctoral schools, etc.;
- provide scientific and methodological support for the implementation of the JDSP "Educational Sciences", including the module "Education for Sustainable Development at School and University";
- regularly develop and prepare for publication the results of their scientific research, which are cited as monographs or scientific articles in high-level scientific databases, as well as develop and publish methodological materials and teaching aids.

DU JDSP "Educational Sciences" students:

- are involved as researchers in DU internal projects implemented by the academic personnel.
- apply diverse topics of doctoral theses, related to the scientific activity of DU academic staff, aimed at solving current educational problems and introducing innovations at the Latvian and international level.

2.2.3.

From the information provided in the SAR, Section 3.2.3 and the discussions with the academic staff and the study programme coordinator during the onsite visit, the JDSP "Educational Sciences":

- follows a student-centred approach in the formulation of the aim, objectives and meaningful learning outcomes, which includes reflection, individual approach, self- and peer-assessment, self-directed learning, cooperative learning, provision of necessary support. Therefore, attention is paid to the physical environment of the classrooms to be conducive to a student-centred approach:

classrooms can be converted for group work, individual work and students can use digital technologies;

- takes into account the diversity of students' learning needs in the choice of pedagogical methods, promoting students' learning motivation, self-reflection and participation in the learning process;
- uses a variety of teaching methods in the implementation of the study programme: lectures and seminars, group work and active forms of work to promote the integration of interdisciplinary knowledge, creative discussions to solve problems. Teaching methods are chosen according to the objectives, specificity and planned learning outcomes of each course, and are oriented towards the development of competences, especially digital, communication, foreign languages, etc.;
- uses social networks and open access technological solutions in the classroom, creating a technology-enriched learning environment, modelling a modern and dynamic learning process;
- organises the studies in the e-environment on the ZOOM platform, offering e-environmental materials in the Moodle system. In some cases, information is also sent to doctoral students' emails;
- uses a variety of assessment methods, including mid-term examinations, independent work - reports, essays, analysis of scientific articles, analysis of practical cases, presentations, observation and analysis, implementation and analysis of interviews, self-reflection, development and presentation of research projects, etc. The student's work is assessed according to criteria or against a standard (example of an excellent paper), the criteria being known to the students in advance;
- involves doctoral students in research groups, forming collaborative groups. Therefore, students are offered appropriate educational and scientific literature, including open-access electronic databases. Students also participate in scientific and popular scientific events at the national and international level (scientific conferences, science communication events, projects, etc.).

Due to the fact that doctoral studies involve research at the international level (participation in scientific conferences, elaboration of scientific publications, etc.) and minimal study materials and literature in the field are available in Latvian, there are no significant differences in the methods of study used by Latvian and foreign students.

In order to support all students and ensure that they effectively achieve the study programme outcomes, face-to-face or online tutorials are offered to discuss current study issues.

DU JDSP "Educational Sciences" students have the opportunity to participate from the 1st year of study in the Erasmus+ programme (study and practice/training mobility), which in total do not exceed 12 months during doctoral studies. However, no student has used this opportunity due to the fact that all of them are employed full-time in the main job (related to the field of education). In addition, during the on-site visit it became clear that incoming and outgoing mobility of students and staff is vital to ensure the Study Programmes' international attractiveness.

Since foreign PhD students are admitted to the DU JDSP "Educational Sciences" the study courses are taught by the DU academic staff in English; thus study materials are also prepared in English. If the student(s) enrolled in DU studies in English chooses one of the optional modules that are not implemented at the university (Inclusive education and technology integration in school, university and adult education, Special and social pedagogy, Pre-school and primary school pedagogy), the student/s are offered the opportunity to learn module courses at the university responsible for their implementation. If the student is a citizen of a third country who is enrolled in a full-time study programme at DU, then the same rules apply to the participation of citizens of these countries in the ERASMUS+ program as other DU students.

2.2.4.

