

Expert group joint opinion

Evaluation Procedure: Assessment of Study Field

Higher Education Institution: Liepājas Jūrniecības koledža

Study field: Seafaring

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

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The objective of this report is to present main findings after evaluation of the Liepaja Maritime College (LJK). Liepaja Maritime College was founded in 1876 and is the oldest maritime school in Latvia. The College provides full-time and part-time first-level professional higher education programs for the qualification of engine officers and deck officers in accordance with the requirements of the IMO and STCW Convention and Code, and logistics specialists. There are five study programs included in the study field Seafaring.

The evaluation of the quality of education at LJK was carried out on the request of LJK by the Quality Agency for Higher Education (AIKA) as part of the work schedule. In 2015, the LJK was evaluated by AIKA with the aim of finding compliance with the requirements of the study field of seafaring and related programs. The College was given a number of recommendations which should have been applied in order to overcome identified weaknesses. The purpose of the current evaluation was to find compliance of the College with standards, check implementation of previous recommendations and provide any recommendations and suggestions for improvement where necessary.

The site visit was prepared and carried out in accordance with the applicable procedure. The visit took place on 11-13 of January 2023. The expert committee reviewed the self-assessment report (SAR) including annexes provided by the LJK.

The visit started with a meeting with the management of the College, namely the acting director and deputy principal. The subsequent visit took place in accordance with the prearranged agenda. During the visit following meetings were held with 1) Self-Evaluation team 2) directors of the study programmes, 3) students 4) teaching staff 5) graduates 6) employers 7) representatives of quality system. Finally, the evaluation team reviewed infrastructure and material resources of the LJK. The panel evaluated compliance of the College with the evaluation criteria using provided documentation and interviews with internal and external stakeholders during the site-visit as evidence. The visit ended with a closing meeting during which the Chair of the Expert Committee overviewed and briefly presented preliminary feedback to the HEI.

In detail the study field of Seafaring was evaluated. This field contains at LJK the following five study programs: Navigation, Maritime Transport, Organization of International Transport, Maritime Transport – Marine Engineering and Marine Engineering. Such a catalog of educational programs reflects the mission of the college well.

In general, the evaluation showed that LJK is able to deliver intended learning outcomes in their programs. Especially it refers to the programs which are associated with the requirements of IMO and STCW Convention and Code as confirmed by the Registry of Seamen of the Maritime Administration of Latvia.

The College assigned all programs to the study field of Seafaring. The evaluation team is of the opinion that the program Organization of International Transport doesn't fully belong to the field of Seafaring. The college should include this program under a different and more relevant study field.

The evaluation of the study field was in general positive. The panel did, however, formulate numerous improvement recommendations allowing the College to be more student oriented, more transparent, more systematic, more professional and more academic when fully implemented.

LJK quality of education at particular programs is on a good level. This is made possible, among other things, by a staff with extensive professional experience – active mariners or logistic specialists and engagement of the students. However, programs need further investment in infrastructure (applies especially to mechanical engineering programs), more cooperation and communication with internal and external stakeholders, better implementation of quality systems and improvements in the information of programs (course descriptions and learning outcomes). The institution should work on full implementation of given recommendations in the time to come.

I - Assessment of the Study Field

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1.1 Management of the Study Field

Analysis

1.1.1 The study field Seafaring is defined to include the study programs Navigation, Maritime Transport, Organization of International Transport, Maritime Transport – Marine Engineering and Marine Engineering as per self-assessment report (SAR) item 2.1.1. The aims of the study field are defined as five strategic goals, which also corresponds to the strategic goals of the Liepaja Maritime College's (LJK) strategic goals (SAR, p. 13). These goals are 1) organizing the process of preparation of specialists using the latest technologies, taking into account the areas and spheres of smart specialization and based on the requirements in the STCW convention, 2) developing a new approach to providing training processes for maritime engineering specialities, 3) creating a modern educational technological base, 4) promoting research in the fields of maritime technology and safety, and 5) promoting faster implementation of engineering achievements in the training process.

The study field Seafaring and included study programs delivers candidates to the maritime professions both on board vessels and ashore. In accordance with SAR item 2.1.1. and interviews with graduates and industry partners, LJK graduates are important for the Latvian maritime industry, and thereby also for the development of Latvia. In accordance with the SAR, the study programs are in compliance with the Latvian national long term planning document and sustainable development strategy. Until the assessment of the study field Seafaring, the programs now included in this study field were organized under two different study fields; 1) Mechanics and Metal Processing, Heat Power Engineering, Heat Technology and Mechanical Engineering and 2) Transport Services (SAR item 1.1).

The interconnection of the study programs is only partly clear and logical. All programs educate specialists for the wider maritime industry, which interconnects the programs. After reading the SAR and completing the institutional visit, the panel do however question the inclusion of the Organization of International Transport program in the study field Seafaring, as this program neither is under STCW regulations nor educates personnel for any job on board vessels, which the study field name "seafaring" indicates. The panel therefore recommends considering including the Organization of International Transport program into another study field. A recommendation given during the 2015 evaluation was to consolidate the two programs now called Maritime Transport - Marine Engineering and Marine Engineering. The main reason for this was that both programs result in the same qualification. This is still an open recommendation, and an issue the expert committee also found valid during this evaluation. Both programs graduates achieve the qualification engineer officer. The same issue also applies for the programs Maritime Transport and Navigation, which both lead to graduates being qualified as deck officers. The study plans of both engineering programs are very similar, and the study plans for the two deck officer programs have very similar courses taught by the same lecturers.

1.1.2 LJK has identified and analyzed strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats as per SAR part 2.1.2. Strategic documents such as the plan for the development of the study field do take some of the defined weaknesses and threats into account, e.g., improve quality of studies, strengthen financial capacity and promote an increase in the number of students. This indicates the LJK having a clear understanding of the criticality of such factors. The panel did during the site visit experience that although there is a general consciousness of the fact that student numbers are decreasing and that there is a need to strengthen the financial capacity, there is not a plan in place on implementation of actions in order to increase applicant numbers or strengthen the financial capacity (meetings with management, study field directors). During the meeting with industry partners, it was stated that the industry partners are interested in more collaboration with the college, and for example joint efforts between education and industry have in other countries proved successful in attracting more students.

In the SWOT analysis lecturer's competence level is mentioned (SAR, part 2.1.2). LJK has a Human Resources Development Plan, which includes developmental needs and plans for development. This plan does, however, not display what the overall plan is for LJK lecturer's competence level, and during the institution visit, it became clear that there are no awareness of any formal strategy for competence development of lecturers going beyond all lecturers having 36 hours of mandatory competence development (meetings with study program directors, teaching staff). All lecturers have a competence development plan, but during the meetings with study program directors and teaching staff the impression was given that this is mainly focused on short courses and projects. This means that for a lecturer to obtain a degree on e.g., master's or doctoral level, it seems very much up to the individual lecturer with no clear demands from the institution. The panel recommends that the college include overall goals for LJK competence level, which sets goals for how many lecturers should have different competence levels and how competence development should be carried out from the first day of employment.

In LJK, Some of the lecturers are only part time employees (meetings with directors of programs, teaching staff, students, graduates and additional meetings) and some are also active seafarers. This is highlighted during the interviews as both positive and negative. Positive, as the sailing lecturers bring the newest information from the maritime industry into the college. There is however a major challenge identified, as the planning and predictability is highly unstable due to the sailing schedule of such lecturers. None of this is included in the SWOT analysis (SAR item 2.1.2), and there is no procedure or strategy in place related to how many of the staff should be full time employees at all times (meetings with program directors and additional meetings). In the SWOT lack of qualified seafarers and salary level are included as threats and lack of qualified academic staff in relation to active seafarers not meeting the Ministry's qualification requirements for pedagogical education and master's degrees. It is important to ensure a high degree of predictability for students and staff, and the panel recommends that LJK develop a policy on how many members of staff in the different programs can be part time employees and how many should be full time employees to ensure a good balance between personnel available at all times (stability) and sufficient predictability for both the college and students.

1.1.3 The management structure of the study field and the corresponding study programs has a focus on development of the study field and its programs. There seems to be a low level of bureaucracy ensuring short communication and decision lines with the study program director as the link between each study program and the management of the institution (SAR item 2.1.3). The administrative and technical staff provides necessary support in running the programs (meetings with directors of programs, teaching staff, students and graduates). As mentioned above does the relatively high degree of part time employees lead to challenges in planning and predictability.

However, from the point of view of experts, the college should evaluate its possibilities to expand the range of offered programs in the study field of "Seafaring". In our opinion, the college has the necessary potential to seriously think about the implementation of the study program "ship electro-automation specialist". Such specialists are highly demanded in the maritime industry, and the volume of their training in Latvia is not enough to meet the demand. The implementation of the mentioned program would allow the college to attract more students and expand the range of offered programs.

1.1.4 There is a system and procedures for admission of students, established through the LJK Admission Rules annually published on the LJK website (SAR item 2.1.4). LJK does have regulations for recognition of formal and informal education regulated in the "Procedure for recognition of study courses acquired in other universities and study programs at the Liepaja Maritime College". This procedure does in accordance with the SAR item 2.1.4 also include professional experience. The system and procedures are logical and seem effective. The information on what can be recognized is not publicly available, and you have to log into the system in order to see the description of the procedure. These procedures should be publicly available, as it may have importance to people considering applying to the LJK. Some of the information on admission requirements also needs to be updated, as there are inconsistencies between program descriptions and official requirements in the different sources for information.

1.1.5 Methods, principles and procedures for assessing the achievements of students have been developed in accordance with the requirements of the first level professional higher education standard. Results of assessments are discussed in department meetings twice per year, which forms a foundation for continuous development of the study program and study process (SAR item 2.1.5).

The assessment methods and procedures are relevant for achieving and documenting the aims of the study programs (SAR item 2.1.5), and the competence of graduates are in line with industry requirements and expectations (meetings with graduates and industry partners). The assessment also ensures compliance with the Section A-II/1 of the STCW Code and partially with the Section A-II/2 of the STCW Code .

1.1.6 The college has established academic integrity regulations, which clarifies the obligations of students and academic staff and their responsibilities with regards to academic integrity of their work (SAR item 2.1.6). LJK do however not have an automatic system for controlling and identifying plagiarism, which means that in practice it is up to the individual teacher to recognize plagiarism (SAR p. 21, meeting with study director). When merging with Riga Technical University (RTU), LJK will be included in RTU's computerized plagiarism control system. The panel does recommend that this is implemented as soon as possible.

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

The aims of the study field Seafaring are defined and can be attainable. The study field and the relevant study programs comply with the main directions of the strategic development of the college and meet the needs and the development trends of the society and national economy. The interconnection of the study programs included in the study field is partly clear and logical, but the panel do question why the study program Organization of International Transport is included in the study field Seafaring, as this program neither is regulated under the STCW Convention, nor educates personnel for employment on board vessels.

The college has identified and analyzed the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the

study field and partly integrated them into development planning documents. The College is aware of the threat the decreasing number of students are imposing, but the panel did not see evidence showing that active action is taken to meet this challenge by implementing new recruitment strategies or actions. The panel did also during the site visit see that although competence level is identified as a threat or weakness, there is a lack of an overall strategy towards the college employee's joint competence level, and there seems to be no active requirements for personnel to achieve degrees, e.g. master's degree, in their competence development. In the analysis of strengths and weaknesses, the high level of lecturers who are active seafarers is not mentioned, although the meetings during the institutional visit gives evidence of this being both a strength and a challenge. In order to ensure that this remains to be a strength, the panel recommends that the LJK develop a policy for how many employees can be part time employees and how many should be full time employees at all times.

The management structure of the study field and the corresponding study programs is oriented towards the development of the study field, decision-making takes place efficiently, and the support provided by the administrative and technical staff seems sufficient.

A system has been set up and procedures developed 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. The system seems logical and effective. Information on what can be recognized is not publicly available, and some of the information on admission requirements needs updating to ensure consistent information in line with official requirements.

Methods, principles and procedures for assessing achievements of students have been developed and are defined. The relevance of assessment methods and procedures complies with requirements of the STCW Convention and are discussed in department meetings.

The college has established academic integrity regulations clarifying the students' and employees' obligations to adhere to academic integrity in their work. LJK does not have an effective anti-plagiarism tool.

Strengths:

1. LJK graduates are important for the Latvian maritime industry, and the graduates are considered to be good.
2. Some active seafarers in staff ensures updated information.
3. Low level of internal bureaucracy with short communication and decision lines.

Weaknesses:

1. Not clear why the Organization of International Transport is included in the study field Seafaring.
2. The two engineering programs are very similar in content, and qualifications awarded are the same. The two deck officer programs are very similar in content, and qualifications awarded are the same.
3. Lack of strategy to meet recruitment challenges and actively work against decreasing numbers of students.
4. Lack of overall policy for composition of staff with an aim to ensure predictability for students and staff.
5. Lack of an overall competence level strategy for the joint staff of LJK.
6. Information on what can be recognized from prior education and experience is not publicly available, as you have to log into the system to find this information.

7. Inconsistencies in admission requirement information.
8. An automatic plagiarism control system is not in place.

1.2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System

Analysis

1.2.1. According to the SAR p.22, and the documents that are accessible on the Liepaja Maritime College Moodle platform, there is an established quality policy. The College also has such documents available as risks, goals of the quality management. All these documents are provided in Latvian language. When asked during an onsite visit in the meeting with quality assurance management, it was stated that the quality policy is not currently available on the website as the website is under development.

According to the document called “LJK kvalitātes mērķi” (in English direct translation - “LJK Quality goals”), the LJK has a total of 9 goals that are crucial for quality management. The LJK has evaluated their own fulfillment on a scale from 1 to 5 according to 7 criteria set and the self evaluation indicates that their goal achievement is successful, having the lowest evaluation of themselves at a 4 out of 5, which corresponds to “good”.

According to the SAR p.23, surveys of the students, graduates and employers are a crucial part of the quality assurance process and allows to identify the problems and address them to improve the performance and study quality in the future, which is analyzed in more detail in SAR item 1.2.4. As stated by the College representatives, student feedback is very important for continuous improvement and development of the study field and relevant study programmes and students are a substantial part of the quality assurance mechanism with their input of study course evaluations. In the opinion of the expert group, LJK has developed and maintains a quality assurance system. This system contributes to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study field and the relevant study programs. Current system ensures continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study field and the relevant study programs.

1.2.2. According to the SAR p.23, the LJK has annual self-evaluation of the study field and study programmes where they in meetings with relevant study program directors and other representatives discuss possible and necessary improvements. Lecturers can also decide on changes in the study courses that they teach. Survey results received from the stakeholders are part of the LJK annual report. To experts' knowledge, this aforementioned document is the key document that provides a basis of information of the yearly performance. The College has stated in the SAR p.11, that they review study programs once a year. There are various mechanisms in place of internal approval of the study programs and supervision of performance and periodic inspection. There are various written procedures or documents that outline the procedure and how the development and review of the study programs is taking place. For example, “Notification of changes in the implementation of educational programmes” and “Development of study course documentation”. However, it is not clear to whom the annual self-assessment report is available. For example, it is not clear whether students can access the results, or if it is only internally available to the management and teaching staff of the LJK. Expert group believes that students should be able to see such information and access it externally in the Moodle platform, for example.