In the SAR, Section 3.2.4 experts learned that the JDSP "Educational Sciences" includes the study

courses "Professor's Assistant Practice I" and "Professor's Assistant Practice II" (4 CP/6 ECTS, 2nd semester), "Professor's Assistant Practice II" (4 CP/6 ECTS, 4th semester), "Professor's assistant practice III" (2 CP/3 ECTS, 6th sem.). During the practice of a professor's assistant, the doctoral student improves his academic competence, learning the basic skills of study, scientific, methodical and organizational work and building the experience necessary for his academic career in the future. With the cooperation of the practice manager and the student, individual practice tasks are developed for each student, taking into account the topic of his/her doctoral thesis and in accordance with the achievable results of the practice and the tasks of the professor's position. When formulating practice tasks, the proportion of scientific, academic, methodical and organizational work determined in the description of the study assistant professor practice course is taken into account. Students create an individual practice plan, reflecting in it the time for completing the practice tasks, coordinate the practice plan with the thesis supervisor and the practice manager. The student performs the tasks of independent work included in the practice plan with the support of the doctoral thesis and/or practice supervisor. During the practice of the assistant professor, there are consultations with the practice manager, within the framework of which the student reflects on the performance of the practice tasks of the assistant professor and receives feedback. Upon the initiative of the student, professor's assistant professor's practice and thesis supervisor, the initially developed practice plan can be clarified, the changes made can be coordinated with all involved parties. Doctoral students present the work done during the practice of assistant professor at the Doctoral Council of DU.

2.2.5.

Based on the SAR, Section 3.2.5, the Education Sciences Promotion Council of DU provides doctoral students with the opportunity to pursue doctoral studies (approved by the Order of the Rector of DU No.4-4/PP/2023/7 dated 02.05.20223). The evaluation of the doctoral dissertation process is carried out in accordance with the "Regulations on Daugavpils University Doctoral Dissertation Councils" and the Regulations of the Doctoral Dissertation Council for Education Sciences. Upon graduation from the JDSP "Educational Sciences", the candidates submit the thesis for examination to the Department of Education and Psychology of DU. After the presentation and review of the thesis, the Department recommends the thesis for consideration by the Doctoral Board. After the positive decision of the Promotion Board, the thesis is submitted to the Research Department of DU, which in turn sends the thesis to the State Scientific Qualification Commission for review. The thesis is evaluated at the meeting of the State Scientific Qualification Commission, and after a positive decision, the thesis promotion process is organised in accordance with the Regulations of the DU Education Sciences Promotion Council. The procedure of the doctoral dissertation process is clearly stipulated in Paragraphs 4, 6, 7, 8 of the Regulations of the Educational Sciences Promotion Council.

2.2.6.

As explained during the onsite visit, two doctoral theses have been defended until today at the Promotion Council of Educational Sciences of DU: the doctoral thesis "Teachers. Views on Media Literacy as a Component of Competence in the Context of Media Education" has been defended in the field of educational sciences in the subfield of school pedagogy, the doctoral thesis (thematically unified set of scientific publications) "Development of Professional Competence of Music Therapists in Latvia" has been defended in the field of educational sciences in the subfield of higher education pedagogy. The evaluation of theses was based on points 7 and 8 of the Regulations of the Promotion Board for Educational Sciences.

Both doctoral theses indicate relevance to the field and correspondence to the JDSP "Educational Sciences".

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

The Study Programme is highly topical in terms of development of national teacher education, as well as national and regional labour market needs. The content of studies, as well organisation is valued by both students and employers. Moreover, it is designed in line with education needs of students as well as is student-centred in implementation. Ongoing multi-stakeholder quality monitoring allows DU respective and demanded adjustment of the resources, methods, and study programme content.

Strengths:

- 1) The requirements of completion of the doctoral degree are equivalent with doctoral expectations in the EHEA and the award of the doctoral degree is based on the achievements and knowledge of the field of educational sciences, based on the current developments and research in the field.
- 2) The study courses provided by DU are taught by the DU academic staff in English.
- 3) The doctoral theses which have been defended until today at the Promotion Council of Educational Sciences of DU indicate relevance to the field.

Weaknesses:

- 1) Despite provisions and opportunities for high research engagement and ERASMUS+ mobility, due to the fact that all current doctoral students are employed full-time in their main job, these opportunities are not broadly utilized (e.g. no student has used ERASMUS+ yet). Even mobility and utilization of joint opportunities among the partner institutions is minimal.
- 2) Only in DU study courses are taught by the DU academic staff in English; not in the rest partner universities.
- 3) Incoming students are not taught in the same classes with the host university students.

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

As stated in Section 2.2.1 above, the requirements of completion of the doctoral degree are equivalent with doctoral expectations in the EHEA and the award of the doctoral degree is based on the achievements and knowledge of the field of educational sciences, based on the current developments and research in the field.

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1.

As detailed in the SAR, Section 1.3, the JDSP "Educational Sciences" is offered at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in cooperation with the Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences. Necessary facilities are available for studies, research and scientific communication, free access to internet and computers, library, reading room, copying equipment, computer classrooms with the necessary software for data processing, equipment for organizing video conferences, modern seating areas. Students can also use DU auditoriums for consultations, meetings, library rooms for literature analysis, preparation of independent and applied research papers, as well as specially equipped rooms for holding conferences, study and extracurricular activities. Auditoriums are equipped with the necessary technical equipment (computers, video projectors, multifunctional

devices).

For the knowledge assessment and communication between students and teaching staff, the DU study environment Moodle is used, students actively use the library's resources, including the subscribed databases available remotely (outside the DU computer network). However, the actual use of the Moodle e-learning environment is poor. No analytic tools are used that would allow the academic staff to have knowledge of the use of the materials doctoral students use. It seems also that alternative methods of communication are used (e.g. google forms).

DU JDSP students:

- have the opportunity to participate in the annual "Daugavpils University research project competition", the purpose of which is to ensure the development of DU's scientific activity and scientific excellence, to promote the research growth of DU's academic, scientific staff and students, to promote the practical applicability of scientific results, cooperation with the private sector and additional attracting external funding, forming innovative interdisciplinary research groups for the introduction of current research topics;
- are provided support for their involvement in scientific activities, as well as for promoting the increase in the number of publications indexed in the Web of Science and/or SCOPUS databases at DU.

In overall the resources and provision of Daugavpils University fully comply with the conditions for the implementation of JDSP "Educational Science" and the achievement of the study results.

2.3.2.

Doctoral students of DU and partner universities:

- have the opportunity to participate in the international summer school. The aim of the summer school is to develop doctoral students' scientific communication and writing competence, as well as knowledge and skills in quantitative and qualitative methodology;
- can use the resources developed by DU academic staff, including teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programme, in cooperation with other universities;
- are provided the opportunity to publish in the DU based international journals "Discourse and Communication for Sustainable Education" and "Journal of Teacher Education for Sustainability".

For the implementation of JDSP "Educational Science", in terms of availability and quality, the material and technical base is also available in the partner universities: RTU LA, RTA and LU. It remains questionable, however, how do the added value opportunities offered by such a joint doctoral degree are utilized by the academic staff and the doctoral students. On the one side, there are separate joint study programme bodies in each university and the Joint Board of the JDSP "Educational Science" does not coordinate all partner institutions in the offering of the study programme, and on the other side all DU current doctoral students are employed full-time in their main job.

Both the SAR and the meeting with students during the site visit pointed to a major problem: "The small or non-existent amount of the scholarship does not allow doctoral students and degree candidates to fully concentrate on studying the doctoral study programme". The amount of work and scholarship does not allow students to fully concentrate on their doctoral studies and on writing their doctoral thesis, as they are forced to work full time and even more as professionals in the field. As a result, many are unlikely to be able to complete their studies on time and, as students pointed out to the expert panel, the amount of scientific publications required within the timeframe is also a challenge.

Yet during interviews with students, experts noticed that joint PhD study programme realization does not provide access (or it is not effectively used) to consortium universities library resources (interviews on 24th of September, 2024).

2.3.3.

As clarified in the SAR, Section 3.3.3., the JDSP “Educational Sciences” funding source is the state budget funding for studies (grant) and tuition fees. The calculation of costs for one student in the study field programmes is performed in the DU Finance and Accounting Department. DU does not have a minimum number of students for doctoral study programmes.

The calculation of the costs of the JDSP “Educational Sciences” is carried out on the condition that at least 5 students study in the study programme in places financed by the state budget. The amount of 1 CP of theoretical lessons planned in the study programme is 8 hours, the professor's hourly rate is EUR 15.30. In the module implemented by DU, 30 CP or 240 hours amount to 3672.00 EUR. Mandatory state social insurance contributions, the employer's share - 884.58 EUR, the total compensation for teaching staff is 4556.58 EUR. The other costs, together with the leave reserve, amount to EUR 904.24. Thus, the total cost of DU in the implemented module (not counting the supervision of doctoral theses) is EUR 5460.82.