Regarding the feedback mechanism, students pointed out that they do not receive any feedback from the College, possible changes made related to the issues addressed nor a summary of the survey results of the answers that they have provided before. When meeting with graduates onsite, they also stated that they did not receive any feedback of the advised proposals after graduation. In

the meeting with employers, it became clear that they do not have such communication with the College. Communication between LJK and industry partners are limited to taking in interns or possible long term employment. When asked to clarify whether the employers fill an internship assessment, they said that they have not done it. Usually, exchanges between the parties happen through phone calls or emails.

As the College provided access to their Moodle system, experts had the access to the documents related to the LJK quality assurance procedures. Several summaries of survey results were found under "Client satisfaction results". It included documents such as "Employer survey results 2021", "Qualification internship evaluation results" and "Study process evaluation". The students stated that they do not have access to the summary documents, and therefore it is presumed that these documents are not accessible for the students.

Overall, the procedures of review for the relevant study programs seem logical and efficient. It would, however, be highly advisable to establish a feedback mechanism, which allows students to see the survey summaries. Currently, the LJK receives the information without giving the students feedback on the results and how the students' opinions differ. Establishing a feedback mechanism will close the loop of the process of internal quality assurance.

1.2.3. According to the SAR p.23, the College stated that students have the opportunity to freely express themselves, and that complaints or proposals can be submitted electronically. For those who do not want to reveal their identity, they can either send the message to the administration or they can leave the application in the mailbox prepared for this purpose – the "Suggestions and complaints" box. During the on-site visit, students gave information on such a box no longer existing, and said that the box was there before, but had been removed. When experts asked other students whether they had seen the "Suggestions and complaints" box, they identified that such a box is located on the 1st floor. This was later confirmed by the experts by seeing the box. During the on-site visit, one student stated that he/she is scared to go directly, while another student said that he did not find it challenging to speak up if there is an issue. As per confirmation in the on-site visit, the College has implemented both direct and anonymous submission of complaints or suggestions.

During the on-site visit, the management representatives stated that internal quality issues usually are resolved directly or through the electronic submissions of student complaints, not through the use of the mailbox. It has to be outlined that also, students that were invited to the accreditation meeting did not know about the existence of the mailbox, which supports the information given on direct exchange of information. Complaint submissions electronically are more often used. However, it is necessary for the students to know of both possible ways to submit their complaints and proposals, thus, the College must ensure that the students are informed.

According to the SAR p.23, in the academic year 2020/2021, an application was received from the students with a request to change one instructor, and the LJK management, taking this application into account, engaged another instructor. During the on-site visit, students stated that they do not receive feedback by e.g. email that their request has been fulfilled or reviewed, but they do see some of the results in real life. It would be advisable to inform the students in the process of developing and implementing solutions, which will show the students that their input is taken into account and actions are taken to resolve the issue.

1.2.4. According to SAR p.23 and information gathered during on-site meetings with students of relevant programmes as well as representatives of the quality assurance, it is clear that the LJK is conducting surveys as part of the study quality assurance process. There are student surveys

conducted once per semester, according to the students. The College representatives stated that surveys for students are in two forms - electronically and also in paper if they are not actively filling the ones electronically. The surveys usually address questions such as - "What did you like and did not like in the course?"; "What could be improved in the future?". The quality assurance representatives stated that at the end of the year, they make questions and answers and try to implement the feedback from students in the study process. As the College is in the middle of renovation work and the dormitory is not in the best shape, students have raised that issue and complained in the surveys. The LJK staff also added that they usually question students about the study process, infrastructure, information/resources, communication between students and lecturers. In the last few years the main topic was in regards to the Covid situation and whether the studies were good enough and maintained the quality standards expected.

It has to be noted that students are rather concerned about the limited predictability of the study schedule as they are notified about the lecture schedule only a day before. It limits their capability to plan in advance, as they do not know the hours they need to be present at the College the next week or even a few days ahead. In the opinion of experts, that is not sufficient predictability. The College representatives said this is a result of challenges in predicting the schedule of lecturers who are field professionals and physically on the ship most of their time. Thus, the lectures can take place only when the seafaring lecturers are present. The expert team is aware of such challenges in this profession, but the College still needs to ensure stability and predictability for the students.

During the meeting with quality assurance responsible personnel, it was stated that there are graduate surveys in place. The College has implemented a system ensuring that surveys are sent to the graduates once a year after graduation for a 3 year period. Some graduates come back to the College for specific training (as a professional development programme) and this gives them the opportunity to give informal feedback as well. The College representatives admitted that a limited number of about 20% of the graduates responds to the surveys.

When meeting with the College staff, information was given that there is a mechanism in place for communicating with the employers after the students have finished their internships. It was stated that LJK ask the employers - "What are the requirements of the study field?", "What positions are needed the most?" However, during the meeting with the employers, it became clear that they have very limited communication with the College. Usually, communication of students' satisfaction with the internship is done through students themselves. The employer representatives in the meeting on-site did not remember filling surveys of any kind.

During the onsite visit with employers, they stated that they would appreciate that the College provides some information about people who are about to graduate. With more cooperation and communication, the employers can provide information on their open positions and some students that would be willing to work after they graduate.

In the meeting with the quality assurance representative, it was stated that they do not see direct communication with the employers necessary in regards to student internships, as students on board ships usually have to fill in the training record book. The College requires notification from the students once a month in order to obtain information on the progress and if everything is fine. In case of major problems with the internship, the College communicates with the employer. If students have not been satisfied with specific things, they can make a note of it in the training record books. Overall, LJK ensures regular collection and analysis of various types of information including number of students, drop out rates, how many students are studying with their own funding. This information has been analyzed under "Indicators describing the study program" for

each of them separately. However, the expert group agrees that there is a necessity to communicate with employers and involve them in the quality assurance processes.

1.2.5. According to the SAR p.27, all necessary information in regards to implemented study programs are published on the website - 1. Ship masters; 2. Ship mechanic; 3. Logistics specialist. However, altogether there is an accreditation of 5 study programmes (1. Maritime Transport-Marine Engineering; 2. Marine Engineering; 3. Maritime Transports; 4. Navigation; 5. Organization of International Transportation) while the information is provided on 3 of these programs in the website. During the on-site visit, it has been stated by the College representatives, that the website is under development, resulting in not all the information being present. It is crucial to provide relevant, updated and concrete information on the study programs to attract students and to avoid any confusion. Experts tried to access the old version of the website, but it was not possible to see the study programs.

When experts tried to search for the HEI on the VIIS platform, there was no information available on the College nor its study programmes. The only information in the study field Seafaring accessible on the VIIS platform was on Novikontas Maritime College. The expert committee supposes that the reason for this may be the fact that the study programs have not yet officially been included in the study field Seafaring, and that the required information will be added after the confirmation of a decision on accreditation.

On the aforementioned 3 study programs that are available on the web page, the following information is available: 1. Study programme; 2. The qualification received after graduation; 3. Study length; 4. Required previous education; 5. Study fee; 6. Budget places available; 7. Study modes - part-time or full-time; 8. Possible places for continuation of studies; 9. Possible places for employment. All of the study programmes are implemented in one language - Latvian, and all the information is provided in Latvian.

Overall, there is a quality assurance system in place that ensures that the aims and learning outcomes are achieved in the study field and study programs. However, there are a few challenges hindering efficient performance and continuous development. Such challenges are lack of information to students of the various ways for providing complaints and proposals. Another crucial aspect is that a student feels scared to share problems because it may influence their study process at the College. It is also a requirement that the quality policy is available publicly, which it is not. The web site lacks information on 2 study programs. It may be confusing for the students who wish to apply for studies, when they cannot find the program that they wish to apply for. To conclude, there are some issues that the College needs to improve on and resolve in order to achieve the efficient performance of the study field and study programmes.

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

Liepaja Maritime College has established a quality assurance system. The quality assurance system is not publicly available at this point, due to development of the new web page of the College. Students are involved in the quality assurance processes such as regular surveys and submission of complaints and proposals, however, they do not receive any feedback on the provided answers. The College regularly monitors student satisfaction on the study courses and with lecturers. The study schedule is not well- functioning, as students are notified of the schedule of studies only a day before. Students believe that their feedback is taken into account. There are, however, minor fallbacks within the system, as some of the students are not informed of the submission of complaints and proposals mechanism. Graduates are a part of the QA processes through the

College's surveys sent once a year after graduation for the first 3 year period after graduation.

There is a lack of communication with employers. Employers stated that they would appreciate a closer collaboration with the College, e.g. by the College providing information about people who are about to graduate, so that the employers can provide their open positions and get in touch with students who can become employees after graduation. The College stated that they do not find direct communication with the employers necessary in regards to student internships, as students are obliged to fill in training record books. This is not considered sufficient from experts' side.

There are two complaint and proposal systems in place and students are aware of these, although rarely used. There is a lack of feedback in regards to the survey results. Students pointed out that they have not received any feedback or summary of the survey results from the College. There is no information about two of the five implemented study programmes on the College website.

Strengths:

1. Two possible types of submission of complaints and proposals.

Weaknesses:

1. Quality assurance policy is not publicly available;
2. Lack of communication with employers on internships and lack of involvement of employers in QA processes;
3. Lack of feedback provided to stakeholders (students, graduates and employers) of survey results;
4. There is no information on 2 study programmes on the College website - Navigation and Maritime Transport - Marine Engineering;
5. Lack of predictability of the study schedule for students. Students get notified of their study schedule only one day prior. This is not suitable, as students cannot plan their week.
6. There is a need to inform the students of both ways to submit complaints and proposals, as the mechanisms in place are not known for all students.

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: Partially compliant

There are various mechanisms and procedures in place of QA including a quality policy which is not currently externally available due to development of the webpage. The key procedures of the QA process are surveys of students and submission of complaints and proposals. There is a procedure in place for conducting surveys for graduates and employers, however, employer representatives stated that they have never received such surveys, which is confusing. Some of the documents as part of QA could not be accessed/found, even though experts were provided with username and password for logging in.

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

LJK has established quality policy -

[http://ljk.edu.lv/pluginfile.php/19987/mod_resource/content/1/Kvalitates_politika2022 .pdf](http://ljk.edu.lv/pluginfile.php/19987/mod_resource/content/1/Kvalitates_politika2022.pdf)
but it is not externally accessible.

The key procedures of the QA process are surveys of students and submission of complaints and proposals.

- 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 College has stated in the SAR p.11, that they review study programmes once a year. There are various mechanisms in place of internal approval of the study programmes and supervision of performance and periodic inspection.

1. Notification of changes in the implementation of educational programmes -

http://ljk.edu.lv/pluginfile.php/11325/mod_resource/content/1/Proced%C5%ABra%20Nr.%20P6-8.%20Pazi%C5%86o%C5%A1ana%20par%20izmai%C5%86%C4%81m%20izgl%C4%ABt%C4%ABbas%20programmas%20%C4%ABsteno%C5%A1an%C4%81.pdf

2. Certification of educational and study course programs -

http://ljk.edu.lv/pluginfile.php/11320/mod_resource/content/1/Proced%C5%ABra%20Nr.%20P6-3.%20Izgl%C4%ABt%C4%ABbas%20un%C4%81c%C4%ABbu%20kursu%20programmu%20sertific%C4%93%C5%A1ana%20.pdf

3. Development of study course documentation -

http://ljk.edu.lv/pluginfile.php/11319/mod_resource/content/1/Proced%C5%ABra%20Nr.%20P6-2.%20Studiju%20kursa%20%28m%C4%81c%C4%ABbu%20priek%C5%A1meta%29%20dokuments%C4%81cijas%20izstr%C4%81d%C4%81%C5%A1ana%20.pdf

4. Assessing and improving the adequacy of material and technical provision of educational programmes -

http://ljk.edu.lv/pluginfile.php/11323/mod_resource/content/1/Proced%C5%ABra%20Nr.%20P6-6.%20Izgl%C4%ABt%C4%ABbas%20un%C4%81c%C4%ABbu%20kursu%20programmas%20infrastrukt%C5%ABras%20informat%C4%ABv%C4%81%20un%20tehnisk%C4%81%20nodro%C5%A1in%C4%81juma%20atbilst%C4%ABbas%20nov%C4%93rt%C4%93%C5%A1ana%20un%20pilnveido%C5%A1ana.pdf (could not be accessed)

- 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

According to p.11 of the SAR, In Section 5 of the LJK regulations, the criteria and conditions for evaluating student performance are placed, which allow you to be sure of the achievement of the expected study results -

http://ljk.edu.lv/pluginfile.php/19055/mod_resource/content/1/LJK%20Studiju%20Nolikums%20ar%20groz.%20uz%2028.10.2021.pdf There are also other documents in place that evaluate student results as Organization and evaluation of qualification practice.

In addition to that, student survey results that are regularly conducted as well as submission of complaints and proposals mechanism.

- 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: Partially compliant

A substantial part of the lecturers are professionals that work in the field. This ensures their knowledge development according to the changes and trends in the field, but challenges predictability for students and level of involvement in the quality development of the LJK. On the internal platform there is a document accessible in regards to competence assessment, training and upgrading of academic staff. However, there is a problem with a fixed schedule and students cannot predict their time. They are notified about their schedule one day prior to the lectures so it makes it very complicated for them to plan their week. Additionally, during the on-site visit experts didn't see relevant evidence that the procedure for ensuring the quality of work of the teaching staff is properly implemented. There is also a lack of an overall competence level strategy for the joint staff of LJK.

- 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 college ensures collection and analysis of the student and graduate surveys. There are surveys accessible on the College's internal platform (experts got access to the platform). From LJK, there have also been employer survey results provided, although, during the on-site visit, employers indicated that they have never participated in a formal form of surveys which is confusing to the experts. The College also assesses academic staff's work and results of the qualification practice assessment of students.

- 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: Partially compliant

There is an established quality policy in place which is accessible only internally in the College's system:

[http://ljk.edu.lv/pluginfile.php/19987/mod_resource/content/1/Kvalitates_politika2022 .pdf](http://ljk.edu.lv/pluginfile.php/19987/mod_resource/content/1/Kvalitates_politika2022.pdf)

There is also a Quality Manual and Risk identification document that is accessible internally. As stated on site by College representatives of QA, an internal audit is performed every year, and risks and quality goals are reviewed, procedures are updated and supplemented. However, it is necessary to ensure that the quality policy is accessible externally on the website of the College as well.

1.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Field

Analysis

1.3.1. According to the SAR p.27, the studies at the LJK are provided both within the allocated budget places and for a fee. The amount of study fees and other paid services are determined by the Council of the College. Tuition fees are increased by an average of 5% every year. The College's financial resources are made up of tuition fees, income from other educational services, income from short training courses and also revenue from student dormitory services.

During the on-site visit it was verified that an analysis of the funding and available resources of the study field is carried out every year, identifying the current needs and planning the long-term necessary investments. In order to successfully implement it, the LJK management meets with study program directors on a regular basis, discussing the results achieved during the previous study year and prioritizing the needs of study areas for the next calendar year.

An agreement on the acquisition of education is concluded with each student, in which the tuition fee for the entire period of study is presented. The costs of one student in the study program are calculated based on the basic principles that have been determined by the December 12, 2006 Cabinet Regulations No. 994. For the students enrolled in the study year 2021/2022, the total costs were as follows: for full-time studies – EUR 2726.00, and for part-time studies – EUR 2606.00. The experts were provided with the detailed calculations of the planned costs of all study programs implemented (SAR p.28.).

At the beginning of each study semester, department heads submit a material and technical request, incl. including necessary provision for research. It is assessed individually within each annual budget of the College. However funds for research purposes are mostly attracted through EU funds - ERDF, ESF, "Interreg cross-border cooperation" and "Erasmus+" programs. The LJK also plans to provide funding for research in the period of 2021-2027 EU funds using opportunities to apply for projects of various programs. The special system for funding scientific and applied research is not established, and from experts' opinion taking into account that scientific and applied research activities are not the main priorities of a college, experts can conclude that availability of funding for such activities is sufficient through the above mentioned financing sources.