In addition, supervision of doctoral theses for 5 students over a 3-year period amounts to 112.5 KP or 900 contact hours, thus, together with the employer's VSAOI (24.09%), the remuneration for supervision of the doctoral thesis would amount to 17087.19 EUR. The total cost of the programme per student is 4509.60 EUR (if 6 students study, then 4327.58 EUR per student).

DU implements mobility with the help of digital technologies - by connecting to what is happening at another university, for example using videoconferencing options, thus implementing the Law on Higher Education Institutions of the Republic of Latvia, which stipulates that the mobility of students and lecturers must be implemented in joint study programmes. However, these additional costs have not yet been calculated. In order to reduce the cost of implementation and mobility of the study programme courses, technical solutions for providing online classes will be sought during the development of the doctoral study programme.

It appears that currently the profitability of the study programme is viable and facilitates the development of the study programme. More attention needs to be placed on reducing the cost of implementation of both the study programme courses and the opportunities provided for research and mobility by utilizing the added value of the programme being a joint degree.

Research opportunities for doctoral students are, however, limited and research funding is not in place.

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

Indicators, like compliance of the study provision, science provision, information base (including the library), material and technical base, as well as the financial base are mostly compliant with the conditions for the implementation of the Study Programme and for ensuring the achievement of its learning outcomes.

Strengths:

- 1) The material and technical base is also available in the partner universities: RTU LA, RTA and LU.
- 2) The profitability of the study programme is viable and facilitates the development of the study

programme.

Weaknesses:

- 1) The added value opportunities offered by a joint doctoral study programme is not fully utilized by the academic staff and the doctoral students. Separate joint study programme bodies in each university and the fact that no scholarship opportunities appear for doctoral students (hence all DU current doctoral students are employed full-time in their main job) are serious obstacles.
- 2) The actual use of the Moodle e-learning environment is poor. No analytic tools are used that would allow the academic staff to have knowledge of the use of the materials doctoral students use. It seems also that alternative methods of communication are used (e.g. google forms).
- 3) Research opportunities for doctoral students are, however, limited and research funding is not in place.

Assessment of the requirement [6]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Indicators, like compliance of the study provision, science provision, information base, material and technical base, as well as the financial base are compliant with the conditions for the implementation of the Study Programme and for ensuring the achievement of its learning outcomes.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1.

The study courses of the JDSP "Educational Sciences" are taught by qualified, scientifically and methodologically trained academic staff, specialists in their field of study. More specifically, as described in the SAR, Section 3.4.1, the academic staff of the JDSP:

- in accordance to the report "On the introduction of a new doctoral model in Latvia" academic staff have doctoral degrees, are elected professors, associate professors, senior researchers or assistant professors at one of the consortium universities, and almost all have active status as an expert of the Latvian Science Council in the relevant field of science. A total of 35 lecturers are included in the provision of JDSP, of which 24 are located in the partner universities and 11 PhD holders (5 professors, 2 associate professors, 2 senior researchers, 2 assistant professors) are from DU (6 from education, 2 from psychology, 3 from linguistics and literary studies);
- confirmed their qualifications every 6 years through the evaluation of the scientific and pedagogical qualifications of associate professors and professors;
- the academic staff benefit from a wide range of opportunities to develop their professional qualifications (e.g. through outgoing mobility; in the 2022/2023 academic year, the lecturers involved in the JDSP "Educational Sciences" have implemented 17 outgoing mobilities of academic staff, teaching at universities outside Latvia);
- the academic staff participate in international scientific networks and consortia (e.g. ATEE, SWEDESD, etc.);
- are regularly and purposefully involved in various professional development activities in the fields of university didactics, teaching methodology, and scientific interests, including those relevant to

the content of the JDSP "Educational Sciences" studies;

- develop their professional competence in professional development courses (including university training courses, English language courses, e.g. within the ESF project No.8.2.2.0/18/A/022 "Strengthening of professional competence of academic staff of strategic areas of specialization of Daugavpils University" they were offered "English language training programmes at B2 and C1 levels" (132 hours), English language training course "Public Speaking" (8 hours), professional English language at C1 level (132 hours), applied English language training.
- practise teaching in English by participating in the ERASMUS+ mobility programme.
- have practical experience in pedagogical activities in general education institutions, interest and adult education, managing and coordinating projects, acting as a scientific reviewer, etc.

In addition, they:

- publish articles in scientific journals;
- participate in international scientific committees;
- participate in scientific and applied practical seminars and conferences;
- present at methodological seminars organised for Latvian teachers;
- develop textbooks and methodological material;
- coordinate and participate in international and national research projects;
- act as editors and are members of editorial boards of scientific journals.

As far as the knowledge of the national language of the academic staff employed by the JDSP "Educational Sciences", this complies with the provisions on the scope of knowledge of the national language and the procedure for testing the knowledge of the national language for the performance of professional and official duties.

The English language proficiency of the teaching staff is English at B2/C1 level.

With all above, it can be maintained that the academic personnel involved in the implementation of the study programme complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements set forth in the regulatory enactments (including Article 55 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions and other requirements of the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 129.), and they enable the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses.

2.4.2.

As explained in the SAR, Section 3.4.2, since the licensing of the JDSP "Educational Sciences", the DU faculty has added 2 academic personnel members: 1 associate professor and 1 senior researcher. In order to ensure the quality of the study programme, before recruiting teaching staff to JDSP, the Doctoral Council of DU evaluates their competence to lead a specific study course, as well as the inclusion of the lecturer in the provision of the study programme is approved at the meeting of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and the Council of Studies of DU.

2.4.3.

The scientific publications and the involvement in research-related projects of the academic staff involved in the implementation of the doctoral study programmes, as described in the SAR, Section 3.4.3, contribute to the implementation of a high-quality doctoral study programme.

In more specific, the doctoral study programme's academic staff:

- publishes articles in scientific journals;
- participates in international scientific committees;
- participates in scientific and applied practical seminars and conferences;

- presents at methodological seminars organised for Latvian teachers;
- develops textbooks and methodological material;
- coordinates and participates in international and national research projects;
- acts as editors and are members of editorial boards of scientific journals.

During the reporting period (2020-2023), the academic personnel involved in the implementation of the JDSP "Educational Sciences", have published 49 scientific publications in the field of social sciences indexed in Web of Science/ SCOPUS or ERIH+ databases and 25 scientific publications in other peer-reviewed journals. One professor has a Hirsch index of 8 in the Web of Science database, three have 3, one has 2, and four have 1. Major scientific publications of the academic personnel involved in the implementation of the JDSP "Educational Sciences" are indexed in Scopus or WoS CC or ERIH+. In addition, 8 faculty members involved in the implementation of the JDSP "Educational Sciences" are experts of the Latvian Council of Science in the social sciences - educational sciences.

2.4.4.

The academic personnel involved in the implementation of the JDSP "Educational Sciences", participate in research projects, ESF and other projects, and publish in the last six years in peer-reviewed editions, including international editions or have five years of practical experience (except for experience in the implementation of the study programme) in accordance with the Law on Higher Education Institutions. From the information provided in the SAR, Section 3.4.3, it is not clear whether this applies to all academic personnel involved in the implementation of the JDSP "Educational Sciences". In sum, though, as described in this Section of the SAR and Section 3.4.4., during the reporting period (2020-2023), the DU academic staff involved in the implementation of the JDSP "Educational Sciences":

- Have published 49 scientific publications in the field of social sciences indexed in Web of Science/SCOPUS or ERIH+ databases and 25 scientific publications in other peer-reviewed journals. One professor has a Hirsch index of 8 in the Web of Science database, three lecturers - 3, one professor - 2, four lecturers - 1.
- Eight members are experts of the Latvian Council of Science in the social sciences - educational sciences.
- Eight members participate in research projects, ESF and other projects.

2.4.5.

As far as the DU, as described in the SAR, Section 3.4.5 and explained during the onsite visit, academic personnel of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and the Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences participate and cooperate in the implementation of the JDSP "Educational Sciences" by cooperating both in the development of study course descriptions and in the planning of study course content, jointly agreeing on the aims, objectives, achievable results, content and forms of testing of the achieved study results of the study courses to be developed and taught. Two or more academic personnel members are involved in the teaching of several study courses. In study courses taught by two or more members of the academic personnel, the duties are divided among them and each teaches a specific part of the study course or specific topics. In such cases, the academic personnel mutually agree on the method of submission and evaluation of the mid-term examinations and tests specified in the course descriptions and inform the student thereof.