1.3.2. According to SAR p.34 and information gathered during onsite meetings with teaching staff and students of the relevant programs it was verified that resources mostly are available to students and teaching staff. The LJK has access to computer classes, an assembly hall, and other rooms. Teaching staff are provided with appropriate workplaces, a teachers' room is provided with workplaces and a restroom. There is also a library and a reading room where the students have access to computer workstations, as well as they have an opportunity to print and reproduce study materials. A unified system has been established for the improvement and purchase of material, methodological, informative, etc. provision, namely it is organized based on the plan submitted by the heads of the relevant departments, as well as based on individual material and technical requests.

During the on-site visit it was verified that the study infrastructure is located in different places in the city of Liepaja. STCW short training courses are conducted at a boat station situated in Ezermalas street 2a, where it is possible to carry out practical activities related to rigging work, lowering/raising the lifeboat, etc. Training ship "Namejs" also is available for practical training. During the tour of facilities it was verified that there are well equipped electrical and mechanical workshops for marine engineering students. For instance, mechanical workshops consist of 8 welding workbenches equipped with an air purification filter system, 4 lathes, milling machine, CNC milling machine, stationary drill (drill-press), metal cutting equipment, grinding equipment with dust extraction and other tools are available in the mechanical workshop. In order to meet the requirements of the STCW Convention and relevant IMO modular courses, the LJK has bridge and engine room simulators, ECDIS, GMDSS and Radar/Arpa equipment. However when it comes to the marine engineering programme it is important to highlight that there is still a lack of some essential equipment for the study process. For instance, experts noticed a lack of full-fledged laboratory equipment for automatic control systems, especially for PLC (programmable logic controller), but the laboratory equipment for hydraulic and pneumatic systems needs to be improved.

During the visit experts observed that the appearance and technical condition of a part of the premises of the College are poor and there is an urgent need for renovation measures. Some renovation works are currently being carried out using the funds allocated by the different projects, however, according to the College management, the funding is not sufficient to complete the renovation of all the premises, including students' dormitory.

1.3.3. From the interview with the teaching staff it was verified that the procedure for the improvement and purchase of methodological and informative provisions is established. In this regard the teaching staff submits a request for material and technical resources (hereinafter - MTL), specifying the name, quantity and price of the MTL to be purchased. The necessity of the item to be purchased is agreed with the head of the corresponding department. The purchase of MTL is carried out after coordination with the head of the financial department and the director of College (SAR p.35).

From SAR p.35, the Library resources and relevant study platforms are available to students and meet the needs of the study field. The total area of the library is 261 m². The library is open four days a week and working hours are from 9.00 - 16.30. The library has a reading room with 24 seats for readers and WIFI connection. LJK has signed a cooperation agreement, within the framework of which it is possible to use learning materials available in other libraries. For instance, the access to the joint catalog of books of Liepaja and Southern Kurzeme county libraries is provided.

Students have access to the e-platform ljk.edu.lv as well. All relevant study materials and lecture notes are available for students and teaching staff. In the library section of this e-platform, the books are accessible in e-format, including some IMO (International Maritime Organization) publications. Nevertheless, experts believe that the College, including both teachers and students, also needs online access to the platforms of International Maritime Law in order to have the latest versions of such documents.

1.3.4. During the on-site visit it was verified that the students of LJK have an opportunity to use the e-study platform moodle.ljk.lv in which all relevant study materials are stored as part of each study course. This platform can also be used to exchange information between students and teachers, and allows to follow the progress of students' studies, looking continuously at the students' success, their activity in taking study courses, and fulfilling independent tasks.

The interviews with students and academic staff showed that during the Covid-19 pandemic, the LJK used different methods and means of communication to organize the study process by using platforms such as: MOODLE, MYKOOB, WhatsApp, Skype, ZOOM, Google Classroom, etc.

1.3.5. According to the SAR p.36 and p.37, the LJK has developed the following internal rules and procedures: "The procedure for the election of academic and administrative positions" and internal regulations "The personnel selection procedure for Liepaja Maritime College". These documents determine the procedure for announcing vacancies, evaluating candidates and approval in an academic or administrative position. Vacancies are announced by announcing the competition on the official website "Latvijas Vēstnesis", as well as by publishing information in the home page of the College. Individuals are elected to academic positions as a result of an open competition. The academic staff of the College are assistant professors, lecturers and assistants. The elected administrative positions of the College are heads of departments. Elections are held by the Council of the College. The internal regulations "On the procedure for the election of academic and administrative positions" can be found: <https://moodle.ljk.lv>

1.3.6. During the on-site visit experts didn't get the relevant evidence that the procedure for

ensuring the quality of work of the teaching staff is properly implemented. From the interviews with the teaching staff involved in the study process and heads of the departments, it was not evident that the internal control and supervision on the study process is carried out on a regular basis. The director of the study program “Navigation” well explained their approach for evaluating the results and effectiveness of the implemented measures regarding the professional development of the teaching staff. The same experts could not say about the study programme “Marine engineering”, namely, the director of the study programme didn’t provide experts with clear answers on what improvement measures are used and how the results and effectiveness of the implemented measures are evaluated.

Nevertheless, according to the SAR p.37., the College has developed a professional development plan for the teaching staff and most of them are actively involved in further education activities. For instance, it is stated that teaching staff participate in various ESF projects in order to supplement their knowledge, skills and abilities in their field. Lecturers of professional subjects regularly participate in professional seminars, thus ensuring the improvement of theoretical knowledge, practical skills and professional competences by means of emphasizing the connection with the modernized content of professional education, innovations and continuous development of the technologies. Also the interviews with the teaching staff showed that all of them have an opportunity to participate in the professional development activities. However the relevant evidence was not gained, that all teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programmes actively uses this opportunity.

1.3.7. Taking into account information provided within the SAR p.38., it was verified that the teaching staff is made up of 43 persons. 89% of them are elected academic staff. Most of them are involved in the implementation of pedagogical work experience by visiting each other's classes, creating discussions and organizing methodical activities. There are not so many scientific activities where the teaching staff is involved. From the interviews with the teaching staff it became apparent that the most usual partial scientific activity for them is consultancy of students in the process of elaboration of qualification work.

It is important to highlight that the workload of the teaching staff also includes development and updating of study courses, providing lectures, consultations, organizing exams and tests, as well as research work and participation in different projects` activities. Overall workload of the academic staff is balanced to ensure the quality of the study process.

1.3.8. According to SAR p.39, it is evident that the LJK has identified all necessary support for students. For the students it is possible to get assistance from a psychologist. It is stated that the college`s psychologist regularly provides individual consultations to students and also to the teaching staff in cases of psychological difficulties. Heads of departments, program directors, study methodologists and teaching staff provide regular assistance to students during the study process. Regarding career support, since 2021, the support of a career consultant is available at LJK. ERASMUS students have an opportunity to attend the informative seminar, which provides the basic information about the hosting country, national traditions and legal aspects.

All relevant information about the study field and study course materials are available for part-time/distance learning students in the e-platform <https://moodle.ljk.lv>. Interviews with students confirmed that students regularly have access to tutors and programs` directors if necessary to receive consultations or other support.

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

Resources and provision of the study field are mostly sufficient and ensure the achievement of the objectives and planned results of the study programmes. It is important to highlight that experts are of the common opinion that the study infrastructure, namely, main premises and students' dormitory are in need of global renovation to improve both the working conditions of the lecturers and the learning conditions of the students. Mostly the funding available for the College is sufficient to ensure the study process in line with corresponding requirements and to satisfy the existing needs. However it is not sufficient to complete the renovation of the premises and update the teaching facilities, including simulators. There was not clear evidence that the internal control and supervision on the study process is carried out systematically on a regular basis. This is also very important in the light of evaluating the results and effectiveness of the implemented measures regarding the professional development of the teaching staff.

Strengths:

1. New build and well equipped mechanical workshops for engineering students.

Weaknesses:

1. A part of the premises of the College and students' dormitory are in a poor condition and there is an urgent need for renovation measures.
2. The College doesn't have online access to the platforms of International Maritime Law in order to have the latest versions of those documents;
3. Lack of evidence that the procedure for ensuring the quality of work of the teaching staff is properly implemented.

1.4. Scientific Research and Artistic Creation

Analysis

1.4.1. Based on LJK provided information the expert group concludes that the directions of LJK applied research in general corresponds to the development goals of the College and are relevant for the study field and industry, which includes analysis of the energetic equipment of the oil/chemical ships and tankers, development of logistics system and improvement of logistics operations for current companies, as also analysis of the supply chain of current companies. LJK states that the scientific research and creative activity of LJK teaching staff is carried out in accordance with the "LJK development strategy 2017-2028" and corresponds to the goals of the study direction, which includes that the research topic corresponds to internationally relevant research directions, as well as the development needs of the region.

1.4.2. Based on the onsite visit and LJK provided information the expert group concludes that provided applied research and the outcomes are integrated in the study process of the study programs, which is also confirmed by the topics of the final theses. The calculations used in the final thesis are previously completed in various industry-related study courses and connected mainly with analysis of the energetic equipment of ships/tankers. The connection the college provided applied research with the study process is logical and justified. Several lectures on the methodology of scientific research work are given to students already during the first semester of studies, but the broadest and deepest research are carried out during the second year of studies, when developing qualification papers.

In practice, research exercises begin with tasks for students to develop reports, which are mandatory. Students prepare reports on current topics and present them within the framework of study courses. Besides that students and academic staff use the current novelties in the field of water/marine transport on a daily basis, as well as apply them in research-related activities in the

process of developing qualification papers, during internship practice on ships, in laboratories, workshops and simulators.

1.4.3. The scientific activity of LJK is not great, which is confirmed by the small number of publications by teaching staff and the lack of appropriate equipment, but LJK has established close cooperation with other educational institutions of the sector, especially with the Lithuanian Maritime Academy. It is confirmed also by different joint projects, like, Project No. 8.2.3.0/18/A/015 "Ensure better management in higher education institutions". Both institutions have organized an international scientific event with participation of representatives of the Convention Monitoring Department of the Maritime Administration of Latvia, the Confucius Institute of the University of Latvia, etc. Over the past six years, LJK employees have participated in various industry conferences, like UAE, Dubai, "International Conference on Trends & Innovations in Management, Engineering, Science & Humanities " (ICTIMESH-2018), Lithuanian Maritime Academy Conference „The Baltic Sea: Gateway or cul de sac?“ as also Online Conference "International Maritime Advanced Training Course of Maritime Digitalization" Shanghai Maritime University. Students also participate in the conferences organized by LJK and Lithuanian Maritime Academy.

1.4.4. There are no special motivational programs, which motivate involvement of staff in scientific research. It is a free initiative of the teaching staff, which is supported if such a desire is shown. LJK staff and students have wide opportunities to participate in local and international projects, and LJK supports lecturers' participation in various scientific events, but the activity of teaching staff is not particularly high and is limited mainly to ERASMUS programs. LJK should introduce a motivation system that would promote the involvement of employees in scientific activities. The most effective solution could be financial support in the form of a supplement to the salary.

1.4.5. LJK has not developed special mechanisms for student involvement in scientific research, but student involvement in various projects (Project "Improvement of the workforce mobility and skills in Latvian- Lithuanian Maritime Transport Sector", Nr.LLI-42, LatLitNaviPort.; Project "Enhancement of the mobility and employability of Lithuanian and Latvian specialists in the field of electrical engineering and high voltage technologies", LLI-24, LitLatHV, etc.) connected with trainings and ERASMUS programs is encouraged. Qualification work is classified by LJK as a kind of research work, compulsory for each student.

1.4.6. LJK tries to apply various innovative solutions within the limits of its financial possibilities. Within the the ERDF Interreg project the college has purchased new computer equipment and software, which was introduced in the Moodle learning environment. Besides that LJK develops a new e-solution - e-administration is introduced allowing to optimize document circulation also in the case of students. LJK has started the renovation of the premises and the gradual renewal of the equipment in the laboratories, which will further promote the interest of students in the respective study programs.

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

The Scientific Research complies with the College and the study field, but have not been fully implemented. It is provided by a justification, based on the information obtained during the onsite visit and based on the information provided within the SAR. The results of the research activities of staff are integrated into the study process. The level of cooperation of LJK could be higher, as also the number of publications. Students are introduced to the basics of scientific research during the lectures, however, involvement in research activity could be better, as also application of various innovative methods.

Strengths:

1. Research activities are relevant to study field and is practice-oriented;
2. Students are introduced to the basics of research;
3. The college is involved in projects and participates in scientific conferences.

Weaknesses:

1. A small number of publications in journals/conference proceedings;
2. There is no motivation system for teaching staff for the realization of scientific activities.

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: Partially compliant

A small number of publications in journals/conference proceedings and no motivation for teaching staff for the realization of scientific activities.

1.5. Cooperation and Internationalisation

Analysis

1.5.1. The College cooperates with partners of the socio-economic environment. Collaboration mainly involves crewing companies. The SAR (p.43) lists numerous companies of this type (for instance: Baltnautic Shipping Ltd Lt and OJ Crew LT companies, Port Authority, Pilot Company). In a meeting with employers, the evaluation team met with representatives of these companies. Their cooperation is mainly on the topic of internships (sea practice) for STCW students. These companies have a good perception of the College because the students are accepted by Latvian and foreign shipowners therefore they do not require any changes in the educational programs. They also do not see the need to improve the continuing competence of students in further education paths (which is very surprising). A different attitude is represented by companies of the logistics market, who recruit students from other educational programs. They see the need to improve education (for example, to implement innovations into the program, to build the need to acquire creative and not only reproductive knowledge and skills). The college should cooperate more deeply with the socio-economic environment. It shall not stop at meeting standards only (e.g. STCW) because this is the minimum standard of education required by international institutions to which the college can add its own ambitions for education.

The college also cooperates with numerous institutions that are close to the maritime industry (like: Ethalon Recruitment LT, Baltcrew Agency OÜ and Skaya Agency ES). It benefits in the education process from teachers working in these institutions such as maritime pilots. This cooperation, although it has good practical aspects, also has a negative impact and sometimes even a destructive one. Namely, the college considers first the duties of these teachers with their employers and only second the LJK's needs. As a result, this causes unstable scheduling to the point that the schedule for students is given from day to day. This situation is almost pathological and should be eliminated as a matter of urgency. That is, cooperation with these people should be maintained but priorities should be changed in order to ensure that college-students come in first place.

In the domestic market, the LJK also cooperates with other schools and universities including Riga Technical University. It seems that also in this field cooperation should be deeper because, for

example, plans for a forthcoming merger between Riga Technical University (RTU) and LJK in detail are not known in the College more widely, which is worrying. Thus, relations, cooperation with the socio-economic environment should involve the college's management as much as lower-level employees. The College cooperates with Latvian HEI institutions like Riga Technical University or Ventspils Technical University. As well there is also significant cooperation with institutions from abroad like Kaunas Technical College or Lithuanian Maritime Academy.

1.5.2. The college has a special agreement with the maritime college in Klaipeda (Lithuania) where students can undertake studies but, above all, it is possible to use the IT infrastructure (e.g. simulators). This is particularly important for the college because it has a significant lack of equipment in the field of engineering education. So, through international cooperation, it has the opportunity to at least partially fill these gaps. Unfortunately, to date, these opportunities have not been properly exploited. It shall be underlined that institutions for cooperation are selected according to specific features of the study field and the relevant study programmes.