In addition, all academic personnel involved in the course management participate in the evaluation of the mid-term and final examination papers, by mutual agreement on the evaluation.

The implementation of the courses is discussed and evaluated, including students' views, in the Joint Study Programme Board of the JDSP "Educational Sciences". This helps to avoid overlapping of

specific topics in different study courses.

From all the above mentioned it is suggested that a mechanism for mutual cooperation of the academic staff in the implementation of the JDSP "Educational Sciences" has been established, which ensures the achievement of the aims of the study programme and the interconnection of study courses within the study programme. However, this does not apply in the same degree across the whole consortium of the four universities offering the study programme, because separate joint study programme bodies are set up in each university. The only relevant provision is the joint JDSP Doctoral Council, DU JDSP Doctoral Council, in which the study programme directors at partner universities coordinate the cooperation of the academic personnel in providing the study programme. In the cooperation between the partner universities, an important role plays the scientific secretary, who is attached to the administration of the study programme at the University of Latvia and who is financed by all partner universities in inter-university settlements.

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

The academic personnel involved in the implementation of the study programme complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements set forth in the regulatory enactments, and they enable the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses. In addition, the qualifications of the academic personnel are consistent with the specifics of the study programme and its implementation requirements, and they are professionals in their field and have demonstrated their competence by participating in international research projects and their numerous publications.

Strengths:

- 1) The study courses of the JDSP "Educational Sciences" are taught by qualified, scientifically and methodologically trained academic staff, specialists in their field of study (11 PhD holders).
- 2) The English language proficiency of the teaching staff is at B2/C1 level.
- 3) The academic personnel actively participates in conferences, projects, research, popularizing their scientific achievements and research content.
- 4) A mechanism for mutual cooperation of the academic staff in the implementation of the JDSP "Educational Sciences" has been established.

Weaknesses:

- 1) The mechanism for mutual cooperation of the academic staff in the implementation of the JDSP "Educational Sciences" at the partner institution level is weak.
- 2) The opportunities within the framework of cooperation with the partner consortium institutions as well as other scientific institutions and higher education institutions are minimal.

Assessment of the requirement [7]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

As explained in Sections 2.4.1-2.4.4 above, the academic personnel involved in the implementation of the study programme complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements set forth in the regulatory enactments, and they enable the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the

relevant study courses.

2.5. Assessment of the Compliance

Requirements

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

DU provided assurance that both DU and the partner institutions will be able to provide the proposed study courses (and their study course descriptions) in English and that the course descriptions comply with the Law on Higher Education Institutions (SAR Annex 3.2.1. Study course descriptions joint DSP.docx).

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme complies with the procedure according to which Latvian recognised documents of higher education are issued (SAR Annex 3.1.2. Diploma and transcript translation joint DSP.zip).

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The academic personnel involved in the implementation of the study programme complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements set forth in the regulatory enactments (including Article 55 of the Law of the Republic of Latvia on Higher Education and the requirements of the Law on Higher Education Institutions and the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 129.), and they enable the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses.

A total of 35 lecturers are included in the provision of JDSP, of which 24 are located in the partner universities and 11 PhD holders (5 professors, 2 associate professors, 2 senior researchers, 2 assistant professors) are from DU (6 from education, 2 from psychology, 3 from linguistics and literary studies).

This is also confirmed in the Study Programme's Annex STATEMENT of experts joint DSP_Educational Sciences.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Out of 35 members of the academic staff included in the provision of JDSP 11 are from DU. All 11 are PhD holders and are elected professors, associate professors, senior researchers or assistant professors (5 professors, 2 associate professors, 2 senior researchers, 2 assistant professors). Almost all have active status as an expert of the Latvian Science Council in the relevant field of science.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

All academic staff teaching in the study programme have confirmed their knowledge regarding the extent of the knowledge of the official Latvian language and the procedures for examining the proficiency in the official language for the performance of their professional duties as clearly stated in the Study Programme Annex "Statement National Language Skills".