The College has been granted ECHE for the 2014-2020 period, currently, LJK implements Erasmus+ projects under ECHE for the 2014-2020 period (till the end of 2023). And only because the preliminary implementation of ECHE projects is still ongoing, the ECHE 2021-2027 awarded to LJK has not been started yet. The perspective of merging with Riga Technical University shall open more options for internationalization in offered programs. It shall be also clear for LJK that seafaring shall be recognized as international activity.

It should also be noted that the STCW programs conducted by the college have the recognition of the Latvian maritime administration, that is, they are firstly based on international standards and secondly internationally recognized by all IMO members – over 170 countries. It means that upon completion of education in College, obtained certificates of competency issued by administration give the opportunity for students to be employed in any of this country without restrictions.

The college's website is not available in foreign languages. Due to that reason possible international cooperation cannot be facilitated, and information about the College is less visible on an intentional level.

1.5.3. The college does not have a developed system and procedure for attracting teaching staff and foreign students in the field of study. It is possible that its small size, limited financial capacity and limited personnel resources are not conducive to developing international cooperation. Although formally LJK has signed several agreements with foreign higher education institutions. Mainly, these are agreements made under the Erasmus+ program. Students and teachers can take advantage of these agreements and go on periodic visits. In practice frankly speaking, only the teachers have taken advantage of this opportunity in several cases (between 1 to 4 mobilities in each programme a year). Students do not seem to be interested. Incoming students and teachers were not observed.

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

The type, scope and range of activities of institutions of the socio-economic environment, including employers, with which the college cooperates in the design and implementation of the study programmes is evident. Cooperation with institutions of the socio-economic environment takes diverse forms adequate to the educational goals and needs arising from the implementation of the study program and the achievement of learning outcomes for students (e.g., maritime internships, land placements, employment of teachers, etc.).

The college provides opportunities for students and teachers to benefit from international student

exchanges. There are a few examples of teachers' trips. Present mobilities are restricted by repair works in the infrastructure of the College. However it should not prevent the College to encourage especially students and also lecturers to take advantage of the mobility programs. There are no arrivals of visitors from abroad to the college. There is also no sign of using the good agreements made with Lithuania Maritime College, among others. Awareness of the scope of cooperation at both the national and international levels is not widespread in the college.

Strengths:

1. Internationally recognized programmes,
2. Good conditions for cooperation with local partners,
3. Strong position of college in the local social and economic environment.

Weaknesses:

1. Lack of international mobilities of students,
2. Assuming the duties of teachers in other institutions as more of a priority than in the LJK which results in pathological scheduling of classes from day to day
3. Lack of treating cooperation as a priority issue in college development.

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 full potential of cooperation is not utilized. At the national level in close proximity cooperation is adequate, even sometimes dominant manifested in pathological scheduling of classes, while at the international level it is negligible, for instance, just because information about the college for a foreign recipient is not available, as the website is only in Latvian.

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

Analysis

1.6.1. In 2012 the study direction Transport Services and programs Maritime Transport, Navigation and International Transport Organization was evaluated, and in 2015 the study direction Mechanics and Metal Work, Heat Power Industry, Heat Engineering and Mechanical engineering and programs Marine Engineer and Maritime Transport - Marine Engineer was evaluated. In previous evaluations, the LJK got several recommendations for the programs and study fields included in the evaluations (SAR p. 47, annexes, meetings with management, group preparing self-assessment report and study directors). Annex. 2.6.1 documents what the LJK has followed up on and how this is done. For some of the recommendations it says "happens continuously" without further description on which actions have been implemented or when such actions have been carried out.

Some of the panel members took part in the evaluation in 2015 and there has been a positive development in LJK quality work since their last visit. The recommendations provided in the previous evaluation report are to a large extent implemented, which is very positive. There are, however, still some areas of concern for the evaluation committee which also was pointed out during evaluations in 2012 and 2015. This indicates that there is still a need to further developing the LJKs systematic approach to their work, and especially in the areas of:

- a more active collaboration with industry partners (evaluation 2012, meetings with industry),

- scientific research activities (evaluation 2012, meetings with study directors, teaching staff, students and graduates),
- improvement of technical facilities and equipment (evaluation 2012, evaluation 2015, meetings with study program directors, students and graduates), and
- staff qualification improvement (evaluation 2015, meetings with study directors and teaching staff).

In the feedback from the the Registry of Seamen of the Maritime Administration of Latvia, it is stated that supervision and own control of execution of programs and specialized training courses are not sufficient, and that the college needs to improve the content and execution of the engineering programs. The maritime authority also points to the above-mentioned items of staff qualifications development, necessary equipment, and the need for implementing one platform and ensuring that teachers and students use this. Feedback from the Registry of Seamen of the Maritime Administration of Latvia also confirms that the LJK ensures a good competence level for their students and graduates, and that LJK candidates achieve good results.

The LJK has developed positively through the years since the previous evaluations (SAR item 2.6, meetings with management, group preparing self-assessment report, study directors and graduates) but the panel is based on the above mentioned challenges slightly worried that the level of systematics at LJK is not optimal and needs further development.

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

Recommendations provided in previous evaluation reports are to a large extent implemented, and there has been a positive development from the last revision at LJK. But there are still areas where the LJK need to improve their systematic approach, and especially in the areas of amore active collaboration with industry partners (evaluation 2012, meetings with industry), scientific research activities (evaluation 2012, meetings with study directors, teaching staff, students and graduates), improvement of technical facilities and equipment (evaluation 2012, evaluation 2015, meetings with study program directors, students and graduates), and staff qualification improvement (evaluation 2015, meetings with study directors and teaching staff).

The panel do recognize the positive development, but are concerned that the level of systematics is not sufficient and needs further development.

Strengths:

1. Positive development in LJK quality work since the last evaluation.
2. Many evaluation items from previous evaluations implemented.

Weaknesses:

1. Overall systematics needs to be further developed.
2. Still necessary to develop collaboration with industry partners, scientific research activities, improvement of technical facilities and staff qualifications.

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: Partially compliant

Several recommendations from previous evaluations are implemented at LJK, e.g. equipment in

mechanical workshops and participation in ERASMUS programs. There are still some challenges that need to be addressed, which also was pointed out in the previous evaluations, e.g. that it is still necessary to develop collaboration with industry partners, scientific research activities, improvement of technical facilities and staff qualifications. The panel also considered this as part of the need to further develop the LJK overall systematics in their work.

1.7. Recommendations for the Study Field

Short-term recommendations

College should include the Organization of International Transport program into another study field because it doesn't fully belong to the field of Seafaring.
College should implement computerized anti-plagiarism system as soon as possible.
College should make available Quality policy public on the website of the College.
College should provide information on all study programs that need to be visible in the website, which means that the two missing programs need to be included (Navigation and Maritime Transport - Marine Engineering).
College should provide feedback for the students on survey results and actions implemented.
College should conduct surveys of employers and graduates and that feedback on the results are provided.
College should ensure planning of classes in adequate advance. It is recommended to make plans for the whole semester.
College should improve and organize the new laboratories of engine control systems with pneumatic and hydraulic elements and high voltage simulators to provide an opportunity for students to undergo appropriate practical training on shore.

Long-term recommendations

College should prepare an overall competence development plan which sets goals for the number of lecturers who have accomplished the different competence levels and how competence development should be carried out from the first day of employment.
College is advised to consider merging the two engineering programs into one engineering program and the two deck officer programs into one.
College should develop a staff sustainable policy on how many members of staff in the different programs can be part time employees and how many should be full time employees to ensure predictability for both the college and its students.
College should increase cooperation and communication with employers on internships.
College should involve employers more in the quality assurance.
College should develop an action plan for attracting young people to the college programs. Low numbers of students and graduates are a serious threat to the sustainability of college programs.
College is advised to consider expanding the range of educational programmes offered, and consider the possibility of providing 5. LKI level program "Ship's Electro-automation specialist".

II - "Maritime Transport - Marine Engineering" ASSESSMENT

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2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1. The first level professional higher education programme Maritime Transport - Marine Engineering complies with indicators, conditions and criteria of the study field of Seafaring. The study programme is approved by the Registry of Seamen and certified by the Ministry of Transport. The programme is compliant with the study field. The main focus of the study programme is to prepare engineer officers in compliance with the requirements of the STCW convention. The length of the implementation of the study programme, which is 2 years (full-time studies) and 3 years (part-time extramural studies), is evaluated as sufficient for acquiring the necessary practical and theoretical skills to enter the labor market.

2.1.2. According to the SAR p.109, the aim of the study programme is to ensure the acquisition of professional higher education and prepare specialists of the fourth professional qualification level, as advised from the experts for the "Engineer Officer in charge of a watch on ships with a main engine power of 750 kW and above ", who can work on various types of the ships.

According to the SAR p. 109, the title of the study programme is Maritime Transport - Marine Engineering in the study field of Seafaring with education classification code 41525 which stands for - (41 - first level professional higher education (EQF level 5); to be implemented after obtaining general or vocational secondary education; duration of studies in full-time studies from two to three years; 525 - thematic area "Mechanical Engineering (Motor Vehicles, Ships and Aircraft")), according to the classification of Latvian education which can be accessed here: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/291524-noteikumi-par-latvijas-izglitiba-klasifikaciju>. There is a qualification obtained after successful completion of speciality examination and qualification thesis of an Engineer Officer (at operational level). This is the same qualification as the Marine Engineering program, and the similarities between the two programs extends also to containing many similar courses taught by the same lecturers. According to the information provided in the SAR pp.109-110, the admission requirements of the two year programme is vocational maritime secondary education, where only the graduates from marine schools can be admitted. The admission requirements for full-time and part-time studies differ. For part-time studies it is necessary to provide documents that confirm the professional qualifications and experience prior to studies. As such, the content of the full time and part time programs differ in extent of practical training within the program. The programme is implemented in Latvian. Students need to acquire the necessary amount of credit points (CP) to finish their studies in the total amount of 80 CP or 120 ECTS.

In the opinion of the experts, the title, code, qualifications to be obtained of the study programme, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated. According to the SAR p.114, the main objectives and tasks of the study program are to promote students' analytical abilities, develop skills in raising professional problems and solving related tasks, developing projects; to encourage the development of students' interests in processes taking place in society; to ensure specialization of students, in accordance with modern requirements, in the selected programme - Marine engineering specialty. The objectives and tasks are fully compatible to ensure the acquisition of theoretical knowledge and practical skills and to achieve the level of professional competence in accordance with the requirements of standard A/III-1 of the STCW Convention and Code and simplified standards A/III-2 of the STCW Convention and Code. According to the SAR p.115, the learning outcomes of the study programme are quite a lot with the key ones being - 1. To

organize and perform watchkeeping duties in the engine room; 2. To prepare to start internal combustion engines, auxiliary machinery and systems; 3. To operate the main engine and related systems; 4. To monitor the operation of all machinery in the engine room, either personally or through the watchkeeping personnel; 5. To plan and carry out technical operation measures; 6. To perform fuel, oil, ballast and other pumping operations; perform detection of defects in electrical and electronic equipment and restore normal operating conditions. It is necessary to specify study programmes learning outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills and competences. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation as well as the implementation language, are reasonable and justified. Learning outcomes achieved in the programme are the same despite the form of study.

2.1.3. According to the SAR p.111, there have been no corrections made in the study programme parameters since the last accreditation cycle. The only aspect specified has been that there have been changes in the study field at the regulatory level from "Mechanics and Metalworking, Thermal energy, Thermal engineering and Mechanical sciences" to "Seafaring". The Civil protection course is not included in the study plan, as should have been done as per mandatory requirements. This course must be implemented in the program.

2.1.4. According to the data provided by the College on the SAR p.117, all ship engineering specialists are in demand and employed 92% of LJK 2017/2018 Maritime Transport -Marine engineering program graduates work at sea, 2018/2019 - 96%, 2019/2020 - 97%, 2020 /2021 95% and 2021/2022 100%. Overall in the labor market, there is a shortage of qualified maritime professionals. However, there has been a noticeable migration trend of the specialists to foreign ships due to economic reasons as they provide better salaries. There has been a decrease in Latvian population in general, a demographic trend which directly points towards decreasing population in youth age groups. It also makes an impact on possible students that could study in the College.

According to the SAR p.118, the number of students is linked to the number of available budget places and labor market demand. The number of students in part-time studies remains at a good level for many years, because a person can work and study. Full time students have decreased, although, in total they are more in the three courses than part-time students. LJK provides such an opportunity, and works individually with each student. However, generally, the number of matriculated students is gradually decreasing based on the data provided of the last three study years. In 2017/2018 there were 33 students studying in the programme, in 2018/2019 - 31, in 2019/2020 - 19, in 2020/2021 - 23, 2021/22 -13.

There has been an increase of state budget places in the College as provided in the SAR p.119, since 2017/2018 which might help to ensure a stable number of matriculated students.

It is important to point out that this College is focused on preparation of specialists in the Kurzeme region as students who live in Riga normally choose to study in Riga.

2.1.5. Not applicable

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

All of the indicators of the study program are in compliance with the existing preconditions of the implementation of the study program, except for the Civil protection course not being included in the study plan. This course must be implemented in the program. The study program Maritime Transport - Marine Engineering complies with the study field indicators, conditions and criteria. In

the opinion of the experts, the title, code, qualification to be obtained of the study programme, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated. The expert committee does note the similarities between this program and the Marine Engineering program, and recommend to merge these two programs into one engineering program qualifying for engineer officer. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation, as well as the implementation language, are reasonable and justified. The content of the full time and part time programs differ in extent of practical training within the program. The study programme is implemented in Latvian. The goals, objectives and learning outcomes are in line, and goals and objectives are in compliance. Learning outcomes need to be described as knowledge, skills and competences. The programme is in demand for regional students and there is a flow of incoming students every study year, even though it is rather unstable in the recent 3 years.

Strengths:

1. A study programme that prepares engineer officers specialists regionally.
2. The Maritime Transport - Marine Engineering program is relevant for the study field Seafaring.

Weaknesses:

1. Instability of matriculated students in recent years.
2. Very similar to the Marine Engineering program.
3. The Civil protection course is not included in the study plan.
4. Learning outcomes are not described by knowledge, skills and competences.

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1. The Maritime Transport – Marine Engineering program complies to a certain extent with national regulations (state education standard, professional (occupational) standards) and professional qualification requirements. Planning, organization, and implementation of the study process partly takes place in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia, the Law on Education, the Law on Higher Education Institutions, the Law on Professional Education and the Council of LJK. The training of marine engineers is carried out in accordance with regulations under The International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW), 1978, as amended, European Union Directives, in accordance with the Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers of 15.12.2015. No. 710 "Regulations of certification, implementation and monitoring of professional training programs for seafarers", and other regulatory enactments relevant to the sector and LJK internal regulatory enactments. The assessment of the current content of study courses and compliance with industry and labor market needs, and scientific trends is carried out in accordance with LJK Procedure Manual: Procedure No. P6-2 "Development of study course documents" and Procedure No. P6-5 "Updating the programmes of study courses". Descriptions of study courses (DSC) are updated as necessary, where the valid version of the DSC is approved at the beginning of each study year at the department meeting. The director of study programs is responsible for the quality, actuality and compliance of the DSC with current study plans and updated regulations.