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The English language proficiency of the teaching staff is at the B2/C1 level. As stated in the Study Programme Annex "Statement Foreign Language B2", the level of knowledge of the language of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the programmes corresponds to at least B2 level according to the European Language Assessment levels.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The sample of the study agreement complies with the mandatory provisions to be included in the study agreement as presented in the SAR of study programmes Annex 3.1.5 Compliance of the joint DSP "Educational Sciences" with the requirements specified for the joint study programmes (Section 55.1 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions).

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Confirmed by SAR annex 2.1.4. Cooperation agreement signed on November 5, 2019, in case that DU suspends implementation of doctoral study programme "Educational sciences" (51142), University of Latvia undertakes to provide opportunities to continue studies in the doctoral study programme "Educational sciences" (51142).

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Confirmed by SAR annex named - CONFIRMATION compensation guarantee for students.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Confirmed by SAR annex 3.1.5. Compliance of joint study program DSP. The joint DSP complies with all 9 criteria/requirements specified for the joint study programmes (Section 55.1 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions).

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Assessment of the requirement [8]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The award of the doctoral degree is based on the achievements and knowledge of the field of educational sciences, based on the current developments and research in the field, in accordance with the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No.668 of 25 October 2022 "Amendment to the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation of 16 April 2013 No. 202 'Procedures for issuing state-recognised higher education qualifications', awarding the degree of Doctor of Science (Ph.D.) in social sciences.

In addition, the JDSP "Educational Sciences" corresponds to the classification of branches and sub-sectors of science as defined in the Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia on Latvian groups of branches of science, branches and sub-sectors of science No 595, 27.09.2022.

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

The Joint Doctoral Study Programme "Educational Sciences" (51142) within the study field "Education and Pedagogy" complies with the formal requirements set by the Latvian legislation and other by-side legislation in order to meet the requirements of the EHEA. It is highly topical in terms of development of national teacher education, as well as national and regional labour market needs.

The content of studies, as well as organisation is valued by both students and employers. Moreover, it is designed in line with education needs of students as well as is student-centred in implementation. Indicators, like compliance of the study provision, science provision, information base (including the library), material and technical base, as well as the financial base are mostly compliant with the conditions for the implementation of the Study Programme and for ensuring the achievement of its learning outcomes. The academic personnel involved in the implementation of the study programme complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme, their qualifications are consistent with the specifics of the study programme and its implementation requirements, and they are professionals in their field and have demonstrated their competence by participating in international research projects and their numerous publications. The major weakness of the study programme is that the mechanisms for mutual cooperation of the academic staff in the implementation of the JDSP "Educational Sciences" at the partner institution level is weak and the opportunities within the framework of cooperation with the partner consortium institutions and other scientific institutions and higher education institutions are minimal. Expert panel also support the implementation of study programme "Educational Sciences" (51142) in English. Both of these study programmes increase the internationalization of studies of Education sciences, by greater attraction of foreign students and visiting professors, and developing a globally-minded personality capable of acting responsibly within educational systems, both nationally and globally.

Evaluation of the study programme "Educational Sciences"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Educational Sciences"

Short-term recommendations

- 1) Immediately ensure that all study courses across the four (4) universities of the JDSP "Educational Sciences" (and not only those taught by the DU academic staff) are taught in English to increase the number of foreign PhD students.
- 2) In the current academic year, devise a more inclusive strategy for incoming students to include them in the same classes with the host university students. Otherwise, this is in contrast with the very idea of, e.g. ERASMUS.
- 3) Starting in the current and the following academic year, provide professional development support to all academic staff and students (training and guidance) in order to use the best possibilities in the Moodle environment to increase the actual use of the Moodle e-learning environment which is currently poor (e.g. no analytic tools are used that would allow the academic staff to have knowledge of the use of the materials doctoral students use). This will decrease the use of alternative methods of communication currently used (e.g. google forms).
- 4) Reduce immediately the cost of implementation of the study programme courses and the opportunities provided for research and mobility by utilizing the added value of the study programme being a joint degree.
- 5) From the following academic year, start the gradual offering of doctoral scholarships on an annual basis to allow the recruitment of more quality doctoral students who can fully concentrate on studying in a doctoral study programme and not work full-time outside the university. This will also allow doctoral students to complete their studies in a shorter period.