The content of the Maritime Transport – Marine Engineering program is relevant, and the study courses of the program meets industry expectations and regulatory requirements – provided that the students are transported to Lithuania Maritime College in order to complete the simulator training for high voltage equipment in accordance with STCW regulations, as such equipment is still not in place at LJK.

The courses of the program correspond to the objectives and tasks of the program and should ensure achievement of learning outcomes and regulatory requirements such as STCW requirements (SAR study program documentation and meetings with study directors, teaching staff, students, industry partners and graduates). However, not all courses are updated, and some learning objectives are not clearly enough formulated. The study course descriptions did not have separate information about the course plan for full time and part time students. Syllabi of the educational programme shall be built on common principles, including properly defined course aims, learning goals/objectives, as well as learning outcomes. Moreover, course aims, learning goals/objectives, contents, and training outcomes, shall reflect the requirements of the binding regulations, such as the STCW Convention and Code, national occupational standards, IMO model courses (where applicable) etc., as well as modern technologies used on board ships. Appropriate references to these requirements in the syllabi shall be also made. In addition, training outcomes shall be measurable (in terms of what a student is able to do as a result of completing a learning). Finally, the language, whether official or English, used in texts of syllabi shall be clear, concise and grammatically sound, as well as use correct marine engineering terminology. A vast majority of the marine engineering syllabi of the LJK does not follow aforementioned principles, as they have very poorly defined learning objectives and training outcomes, as well as not fully reflecting requirements of the STCW Convention and Code, recommendations of the relevant IMO model course and modern technologies. According to the meeting with study program directors, this impression corresponds with LJK own assessment as it during the meeting became clear that LJK also consider that some learning objectives are not clearly enough formulated for the marine engineering programs, it was also stated that some courses were updated and that the rest would be done "if time". This was initially pointed out by the Registry of Seamen of the Maritime Administration of Latvia and is confirmed by the panel through the evaluation process (SAR study course descriptions, meeting with study director).

Literature lists are included in the course descriptions (SAR Program annex). The panel notes that the literature used is quite old and for some courses it is expected that the literature is outdated. This is an overall problem for the courses, and LJK must strive to update their literature to ensure the fundament of their teaching being up to date. It should be possible to find more recent literature, as we see examples in courses such as Applied Physics (5 of 7 literature resources from the 1990s and 2 from early 2000s), Information technologies (many books from early 2000s, only one book less than 10 years old (from 2018)) and technical mechanics (most literature from early 1970s, one book from 1995).

The panel also notes that several platforms are in use both in the same course but also use of digital platforms (Mykoob, Moodle, Google classroom, etc.) differs between courses. This can lead to misunderstandings for students, uncertainty on where to find materials and information relevant for the courses, and make it challenging for the students to obtain updated information. The LJK should ensure a more specific policy towards platforms in use and make sure to standardize this more (meeting with teaching staff, students, facilities tour). It also became clear in meetings with study program directors and students that the college does not have sufficient practical tools for this program, and the college must ensure that such tools are in place. The panel also recommends that the college look into possibilities for using modern aids such as e.g. AutoCAD to support the technical drawing training.

Also it is important to highlight that according to the information received from Registry of Seaman, during the competency assessment procedure the examinees often show insufficient knowledge in certain areas, for example, in ship systems, ship turbines, fault finding (defects) in the main engine, refrigeration systems, hydraulic and pneumatic control systems, theoretical electrical engineering, thermodynamics, material studies, etc. Unfortunately, the College so far has not been able to create

a systematic approach to improving students' knowledge, which indicates insufficient or inefficient methodological capabilities.

The meeting with graduates and industry partners confirms that the graduates from LJK do have the necessary knowledge and competence required by the maritime industry.

2.2.2. Not applicable

2.2.3. Study implementation methods for the Maritime Transport - Marine Engineering study program are chosen to achieve the learning outcomes for the course, and different methods are used: lectures, practical lessons, self-guided work, group work, discussions, seminars, educational excursions and simulation. The course description displays the methods used in each course.

For part time students, the requirement for independent work is higher than for the full-time program (SAR p.122, meetings with study program directors and teachers). This is currently not displayed in the study course descriptions, and should be included. Students in all programs are both invited to and expected to have an active role during their studies, and LJK have to some extent implemented principles of student-centered education through implementation of independent work, projects etc. (SAR, p. 122). For the part time students, on-site activities are limited to two sessions per study year. Students can get counseling between sessions, but the main activities are self-instructional work (SAR item 3.2.3, p. 122). For the students, it is challenging to plan their studies, as the schedule is not known in due time. This makes the student centered learning challenging for the students as a result of how the LJK organizes the study schedule. This must be improved.

For the Maritime Transport - Marine Engineering program, there is a lack of critical equipment on site (meetings with program director, teaching staff, students and facilities tour). This is temporarily solved by an agreement with Lithuania Maritime Academy in order to ensure access to high voltage simulators, and a process for obtaining such simulators is in progress (meeting with study director).

2.2.4. The Maritime transport - Marine engineering study program includes one maritime practice training in the 3rd semester on board ships. The content of the practical training period corresponds to 16 credit points. On board training is organized in accordance with the LJK regulations on the organization, implementation of qualification practice and practice project preparation and presentation for the first-level higher professional full-time and part-time studies.

Purpose of the practice is to strengthen and supplement theoretical knowledge acquired, obtain competence appropriate to the study program, and gain practical skills necessary for specialists in the relevant field.

The procedure for organizing student/learning practice is determined by the LJK practice regulations and quality management system procedure P8-3 Practice. The evaluation of practice results is based on the pass/fail system, and the procedure is described in the LJK Practice Regulations (SAR p. 122-123).

Practical training is carried out on board vessels owned or manned by industry partners of the LJK. During the meeting with industry partners, it became clear that the collaboration with industry partners can be further developed through a more active collaboration also including other activities than practical training on vessels.

2.2.5. Not applicable

2.2.6. The students write a final thesis in the last academic semester after completing the marine qualification practice program. The thesis is a demonstration of the results of the student's independent applied research. Through the thesis, the students demonstrate their knowledge, skills and abilities acquired through their studies.

The final thesis should cover the topic "Analysis of the energy equipment of the ship (the ship on which the student was in practice)". The content of the qualification work task is developed by the engineering department and is reviewed at the department meeting. As per study course description of the final thesis (annex "Descriptions of the study courses/modules") the content of the qualification work is a general description and operational analysis of the ship's energy equipment, in the center of which is the main engine and its operation servicing systems, as well as the ship's auxiliary systems and electrical devices. The topic is therefore relevant to the field and to the study program.

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

The content of the study program is topical, and the study courses/modules correspond to the objectives of the program. Not all courses are updated, and some learning objectives need clarifications. Literature used must be updated, as a lot of courses are based on old literature. The Maritime Transports – Marine Engineering program complies with national regulations, professional standards and professional qualification requirements as long as the students are transported to Lithuania Maritime College in order to complete simulator training on equipment required as per the STCW 78 as amended, but not yet available at LJK. Several digital platforms are in use.

The study implementation methods contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study courses and the study program. Student-centered learning and teaching principles are considered to an extent, but the lack of predictability due to changing schedules and short planning horizon makes it unnecessarily hard for the students and thereby challenging the student's ability to plan their own learning. LJK must improve the organization of the study schedule. The requirement for independent work differs between the full time and part time programs. There is a lack of critical equipment on site.

The Maritime Transports – Marine Engineering program include practical training in order to strengthen and supplement the theoretical knowledge acquired, obtain appropriate competence and gain necessary practical skills as per requirements in STCW 78 as amended. The practical training is carried out on board vessels owned or manned by industry partners such as shipping and manning companies. LJK does have regulations for organizing and evaluating on board training.

The topics of students' final theses cover the topic "Analysis of the energy equipment of the ship (name of the ship where the students did their practical training)" and are relevant to the field and correspond to the study program.

Strengths:

1. Topic of students final thesis is relevant for the study program and the field.

Weaknesses:

1. Course descriptions need to be updated.
2. Literature used is old and needs updating.
3. Learning objectives need clarifications.
4. Several digital platforms in use.

5. Lack of critical equipment on site.
6. Updated tools such as e.g. AutoCAD is not in use.
7. The higher requirements of independent work for part time students should be reflected in the study course descriptions.
8. Study schedule changes on short notice and lacks predictability, which makes it hard for students to plan their own learning.

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Doesn't apply to the programme

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1. Taking into account the opinion received from the Registry of Seamen and results of the interviews with the teaching staff involved and the head of engineering department, it was observed that the study provisions as well as material and technical provisions of the study program Maritime Transport - Marine Engineering are only partially compliant with relevant requirements to ensure achievement of the learning outcomes. For instance, not all study course descriptions have been updated according to the technological development of the industry, in some cases their goals and achievable results have not been formulated clearly, unambiguously and in accordance with the goals of the program. Taking into account above, experts can conclude that the procedure developed by College, how study course descriptions are updated, is not effective or this procedure is not followed.

According to the director of the study program, the implementation of the study program is generally ensured by the material and informational base of the College. Infrastructure of the program can be characterized by four main blocks, namely, premises for teaching and scientific work, library, facilities for STCW short training courses, and workshops and laboratories for practical training of marine engineers.

During the interviews experts were informed that the educational institution has purchased new equipment important for the implementation of the engineering programs, for example, laboratory equipment for refrigeration equipment, material teaching laboratory equipment, etc., but it is not fully used or is not in working order. There is still a lack of high voltage simulators on site, full-fledged laboratory equipment for automatic control systems, especially for PLC (programmable logic controller), but the laboratory equipment for hydraulic and pneumatic systems needs to be improved.

Informative provisions, including library resources such as text books, publications relevant to the study programme etc., are available for both students and teaching staff. Also some digital teaching aids (CBT - computer based programs) are used for the delivery of the study programme.

It should be noted that the interview with employers' representatives confirmed that graduates of marine engineering programmes are very demanded in the labor market as there is a significant

shortage of marine engineers in the industry.

2.3.2. Not applicable

2.3.3. The funding available for the implementation of the study program is mostly sufficient to ensure the part time and full time study process. It is important to highlight that taking into account the relatively small number of enrolled students and graduates, the profitability of the study programme is not high. However, taking into account information provided in SAR p. 127-128, the study program has the minimum number of students to ensure positive profitability. According to the college management, the minimum number of learners per course to ensure the profitability of the program is 16 individuals. The source of funding for the marine engineering study programs is state budget financing and tuition fees. According to SAR p. 129, an analysis of the funding and available resources of the study area is carried out every year, identifying the current needs and planning long-term necessary investments.

As it was explained by the director of College, the implementation of the program financially could be supported by the income earned from the different project activities. However, during the visit to the College, it was evident that funding currently available is not sufficient to meet all relevant needs of new equipment for the study program Maritime Transport - Marine Engineering.

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

The resources of the College are partially sufficient to ensure the efficient implementation of the study programme Maritime Transport - Marine Engineering. The study infrastructure, equipment, and simulators available in the college mostly correspond to the goals and planned results of the program. Nevertheless experts noticed a lack of some essential equipment for implementation of the study program.

Strengths:

1. An effort to improve the material technical provision.

Weaknesses:

1. Lack of the essential technical provisions for successful implementation of the study program. For instance, it is highly recommended to improve laboratory equipment for automatic control systems, supplementing it with a PLC (programmable logical controllers) as it is required by the STCW Convention and Code.
2. Systematic approach has to be improved regarding the management of the study program and internal control on the study process.

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

Lack of the essential technical provisions for successful implementation of the study program.
For instance, laboratory equipment for automatic control systems.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1. Number of teachers and other personnel ensure delivery of intended learning outcomes in the program. As said in SAR (page 130) and confirmed during visit the teaching staff (number, qualification) complies with the requirements specified in Law on Higher Education Institutions. The teaching personnel (instructors, supervisors and assessors) of the general and professional subjects are education and/or maritime professionals with the relevant seafarer's qualification, and with the relevant seagoing service. Moreover, as required by the regulation I/6 of the STCW Convention, the teaching personnel involved in the implementation of the professional subjects is qualified for the particular types and levels of training or assessment of competence of seafarers, and certified by the Registry of Seamen of the Maritime Administration of Latvia. These teachers generally don't have scientific or academic degrees however their professional experience is longer than required minimum of 5 years. Totally in the implementation of the programme 20 lecturers are involved, 13 of them have master's degrees and one has a doctoral degree. Taking into account the current number of students 70 (full time and part time students) the ratio of teachers per student is 3.5. It means that students have unrestricted access to the teachers. Teachers are competent, however, not one subject is delivered in English language, which could lead to resistance from taking part in international mobility programmes (except lecturers of English language). Over 90% of teaching staff has a basic job at the college, while 10% combines teaching work with work at sea.

Recent experience connected with Covid pandemic and distance learning should encourage reflection. Some teachers need to improve their IT competence. Teachers should not have free choice of communication platforms with students while implementing the study program. This shows that college has not been well prepared to provide education using remote techniques. It is also not good if, from the student's perspective, subsequent classes can be held using different online platforms - dependent on the will of the teacher and not the overall policy of the college.

2.4.2. Teaching staff seems to be stable for a longer period of time taking into account their competences but considering also quite a high average age. Teachers are enthusiastic, they provide good support for the operation of the college. According to information provided in SAR (3.4.2) the number of teachers with appropriate qualifications and professional experience has increased compared to previous evaluation. This is a positive tendency ensuring the achievement of intended learning outcomes in the study program. On the other hand, some of the teachers have double employment which significantly restricts their availability. In some cases, LJK also rely on professionals from industry. On the one hand, this is very positive because students receive up-to-date knowledge from these lecturers. On the other hand, the work of these lecturers in college seems to be another, less important, task. As a result of this, lesson plans are arranged dynamically to accommodate the lecturers' current needs or work opportunities. This introduces unnecessary unstable scheduling negatively affecting students, administration and other teachers. Such practices should be eliminated.

2.4.3. Not applicable

2.4.4. According to the evaluation team, teachers are not obliged to conduct research, however they should possess knowledge of the current state of knowledge/research results/developments in their field, in order to be able to pass this on to students. For that reason, teachers should at least monitor the progress of research, they should e.g. participate in conferences, symposia, and maybe development/scientific projects. All teachers are having academic degrees or extensive practical experience of more than 5 years that shall satisfy formal requirements of Law on Higher Education.

2.4.5. It seems that teachers work together to implement the education program well. Teachers' representatives are part of program councils. Teachers participate in improving the educational process. Among other things, they have jointly prepared training materials in the new simulator. The level of mutual cooperation among teachers seems to be adequate.

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

The selection of teaching staff and their number in relation to the number of students ensures proper delivery of classes. Teaching staff have competences that enable the proper delivery of classes both in stationary form and with the use of distance learning techniques and methods. The College staff policy, including the selection of teachers, is appropriate to the needs of the delivery of classes and in each case takes into account the competence of the teachers, their academic achievements and especially professional maritime experience.

Strengths:

1. Involvement in the program from teachers having maritime professional qualifications and current experience.

Weaknesses:

1. Some teachers seem not to have adequate IT competences for online advanced teaching methods.

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

Despite minor comments (like IT challenges) teachers ensure good delivery of intended learning outcomes

2.5. Assessment of the Compliance

Requirements

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

The study program partly complies with the Cabinet Regulations No.141 "Regulations on the first level Professional Higher Education State Standard". Civil defense course is not included in the study plan as a mandatory course.

- 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

Comply with the standard of the ship mechanic (operational level) PS 0407. Accepted at the meeting of professional education and employment of tripartite cooperation on 23.02.2007.

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Not all written descriptions of the study courses contain the following or containment is not full (as per Law on Higher Education Institutions):

Clarify the purpose of the study course so that it corresponds to the learning outcomes – some study courses need slight improvement;

Supplementary literature and indication of other sources of information is not included – most study courses need slight improvement

- 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 diploma complies with the Cabinet Regulations No.202, according to which state recognized documents of higher education are issued.

- 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 director of LJK has submitted a certificate that the knowledge of the national language of all teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study program complies with the regulations on the amount of knowledge of the national language.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

LJK has an agreement with Ltd. "Novikontas Maritime College" and Lithuania Maritime Academy to provide students with the opportunity to continue their education in another college in case the implementation of the LJK study programs has been terminated.

- 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

LJK has confirmed that students are guaranteed compensation for losses if the study program is not accredited or the study program's license is revoked.

- 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

Planning, organization and implementation of the study process takes place in accordance with the Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers of 15.12.2015. No. 710 "Regulations of certification, implementation and monitoring of professional training programs for seafarers", and other regulatory enactments relevant to the sector and LJK internal regulatory enactments.

Comply with International Maritime Organization (IMO) International Convention "Standards for the Training, Certification and Watchkeeping Service of Seafarers" for the operational level (STCW requirements A-III/1).

Assessment of the requirement [8]

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Improvements are needed in the study course descriptions.

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

The study program complies with the study field indicators, conditions and criteria. The goals, objectives, learning outcomes are in line and goals and objectives are in compliance. Learning outcomes need to be described as knowledge, skills and competence. The content of the study program is topical, and the study courses/modules correspond to the objectives of the program while not all courses are updated, and some learning objectives need clarifications. The Maritime Transport - Marine Engineering program is very similar to the Marine Engineering program both in content and in the identical qualifications achieved after completion of the program. The panel therefore recommends that LJK merge these programs into one program giving the qualification of engineer officer. The study implementation methods contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study courses and the study program. The resources of the College are partially sufficient to ensure the efficient implementation of the study program. The study infrastructure, equipment, and simulators available in the college mostly correspond to the goals and planned results of the program. Nevertheless experts noticed a lack of some essential equipment. Teaching staff have competences that enable the proper delivery of classes both in stationary form and with the use of distance learning techniques and methods. The College staff policy, including the selection of teachers, is appropriate to the needs of the delivery of classes and in each case takes into account the competence of the teachers, their academic achievements and especially professional maritime experience. Scientific activities should be improved. The Civil protection course is not included in the study plan, as should have been done as per mandatory requirements. This course must be implemented in the program.

As a result of evaluating all the information available from SAR, various documents, and the evidence received during the site visit, the group of experts has identified the following strengths and weaknesses.

Strengths:

1. A study program that prepares engineer officers specialists regionally;
2. Study program Maritime Transport - Marine Engineering is relevant for the study field Seafaring;
3. Graduates have good employment opportunities due to the significant shortage of marine engineers in the industry.

Weaknesses:

1. Some courses need to be updated, literature used needs to be renewed, program learning outcomes are not described as knowledge, skills and competence, and the Civil protection course is not included in the study plan for the program;
2. Lack of critical equipment on site;
3. Updated tools such as e.g. AutoCAD is not in use;
4. The higher requirements of independent work for part time students should be reflected in the study course descriptions;
5. Lack of the essential technical provisions for successful implementation of the study program;
6. Systematic approach has to be improved regarding the management of the study program and internal control on the study process;
7. Some lecturers seem to not have adequate IT competence for online lecturing and need competence development;
8. The Maritime Transport - Marine Engineering program is very similar to the Marine Engineering program.

Evaluation of the study programme "Maritime Transport - Marine Engineering"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Average

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Maritime Transport - Marine Engineering"

Short-term recommendations

College should update courses and clarify learning objectives, the increased requirements of independent work for part time students should also be visible in the study course descriptions, the Civil protection course must be implemented in the study plan of the program and program learning outcomes must be described as knowledge, skills and competence

College should standardize use of digital platforms within and across courses

College should ensure information on the high requirements of independent work for part time students are reflected in the study course descriptions

College should ensure predictability in study schedule

College should install necessary equipment such as high voltage simulator, automatic control systems including a PLC (programmable logical controllers)

Long-term recommendations

College is advised to consider merging the Maritime Transport -Marine Engineering program and the Marine Engineering program into one program giving the qualification of engineer officer

College should stabilize the number of matriculated students, as these are unstable and decreasing every year

College should consider using modern and updated tools such as e.g. AutoCAD

College should improve the systematic approach in the management of this program, and ensure better internal control of the study process

College should ensure that all lecturers have adequate IT competence for online lecturing

II - "Marine Engineering" ASSESSMENT

II - "Marine Engineering" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1. The first level professional higher education program Marine Engineering complies with indicators, conditions and criteria of the study field of Seafaring. The study program is approved by the Registry of Seamen and certified by the Ministry of Transport. The program is compliant with the study field. The aim of the study program Marine Engineering is to prepare competitive specialists for the labor market in accordance with the requirements of standard A-III/1 of the STCW Convention and Code and reduced requirements of the standard A-III/2. The length of the implementation of the study programme is 3 years (full-time studies) and 4 years (part-time extramural studies). This is

evaluated as sufficient for acquiring the necessary practical and theoretical skills to enter the labor market.

2.1.2. According to the SAR p.136, the aim of the Marine Engineering program is to ensure the acquisition of professional higher education and prepare specialists of the fourth professional qualification level of the marine engineering industry "Engineer Officer in charge of a watch on ships with a main engine power of 750 kW and above ", who can work on various types of ships.

According to the SAR p. 136, the title of the study programme is Marine Engineering in the study field of Seafaring with education classification code 41525 which stands for - (41 - first level professional higher education (EQF level 5); to be implemented after obtaining general or vocational secondary education; duration of studies in full-time studies from two to three years; 525 - thematic area "Mechanical Engineering (Motor Vehicles, Ships and Aircraft")), according to the classification of Latvian education which can be accessed here: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/291524-noteikumi-par-latvijas-izglitiba-klasifikaciju>. There is a qualification obtained after successful completion of speciality examination and qualification thesis of an Engineer Officer (at operational level). This is the same qualification as the Marine Engineering program, and the similarities between the two programs extends also to containing many similar courses taught by the same lecturers. According to the information provided in the SAR pp.136-137, the admission requirements for the program is secondary education. Admission requirements for full-time and part-time studies are different. For part-time studies, it is necessary to provide documentation that the applicant has gained professional qualifications and experience in the sea. The program is implemented in Latvian. Students need to acquire a total amount of 120 CP or 180 ECTS to finish their studies.

In the opinion of the experts, the title, code, qualification to be obtained of the study programme, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated.

According to the SAR p. 141, the main tasks and the objectives of the study program are to promote students' analytical abilities, develop skills in raising professional problems and solving related tasks, developing projects; to develop the study process in such way as to develop students' intelligence, promote their spiritual development, promote the use of intellectual abilities in practical activities; to encourage the development of students' interests in processes taking place in society; to ensure specialization of students, in accordance with modern requirements, in the selected program – Marine engineering specialty. The objectives and tasks are fully compatible to ensure the acquisition of theoretical knowledge and practical skills and to achieve the level of professional competence in accordance with the requirements of standard A/III-1 of the STCW Code and simplified standards A/III-2 of the STCW Convention and Code.

According to the SAR p.142, a few of the learning outcomes are - 1. To prepare to start internal combustion engines, auxiliary machinery and systems; 2. To operate the main engine and related systems; 3. To monitor the operation of all machinery in the engine room, either personally or through the watchkeeping personnel; 4. To plan and carry out technical operation measures; 5. To perform fuel, oil, ballast and other pumping operations; 6. To use English, both verbally and in writing; 7. To operate electrical, electronic and control systems; 8. To perform detection of defects in electrical and electronic equipment and restore normal operating conditions; 9. To perform safe and efficient maintenance and repair works. The duration and scope of the study program implementation as well as the implementation language, are reasonable and justified. Learning outcomes indicated are the same indicated to be achieved in the program are the same, regardless of form of study. However, in the expert's opinion, the learning outcomes should differ between the

programs when the form and interaction frequency with the students differ. A different approach has to be taken and to some extent, the information that they have gained independently studying, can differ as they base their information on what is self taught mostly, instead of what has been heard in the lectures. Thus, knowledge, skills and competencies for both study modes will be different.

2.1.3. According to the SAR p.138, there have been no corrections made in the study programme parameters since the last accreditation cycle. The only aspect specified has been that there have been changes in the study field at the regulatory level from "Mechanics and Metalworking, Thermal energy, Thermal engineering and Mechanical sciences" to "Seafaring".

According to the SAR p.138, no corrections have been made in the study program parameters since the last accreditation cycle. The only aspect specified is that there have been changes in the study field at the regulatory level from Mechanics and Metalworking, Thermal energy, Thermal engineering and Mechanical sciences to Seafaring. The experts find it a bit confusing that the College has not identified implementation of the Civil Protection course since the previous accreditation. In the description of the provided study courses, the Civil protection course has been added to full-time studies of the study program and also in the C part which is a free elective, while this study course is part of mandatory courses that everyone must take. While for part- time studies it has not been included.

2.1.4. According to the data provided by the College on the SAR pp.144-145, all marine engineering specialists are in demand and employed - 94% of LMC 2017/2018 graduates work at sea, 2018/2019 - 95%, 2019/2020 - 97%., 2020 /2021 97% and 2021/2022 99%, according to the graduates survey results. Overall in the labor market, there is a shortage of qualified maritime professionals. However, there has been a noticeable migration trend of the specialists to foreign ships due to economic reasons as they provide better salaries. There has been a decrease in Latvian population in general. This is a demographic trend which directly points towards decreasing population in youth age groups. It also makes an impact on possible students that could study in the College.

According to the SAR p.145, the number of students is linked to the number of available budget places and labor market demand. The number of students in part-time studies remains at a good level for many years, because a person can work and study. LJK provides such an opportunity, and works individually with each student.

In general, the number of matriculated students is gradually decreasing in both part-time and full-time study programs based on data provided for the last three study years. In 2019/2020 - 33, in 2020/2021 - 26, 2021/22 - 25. It is important to point out that this College is focused on preparation of specialists in the Kurzeme region as students who live in Riga normally choose to study in Riga.

According to SAR p.146 on exmatriculation, around 50% graduate their studies. The main reasons for student exmatriculation are 1. Unable to find the shipboard training practice in time; 2. Financial situation; 3. Insufficient perception of the chosen profession; 4. Organizational issues and time planning.

According to SAR p.146 data on funding and budget places, since 2019/2020, there is a decrease of students who are studying with their private funding. As the economic situation in the country is worsening, it is an interrelated issue which has to be addressed by the College in the future. Possibly, more budget places can be ensured.

2.1.5. Not applicable.

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

Almost all of the indicators of the study programme are in compliance with the existing preconditions of the implementation of the study program. The study programme Marine Engineering complies with the study field indicators, conditions and criteria. The Civil protection course is not implemented in the part-time study program, while it is implemented as an elective in the full-time program. This course is mandatory for all students. In the opinion of the experts, the title, code, qualification to be obtained of the study program, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated. The expert committee does note the similarities between this program and the Marine Engineering program, and recommend to merge these two programs into one engineering program qualifying for engineer officer. The duration and scope of the study program implementation as well as the implementation language are reasonable and justified. The study program is implemented in Latvian. The goals, objectives and learning outcomes are in line and in compliance, however, the knowledge, skills and competences (learning outcomes) have to be outlined separately for different study modes as the interaction with the students and level of self-study varies greatly. The program is in demand for regional students and there is a flow of incoming students every study year, although it has been rather unstable in the recent 3 years with an increasing amount of exmatriculated students. There is a decrease of privately funded students.

Strengths:

1. Graduates of the Marine Engineering program have good employment opportunities due to the significant shortage of marine engineers in the industry.
2. Study program is relevant for the study field.

Weaknesses:

1. Decrease of matriculated students;
2. Very similar to the Maritime Transport - Marine Engineering program;
3. Decrease of privately funded students;
4. Civil protection course has been implemented only in the full-time study programme and as C elective course.
5. The same learning outcomes, knowledge skills and competencies indicated for different study modes.

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1. The Marine Engineering program complies partly with national regulations (state education standard, professional (occupational) standards) and professional qualification requirements. Planning, organization, and implementation of the study process takes place in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia, the Law on Education, the Law on Higher Education Institutions, the Law on Professional Education and the Council of LJK. The training of marine engineers is carried out in accordance with regulations under The International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW), 1978, as amended, European Union Directives, in accordance with the Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers of 15.12.2015. No. 710 "Regulations of certification, implementation and monitoring of professional training programs for seafarers", and other regulatory enactments relevant to the sector and LJK internal regulatory enactments. The assessment of the current content of study courses and compliance with industry and labor market needs, and scientific trends is carried out in accordance with LJK Procedure Manual: Procedure No. P6-2 "Development of study course documents" and Procedure No. P6-5 "Updating the programmes of study courses". Descriptions of study courses

(DSC) are updated as necessary, where the valid version of the DSC is approved at the beginning of each study year at the department meeting. The director of study programs is responsible for the quality, actuality and compliance of the DSC with current study plans and updated regulations. The content of the Marine Engineering program is relevant, and the study courses of the program meets industry expectations and regulatory requirements – provided that the students are transported to Lithuania Maritime College in order to complete the simulator training for high voltage equipment in accordance with STCW regulations, as such equipment is still not in place at LJK.

The courses of the program correspond to the objectives and tasks of the program and should ensure achievement of learning outcomes and regulatory requirements such as STCW requirements (SAR study program documentation and meetings with study directors, teaching staff, students, industry partners and graduates). However, not all courses are updated, and some learning objectives are not clearly enough formulated. The study course descriptions did not have separate information about the course plan for full time and part time students. Syllabi of the educational programme shall be built on common principles, including properly defined course aims, learning goals/objectives, as well as learning outcomes. Moreover, course aims, learning goals/objectives, contents, and training outcomes, shall reflect the requirements of the binding regulations, such as the STCW Convention and Code, national occupational standards, IMO model courses (where applicable) etc., as well as modern technologies used on board ships. Appropriate references to these requirements in the syllabi shall be also made. In addition, training outcomes shall be measurable (in terms of what a student is able to do as a result of completing a learning). Finally, the language, whether official or English, used in texts of syllabi shall be clear, concise and grammatically sound, as well as use correct marine engineering terminology. A vast majority of the marine engineering syllabi of the LJK does not follow aforementioned principles, as they have very poorly defined learning objectives and training outcomes, as well as not fully reflecting requirements of the STCW Convention and Code, recommendations of the relevant IMO model course and modern technologies. According to the meeting with study program directors, this impression corresponds with LJK own assessment as it during the meeting became clear that LJK also consider that some learning objectives are not clearly enough formulated for the marine engineering programs and that some courses were updated and that the rest would be done “if time”. This was initially pointed out by the Registry of Seamen of the Maritime Administration of Latvia and was confirmed by the panel through the evaluation process (SAR study course descriptions, meeting with study director). As a result of this, the expert committee observes that the LJK established procedure on how study course descriptions are updated, is either not effective or the procedure is not followed.

Literature lists are included in the course descriptions (SAR Program annex). The panel notes that the literature used is quite old and for some courses it is expected that the literature is outdated. This is an overall problem for the courses, and LJK must strive to update their literature to ensure the fundament of their teaching being up to date. It should be possible to find more recent literature, as we see examples in courses such as Applied Physics (5 of 7 literature resources from the 1990s and 2 from early 2000s), Information technologies (many books from early 2000s, only one book less than 10 years old (from 2018)) and technical mechanics (most literature from early 1970s, one book from 1995).