6) From the following academic year, start a gradual funding on an annual basis of research opportunities for doctoral students.

Long-term recommendations

1) Further capitalize on the prestige and added value of the fact that the JDSP "Educational Sciences" is the only doctoral level study programme in educational sciences in Latvia implemented by four Latvian universities.

2) Enhance centralized joint governance of the JDSP "Educational Sciences". As it functions now it does not gain the merits of a joint doctoral degree, rather it resembles four separate doctoral degrees with minimal utilisation of each university's strengths, infrastructure, resources, academic staff, provisions, etc. All bodies of the study programme need to be joint and not separate.

3) Increase the mechanisms for mutual cooperation of the academic staff in the implementation of the JDSP "Educational Sciences" at the partner institutions level.

4) Increase the mobility of doctoral students and the utilization of joint opportunities among the partner institutions.

5) Increase doctoral students' reasons and opportunities to utilize the joint nature of the study programme, and not only the DU opportunities and provisions.

6) Proficiency in English among both the academic staff and students should become a long-term target. This will enhance the professional competency development options for staff as well as students' effective use of library resources, and international mobility of both.

7) Further stimulate the incoming and outgoing mobility of students and staff to ensure the Study Programme's international attractiveness. The DU may consider various ways to promote further synergies with other universities, for instance through further enhancing ERASMUS+, NORDPLUS or any other appropriate internal, local and European scheme.

8) Further stimulate the outgoing mobility of students and staff to ensure their immersion into English language learning.

9) Invest in modernising the university infrastructure to improve a more comfortable, attractive and modern atmosphere for student individual and group work (especially in the main building areas).

III - Assessment of the Requirements for the Study Field and the Relevant Study Programmes

III - Assessment of the Requirements for the Study Field and the Relevant Study Programmes

Assessment of the Requirements for the Study Field

Requirements	Requirement Evaluation		Comment
R1 - Pursuant to Section 5, Paragraph 2.1 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions, the higher education institution/ college shall ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study field whilst implementing its internal quality assurance system:	Fully compliant		The culture of self-reflection and continuous improvement was evident in DU during the visit (also see section 1.1.4 of this report). Despite the establishment of internal quality mechanisms, there is room for their improvement, including popularizing student surveys and systematization collection of feedback from employers and graduates. In overall though, the extend of these imperfections impact on the overall evaluation of the Study Field's compliance is limited.
R2 - Compliance of scientific research and artistic creation with the level of development of scientific research and artistic creation (if applicable)	Fully compliant		System developed at DU (SAR Annex 1.4. Procedure of assessing the scientific activity.pdf; internal DU grants, finances allocated for publications and participation in conferences; DU scientific journals and conferences etc. activities described in SAR chapter 2.4. pp. 52-62) supports the research needs of academic staff, is oriented to attain the high level scientific research results thriving for the goal to locate DU as a regional center of excellence.
R3 - The cooperation implemented within the study field with various Latvian and foreign organizations ensures the achievement of the aims of the study field.		Partially compliant	The local cooperation is well established. But the international cooperation is not very active: there are 2 contracts with foreign partners, held by the study programme "Primary school teacher": 1 partner is from Ukraine, 1 from Lithuania; and one scientific contract with Estonia. Experts have not seen copies of contracts with foreign institutions. Experts asked additional info during the site visit, they also got some additional info, but despite of it the statistics is not clear.

Requirements	Requirement Evaluation			Comment
R4 - Elimination of deficiencies and shortcomings identified in the previous assessment of the study field, if any, or implementation of the recommendations provided.	Fully compliant			Recommendations of previous expert panels were implemented according to the follow-up plans prepared after the previous accreditation processes. Short-term recommendations have been implemented (see expert analysis of 1.6.1. criterion).

Assessment of the Requirements for the Relevant Study Programmes of the Study Field

No.	Study programme	R5	R6	R7	R8	Evaluation of the study programme (excellent, good, average, poor)
1	Preschool Teacher (41141)	Not relevant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Excellent
2	Teacher (42141)	Not relevant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Good
3	Primary School Teacher (42141)	Not relevant	Partially compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Good
4	Educational sciences (45142)	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Good
5	Teacher (46141)	Not relevant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Excellent
6	Educational Sciences (51142)	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Good

The Dissenting Opinions of the Experts

None