The panel also notes that several platforms are in use both in the same course but also use of digital platforms (Mykoob, Moodle, Google classroom, etc.) differs between courses. This can lead to misunderstandings for students, uncertainty on where to find materials and information and make it challenging for the students to obtain updated information. The LJK should ensure a more specific policy towards platforms in use and make sure to standardize this more (meeting with teaching

staff, students, facilities tour). It also became clear in meetings with study program directors and students that the college does not have sufficient practical tools for this program, and the college must ensure that such tools are in place. The panel also recommended that the college look into possibilities for using modern aids such as e.g. AutoCAD to support the technical drawing training.

The meeting with graduates and industry partners confirms that the graduates from LJK do have the necessary knowledge and competence required by the maritime industry.

Also it is important to highlight that according to the information received from Registry of Seaman, during the competency assessment procedure the examinees often show insufficient knowledge in certain areas, for example, in ship systems, ship turbines, fault finding (defects) in the main engine, refrigeration systems, hydraulic and pneumatic control systems, theoretical electrical engineering, thermodynamics, material studies, etc. Unfortunately, the College has so far not been able to create a systematic approach to improving students' knowledge, which indicates insufficient or inefficient methodological capabilities

2.2.2. Not applicable

2.2.3. Study implementation methods for the Marine Engineering study program are chosen to achieve the learning outcomes for the course, and different methods are used: lectures, practical lessons, self-guided work, group work, discussions, seminars, educational excursions and simulation. The course description displays the methods used in each course.

For part time students, the requirement for independent work is higher than for the full-time program (SAR p.149, meetings with study program directors and teachers). This is currently not displayed in the study course descriptions, and should be included. Students in all programs are both invited to and expected to have an active role during their studies, and LJK have to some extent implemented principles of student-centered education through implementation of independent work, projects etc. (SAR, p. 149). For the students, it is challenging to plan their studies, as the schedule is not known in due time. This makes the student centered learning challenging for the students as a result of how the LJK organizes the study schedule. This must be improved. For the part time students, the on site activities are limited to two sessions in the study year. Students can get counseling between sessions, but the main activities are self-instructional works (SAR item 3.2.3, p. 149).

2.2.4. The Marine engineering study program includes practical training. As per the study program curriculum, the content of the practical training period corresponds to 40 credit points consisting of 8 credit point professional training (workshop training) and 32 credit points shipboard training. On board training is organized in accordance with the LMC regulations on the organization, implementation of qualification practice and practice project preparation and presentation for the first-level higher professional full-time and part-time studies.

Purpose of the practice is to strengthen and supplement theoretical knowledge acquired, obtain competence appropriate to the study program, and gain practical skills necessary for specialists in the relevant field.

The procedure for organizing student/learning practice is determined by the LJK practice regulations and quality management system procedure P8-3 Practice. The evaluation of practice results is based on the pass/fail system, and the procedure is described in the LJK Practice Regulations (SAR p. 122-123).

Practical training is carried out on board vessels owned or manned by industry partners of the LJK. During the meeting with industry partners, it became clear that the collaboration with industry partners can be further developed through a more active collaboration also including other activities than practical training on vessels.

2.2.5. Not applicable

2.2.6. The students write a final thesis in the last academic semester after completing the marine qualification practice program. The thesis is a demonstration of the results of the student's independent applied research. Through the thesis, the students demonstrate their knowledge, skills and abilities acquired through their studies.

The final thesis should cover the topic "Analysis of the energy equipment of the ship (the ship on which the student was in practice)". The content of the qualification work task is developed by the engineering department and is reviewed at the department meeting. As per the study course description of the final thesis (annex "Descriptions of the study courses/modules" the content of the qualification work is a general description and operational analysis of the ship's energy equipment, in the center of which is the main engine and its operation servicing systems, as well as the ship's auxiliary systems and electrical devices. The topic is therefore relevant to the field and to the study program.

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

The content of the study program is topical, and the study courses/modules correspond to the objectives of the program. Not all courses are updated, and some learning objectives need clarifications. Literature needs to be updated, as a lot of old literature is used in the courses. The Marine Engineering program complies with national regulations, professional standards and professional qualification requirements as long as the students are transported to Lithuania Maritime College in order to complete simulator training on equipment required as per the STCW 78 as amended, but not yet available at LJK. Several digital platforms are in use.

The study implementation methods contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study courses and the study program. Student-centered learning and teaching principles are considered to an extent, but the lack of predictability due to changing schedules and short planning horizon makes it unnecessarily hard for the students and thereby challenging the student's ability to plan their own learning. LJK must improve the organization of the study schedule. The requirement for independent work differs between the full time and part time programs. There is a lack of critical equipment on site.

The Marine Engineering program includes practical training in order to strengthen and supplement the theoretical knowledge acquired, obtain appropriate competence and gain necessary practical skills as per requirements in STCW 78 as amended. The practical training is carried out on board vessels owned or manned by industry partners such as shipping and manning companies. LJK does have regulations for organizing and evaluating on board training.

The topics of students' final theses cover the topic "Analysis of the energy equipment of the ship (name of the ship where the students did their practical training)" and are relevant to the field and correspond to the study program.

Strengths:

1. Topic of students final thesis is relevant for the study program and the field.

Weaknesses:

1. Some courses need to be updated, and the literature used needs to be renewed.
2. Some learning objectives need clarifications.
3. Several digital platforms in use.
4. Lack of critical equipment on site.
5. Updated tools such as e.g. AutoCAD is not in use.
6. The higher requirements of independent work for part time students should be reflected in the study course descriptions.
7. Study schedule changes on short notice and lacks predictability, which makes it hard for students to plan their own learning.

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Doesn't apply to the programme

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1. Taking into account the opinion received from the Registry of Seamen and results of the interviews with the teaching staff involved and the head of engineering department, it was observed that the study provisions as well as material and technical provisions of the study program Marine Engineering are only partially compliant with relevant requirements to ensure achievement of the learning outcomes. During the interviews experts were informed that the educational institution has purchased new equipment important for the implementation of the engineering programs, for example, laboratory equipment for refrigeration equipment, material teaching laboratory equipment, etc., but it is not fully used or is not in working order. There is still a lack of a high voltage simulator on site, full-fledged laboratory equipment for automatic control systems, especially for PLC (programmable logic controller), but the laboratory equipment for hydraulic and pneumatic systems needs to be improved.

Informative provisions, including library resources such as text books, publications relevant to the study programme etc., are available for both students and teaching staff. Also some digital teaching aids (CBT - computer based programs) are used for the delivery of the study programme.

It should be noted that the interview with employers' representatives confirmed that graduates of marine engineering programmes are very demanded in the labor market as there is a significant shortage of marine engineers in the industry.

2.3.2. Not applicable

2.3.3. In general funding available for the implementation of the study program is mostly sufficient to ensure the part time and full time study process. As it was explained by the director of College, the implementation of the program financially could be supported by the income earned from the

different project activities. However, during the visit at LJK, it was evident that funding currently available is not always sufficient to meet all relevant needs of new equipment, namely to significantly improve technical provisions or to buy new simulators.

It is important to highlight that as a result of the relatively small number of enrolled students and graduates, the profitability of the study program is not high. However, taking into account information provided in SAR p. 127-128, the study program has the minimum number of students to ensure positive profitability. According to the college management, the minimum number of learners per course to ensure profitability of the program is 16 individuals. The source of funding for the marine engineering study programs is state budget financing and tuition fees. According to SAR p. 129 an analysis of the funding and available resources of the study area is carried out every year, identifying the current needs and planning long-term necessary investments.

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

The resources of the College are partially sufficient to ensure the efficient implementation of the study program Marine Engineering. The study infrastructure, equipment, and simulators available in the college mostly correspond to the goals and planned results of the program. Nevertheless, experts noticed a lack of some essential equipment for implementation of the study program.

Strengths:

1. An effort to improve the material technical provision.

Weaknesses:

1. Lack of essential technical provisions for successful implementation of the study program. For instance, it is highly recommended to improve laboratory equipment for automatic control systems, supplementing it with a PLC (programmable logical controllers) as this is required by the STCW Convention and Code.
2. The systematic approach has to be improved regarding the management of the study program and internal control on the study process.

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

Lack of essential technical provisions for successful implementation of the study program. For instance, laboratory equipment for ship`s automatic control systems.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1. Number of teachers and other personnel ensure delivery of intended learning outcomes in the programme. As said in SAR (p. 159) and confirmed during visit the teaching staff (number, qualification) complies with the requirements specified in Law on Higher Education Institutions. The teaching personnel (instructors, supervisors and assessors) of the general and professional subjects are education and/or maritime professionals with the relevant seafarer's qualification, and with the relevant seagoing service. Moreover, as required by the regulation I/6 of the STCW Convention, the

teaching personnel involved in the implementation of the professional subjects is qualified for the particular types and levels of training or assessment of competence of seafarers, and certified by the Registry of Seamen of the Maritime Administration of Latvia. These teachers generally don't have scientific or academic degrees however their professional experience is longer than the minimum requirement of 5 years. Totally in the implementation of the programme 20 lecturers are involved, 13 of them have master's degrees and one has a doctoral degree. Taking into account the current number of students of 153 (full time and part time students), the ratio of teachers per student is 7.5. This means that students have unrestricted access to the teachers. Teachers are competent, however, not one course is delivered in English, which could lead to resistance from taking part in international mobility programmes (except lecturers of English language). Over 90% of the teaching staff has a basic job at the college, while 10% combines teaching work with work at sea.

Recent experience connected with Covid pandemic and distance learning should encourage reflection at LJK. Some teachers need to improve their IT competences. Teachers should not have a free choice of communication platforms. This shows that college has not been well prepared to provide education using remote techniques. It is also not good for the student's perspective, if subsequent classes are held using different online platforms - dependent on the will of the teacher and not a result of the college policy.

2.4.2. Teaching staff seems to be stable for a longer period of time taking into account their competences but also considering quite a high average age. Teachers are enthusiastic, they provide good support for the operation of the college. According to information provided in SAR the number of teachers with appropriate qualifications and professional experience has increased compared to previous evaluation. This is a positive tendency contributing to the achievement of intended learning outcomes in the study program. On the other hand some of the teachers have double employment which significantly restricts their availability. LJK does in some cases rely on professionals from industry. On the one hand, this is very positive as students receive up-to-date knowledge from these people. On the other hand, the work of these teachers in the college seems to be a less important choice. As a result of this, lesson plans are arranged dynamically to accommodate the seafarers other work opportunities. This introduces unnecessary unstable scheduling negatively affecting students, administration and other teachers. Such practices should be eliminated.

2.4.3. Not applicable

2.4.4. According to the evaluation committee, teachers are not obliged to conduct research, however they should possess knowledge of the current state of knowledge/research results/developments in their field so that the current state of knowledge is passed on to students. For that reason, teachers should at least monitor the progress of research, they should e.g. participate in conferences, symposia, maybe development/scientific projects.

2.4.5. It seems that teachers work together to implement the education program well. Teachers' representatives are part of program councils. Teachers participate in improving the educational process. Among other things, they have jointly prepared training materials in the new simulator. The level of mutual cooperation among teachers seems to be adequate.

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

The selection of teaching staff and their number in relation to the number of students ensures proper delivery of classes. Teaching staff have competences that enable the proper delivery of

classes both in stationary form and most with the use of distance learning techniques and methods. The College staff policy, including the selection of teachers, is appropriate to the needs of the delivery of classes and in each case takes into account the competence of the teachers, their academic achievements and especially professional maritime experience.

Strengths:

1. Involvement in the program from teachers having maritime professional qualifications and current experience.

Weaknesses:

1. Some teachers seem not to have adequate IT competences for online advanced teaching methods.

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

Despite minor comments (like IT challenges), teachers ensure good delivery of intended learning outcomes

2.5. Assessment of the Compliance

Requirements

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

The study program partly complies with the Cabinet Regulations No.141 "Regulations on the first level Professional Higher Education State Standard". Civil defense course is not included in the study plan as a mandatory course.

- 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

Comply with the standard of the ship mechanic (operational level) PS 0407. Accepted at the meeting of professional education and employment of tripartite cooperation on 23.02.2007.

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Not all written descriptions of the study courses contain the following or containment is not full (as per Law on Higher Education Institutions):

1. Clarify the purpose of the study course so that it corresponds to the learning outcomes -

some study courses need slight improvement;

2. Supplementary literature and indication of other sources of information is not included – most study courses need slight improvement.

- 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 diploma complies with the Cabinet Regulations No.202, according to which state recognized documents of higher education are issued.

- 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 director of LJK has submitted a certificate that the knowledge of the national language of all teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study program complies with the regulations on the amount of knowledge of the national language.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

LJK has an agreement with Ltd. "Novikontas Maritime College" and Latvian Maritime Academy to provide students with the opportunity to continue their education in another college in case the implementation of the LJK study programs has been terminated.

- 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

LJK has confirmed that students are guaranteed compensation for losses if the study program is not accredited or the study program license is revoked.

- 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

Planning, organization and implementation of the study process takes place in accordance with the Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers of 15.12.2015. No. 710 "Regulations of certification, implementation and monitoring of professional training programs for seafarers", and other regulatory enactments relevant to the sector and LJK internal regulatory enactments.

Comply with International Maritime Organization (IMO) International Convention "Standards for the Training, Certification and Watchkeeping Service of Seafarers" for the level of compliance (STCW requirements A-III/1).

Assessment of the requirement [8]

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Improvements are needed in the study course descriptions and plan.

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

The study program complies with the study field indicators, conditions and criteria. The program is in demand for regional students and there is a flow of incoming students every study year, but the college must implement actions to meet the decreasing number of matriculated students and possible applicants. The content of the study program is topical, and the study courses/modules correspond to the objectives of the program. Not all courses are updated, and therefore some

learning objectives need clarifications. At the same time the program complies with national regulations and professional qualification requirements. The Marine Engineering program is very similar to the Maritime Transport - Marine Engineering program both in content and in the identical qualifications achieved after completion of the program. The panel therefore recommends that LJK merge these programs into one program giving the qualification of engineer officer. The study implementation methods contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study courses and the study program. It includes practical training in order to strengthen and supplement the theoretical knowledge acquired, obtain appropriate competence and gain necessary practical skills as per requirements in STCW 78 as amended. The resources of the College are partially sufficient to ensure the efficient implementation of the study program, but the study infrastructure, equipment, and simulators available in the college mostly correspond to the goals and planned results of the program. Nevertheless experts noticed a lack of some essential equipment for implementation of the study program.

Teaching staff have competences that enable the proper delivery of classes both in stationary form and most with the use of distance learning techniques and methods. The College staff policy, including the selection of teachers, is appropriate to the needs of the delivery of classes and in each case takes into account the competence of the teachers, their academic achievements and especially professional maritime experience. Scientific activities should be improved.

As a result of evaluating all the information available from SAR, various documents, and the evidence received during the site visit the group of experts has identified the following strengths and weaknesses.

Strengths:

1. Graduates of the program have good employment opportunities due to the significant shortage of marine engineers in the industry;
2. The study program is relevant for the study field Seafaring.

Weaknesses:

1. Decrease in matriculated students and possible applicants;
2. Some courses need to be updated and the civil protection course must be implemented as a mandatory course;
3. Lack of critical equipment on site such as high voltage simulators and PLCs;
4. Updated tools such as e.g. AutoCAD is not in use;
5. The higher requirements of independent work for part time students should be reflected in the study course descriptions;
6. Systematic approach has to be improved regarding the management of the study program and internal control on the study process;
7. Some lecturers seem to not have adequate IT competence for online lecturing and need competence development;
8. The Marine Engineering program is very similar to the Maritime Transport - Marine Engineering program.

Evaluation of the study programme "Marine Engineering"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Average

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Marine Engineering"

Short-term recommendations

College needs to update courses including literature used and clarify learning objectives, the increased requirements of independent work for part time students should also be visible in the study course descriptions
College should standardize the use of digital platforms within and across courses
College should install necessary equipment such as high voltage simulator, automatic control systems including a PLC (programmable logical controllers)
College should ensure predictability in study schedule
College should implement the Civil Protection Course as a mandatory course.

Long-term recommendations

College is advised to consider merging the Marine Engineering program and the Maritime Transport - Marine Engineering program into one program giving the qualification of engineer officer
College needs to stabilize the number of matriculated students, as these are unstable and decreasing every year, and increase the number of privately funded students
College should consider using modern and updated tools such as e.g. AutoCAD
College should improve the systematic approach in the management of this program, and ensure better internal control of the study process
College should ensure that all lecturers have adequate IT competence for online lecturing

II - "Maritime Transports" ASSESSMENT

II - "Maritime Transports" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1. The first level professional higher education program Maritime Transports complies with indicators, conditions and criteria of the study field of Seafaring. The study program is approved by the Registry of Seamen and certified by the Ministry of Transport. The program is compliant with the study field. The main focus of the study program is to prepare deck officers in compliance with the requirements of the STCW Convention and Code. The length of the implementation of the study program is 2 years for full-time studies and 3 years for part-time extramural studies, which is evaluated as sufficient for acquiring the necessary practical and theoretical skills to enter the labor market.

2.1.2. According to the SAR p.89, the aim of the study program is to ensure the acquisition of theoretical knowledge and practical skills, so that learners reach the level of professional competence in accordance with the requirements of the STCW Convention and Code A/II-1 standard and reduced A/II-2 standard.

According to the SAR p. 89, the title of the study program is Maritime Transports in the study field of

Seafaring with education classification code 41840 which stands for - (41 - first level professional higher education (EQF level 5); to be implemented after obtaining general or vocational secondary education; duration of studies in full-time studies from two to three years; 840 - thematic area "Transport Services", according to the classification of Latvian education which can be accessed here: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/291524-noteikumi-par-latvijas-izglitiba-klasifikaciju>. There is a qualification obtained after successful completion of Qualification work, Maritime English Qualification exam in accordance with SAR p.91. The qualification given is deck officer. This is the same qualification as the Navigation program, and the similarities between the two programs extends also to containing many similar courses taught by the same lecturers. According to the information provided in the SAR p.91, the admission requirements of this program implemented in full-time and part-time studies differ. For full-time studies students can apply if they have vocational secondary education (maritime school graduates), while for part-time studies they must have secondary professional maritime education (maritime school graduates) and the professional of watch or qualified watch sailor qualification and with a 12-month sea license. The program is implemented in Latvian. Students need to acquire 80 CP or 120 ECTS to finish their studies.

In the opinion of the experts, the title, qualification to be obtained of the study program, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study program implementation as well as the implementation language, are reasonable and justified. Learning outcomes achieved in the program are the same despite the form of study.

It is important to highlight that educational programmes of College for ship deck officers and ship engineers are licensed in two groups of educational programmes: Machine Science (Mechanical vehicles, ships, and aircraft) (ISCED code 0716) and Transport Services (ISCED code 1041). Therefore, because both programmes are related to the regulated training of STEM specialists to work on board ships, and considering the technical nature of ship deck officers' programmes and the fact that a significant part of the study courses included in the deck officers' programme are related to the engineering science block, these programmes should be classified in one group as the Machine Science.

According to the SAR p.90, some of the prescribed objectives and tasks of the study program are - 1. To plan and carry out a voyage of the ship; 2. To determine the location by all possible means; 3. To handle all the ship's electronic navigation equipment and apply the obtained information to verify the vessel's location; 4. To know the working principles of the magnetic and gyrocompass, determine and take into account the compass corrections; 5. To determine the most likely location of the ship according to the Sun, stars or planets and apply meteorological information; 6. To coordinate search and rescue operations. In the expert opinion, the outlined objectives of the program seem to be in line with the necessities of acquired knowledge for the study program. Students gain the insight and understanding of the main working principles needed on the ship as well as the theoretical basis for successful work on the ship.

According to the SAR p.91, the main learning outcomes of the study program are that at the end of the 1st level professional higher education program Maritime transport, the graduates obtain the professional qualification deck officer, which corresponds to the 4th professional qualification level. This gives the right to work as a watch helmsman on ships of 500 GT and larger without navigation district restrictions and to receive the certificate of competence of the International Convention STCW-78/95 "Watch helmsman on ships of 500 GT and larger" in the prescribed manner.

2.1.3. According to the SAR p.93, there have been corrections made in the study program parameters since the last accreditation cycle. The changes made are the following:

1. In mandatory subjects part (part A), the amount of CP is increased from 23 KP to 25 KP. The study course is supplemented with "Research methods" so that students learn the scientific writing format,

with the amount of 1 KP.

2. The 2nd study year is supplemented with "Civil Protection" to ensure Cabinet of Ministers (CoM) Regulation No. 716 claims with the amount of 1KP.

3. In the restricted elective course part (part B), the amount of CP is reduced from 47 KP to 45 KP. The amount of the study course "Astronavigation" was reduced from 4 KP to 3 KP in order to provide 1 KP for the course program "Civil Protection" in compliance with Cabinet of Ministers (CoM) Regulation no. 716.

4. In part (C) of free-choice study courses, the amount of KP is reduced from 3 KP to 2 KP. The number of hours and the number of credit points for the study course "Sports" have been reduced from 3 KP to 2 KP so that students can learn the design of scientific paper writing.

The changes made in the study program are seen as necessary and justified by the experts due to the changes in the legal regulations that are needed to be followed.

2.1.4. According to the data provided by the College on the SAR pp.94-95, transport services in Latvia are important areas of the national economy which ensure both the development of maritime shipping and the circulation of cargo, including transit, in the country. The specialty of deck officers is currently in great demand not only within the EU, but also throughout the world, and its deficit is between 20% to 30%. According to the information provided in the SAR p.95, there is no separate record of how many LJK graduates work in their chosen profession. But the last known survey of the Register of Jurists in 2013 shows that in the first years after graduating from school, even 99% work in their chosen profession.

According to the SAR pp.95-96, there has been a slight decrease in matriculation in the study program Maritime transport part-time study mode in the last few years. In 2018/2019 - 6, in 2019/2020 - 4, in 2020/2021 - 5, 2021/22 -3. In full -time study mode, there has been a slight increase of students - in 2018/2019 - 18, in 2019/2020 - 13, in 2020/2021 - 21, 2021/22 -23.

2.1.5. Not applicable

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

All of the indicators of the study program are in compliance with the existing preconditions of the implementation of the study program. The study program Maritime transport complies with the study field indicators, conditions and criteria. In the opinion of the experts, the title, code, qualification to be obtained of the study program, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated. The expert committee does note the similarities between this program and the Navigation program, and recommend to merge these two programs into one program qualifying for deck officer. The duration and scope of the study program implementation as well as the implementation language, are reasonable and justified. The study program is implemented in Latvian. The goals, objectives, learning outcomes are in line and in compliance. The program is in demand for regional students and there is a flow of incoming students every study year. There has been a slight increase of full-time students while a decrease for part-time students.

Strengths:

1. Regionally needed programme to prepare specialists which are in demand.

Weaknesses:

1. The latest available data on graduates employment is from 2013;

2. Very similar to the Navigation program;

3. It is unclear what qualification the students obtain exactly after graduation as in some places it is stated - ship masters, and in other places - ship navigators. It must be clearly communicated to all parties that the correct qualification is deck officer.

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1. The Maritime Transports program partly complies with national regulations (state education standard, professional (occupational) standards) and professional qualification requirements. Planning, organization, and implementation of the study process takes place in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia, the Law on Education, the Law on Higher Education Institutions, the Law on Professional Education and the Council of LJK. The training of maritime transport specialists is carried out in accordance with regulations under The International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW), 1978, as amended, European Union Directives, in accordance with the Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers of 15.12.2015. No. 710 "Regulations of certification, implementation and monitoring of professional training programs for seafarers", and other regulatory enactments relevant to the sector and LJK internal regulatory enactments. The assessment of the current content of study courses and compliance with industry and labor market needs, and scientific trends is carried out in accordance with LJK Procedure Manual: Procedure No. P6-2 "Development of study course documents" and Procedure No. P6-5 "Updating the programmes of study courses". Descriptions of study courses (DSC) are updated as necessary, where the valid version of the DSC is approved at the beginning of each study year at the department meeting. The director of study programs is responsible for the quality, actuality and compliance of the DSC with current study plans and updated regulations.

The content of the Maritime Transports program is relevant, and the study courses of the program meet industry expectations and regulatory requirements such as STCW requirements. The study course descriptions did not have separate information about the course plan for full time and part time students. The courses of the program correspond to the objectives and tasks of the program and ensure achievement of learning outcomes and partly to regulatory requirements (SAR study program documentation and meetings with study directors, teaching staff, students, industry partners and graduates). For the regulatory requirements, there are not defined requirements for the commencement of the acquisition of the study course as requested in Law on Higher Education Institutions Section 56.1. In the period since the last evaluation, some changes have been made (see chapter 2.1.3 above). The changes are by the experts seen as necessary and justified, as changes in legal regulations needs to be followed.

The panel notes that several platforms are in use both in the same course but also use of digital platforms (Mykoob, Moodle, Google classroom, etc.) differs between courses. This can lead to misunderstandings for students, uncertainty on where to find materials and information and make it challenging for the students to obtain updated information. The LJK should ensure a more specific policy towards platforms in use and make sure to standardize this more (meeting with teaching staff, students, facilities tour). The meetings with graduates and industry partners confirm that the graduates from LJK do have the necessary knowledge and competence required by the maritime industry.

2.2.2. Not applicable

2.2.3. Study implementation methods for the Maritime Transports study program are chosen to achieve the learning outcomes for the course, and different methods are used: lectures, practical

lessons, self-guided work, group work, discussions, seminars, educational excursions and simulation. The course description displays the methods used in each course.

For part time students, the requirement for independent work is higher than for the full-time program (meetings with study program directors and teachers). This is currently not displayed in the study course descriptions, and should be included. Students in all programs are both invited to and expected to have an active role during their studies, and LJK have to some extent implemented principles of student-centered education through implementation of independent work, projects etc. (SAR, p. 98). For the students, it is challenging to plan their studies, as the schedule is not known in due time. This makes the student centered learning challenging for the students as a result of how the LJK organizes the study schedule. This must be improved.

2.2.4. The Maritime transports study program includes practical training on board ships. The content of the practical training period corresponds to 18 credit points as per overview in the curriculum for the study program. On board training is organized in accordance with the LJK regulations on the organization, implementation of qualification practice and practice project preparation and presentation for the first-level higher professional full-time and part-time studies.

Purpose of the practice is to strengthen and supplement theoretical knowledge acquired, obtain competence appropriate to the study program, and gain practical skills necessary for specialists in the relevant field.

The procedure for organizing student/learning practice is determined by the LJK practice regulations and quality management system procedure P8-3 Practice. The evaluation of practice results is based on the pass/fail system, and the procedure is described in the LJK Practice Regulations (SAR p. 122-123).

Practical training is carried out on board vessels owned or manned by industry partners of the LJK. During the meeting with industry partners, it became clear that the collaboration with industry partners can be further developed through a more active collaboration also including other activities than practical training on vessels.

2.2.5. Not applicable

2.2.6. The students write a final thesis which is a final examination at the end of their studies. The thesis is a demonstration of the results of the student's independent applied research. Through the thesis, the students demonstrate their knowledge, skills and abilities acquired through their studies.

According to the SAR item 3.2.6, the students choose the subject of the qualification thesis based on their professional interests. As per description in the SAR (p.101), the topic of the thesis must arise from actual problems identified in practice and correspond to the relevant study program. The department offers a list of topics, if the students want to choose from the suggested topics.

As the study program description for the Maritime Transport program did not include a description of the framework of the final thesis, the full description was not available to the panel. The list of student's theses, the titles indicate that all students work on a passage between two ports (as per document List of student's final thesis for all five programs). From the LJK, in the meetings with members of the group responsible for the preparation of the SAR and study program directors, the thesis was stated to be research on passage planning from port to port. This means that the students are not required to find a topic of interest to research themselves or in collaboration with industry. Working on a predefined assignment limits the student's research activity in the thesis. The

level of independence in the work can also be questioned, as the predefined task is quite similar to the work of the other students in class, only differing by chosen ports (as per document List of student's final thesis for all five programs).

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

The content of the study program is topical, and the study courses/modules correspond to the objectives of the program. The Maritime Transports program complies to a large extent with national regulations, professional standards and professional qualification requirements.

The study implementation methods contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study courses and the study program. Several digital platforms are in use. Student-centered learning and teaching principles are considered to an extent, but the lack of predictability due to changing schedules and short planning horizon makes it unnecessarily hard for the students and thereby challenging the student's ability to plan their own learning. LJK must improve the organization of the study schedule. The requirement for independent work differs between the full time and part time programs.

The Maritime Transports program includes practical training in order to strengthen and supplement the theoretical knowledge acquired, obtain appropriate competence and gain necessary practical skills as per requirements in STCW 78 as amended. The practical training is carried out on board vessels owned or manned by industry partners such as shipping and manning companies. LJK does have regulations for organizing and evaluating on board training.

The topics of students' final theses cover work with a passage from one port to another, which is relevant to the field and corresponds to the study program. The fact that all students work on a predefined assignment limits the student's research activity, and also the level of independence in the work, as the theses only differ by chosen ports.

Strengths:

1. Content of program is relevant and updated.
2. Topic of final thesis is relevant to the study program and the field.

Weaknesses:

1. All students use the same assignment as starting point for their final thesis.
2. Several platforms in use within courses and across courses.
3. The higher requirements of independent work for part time students should be reflected in the study course descriptions.
4. Lack of defined requirements for the commencement of the acquisition of the study course in compliance with the Law on Higher Education Institutions Section 56.1.
5. Study schedule changes on short notice and lacks predictability, which makes it hard for students to plan their own learning.

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Doesn't apply to the programme

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1. Taking into account the opinion received from the Registry of Seamen and results of the interviews with the teaching staff involved and the head of navigational department, it was observed that the study provisions as well as material and technical provisions of the study program Maritime Transport (41840) are mostly compliant with relevant requirements to ensure achievement of the learning outcomes.

According to SAR p.102 there are available such common equipment for the implementation of the study program as projectors and screens, interactive whiteboards, 3D printers, copiers, printers, scanners, portable computers, document binding machines, laminating devices, acoustic systems and sound amplifiers, video cameras and photo cameras, audio and video equipment, voice recorders, video projectors, etc.

During the tour of facilities the experts had an opportunity to see the different simulators used in the implementation of the study program. For instance, full mission Bridge Simulators provides students with the competence "To carry out navigational watch". There are many other examples of successful use of simulators in the study process. It is important to highlight that experts were concerned about the relatively small number of workstations (only four) for the ECDIS simulator. From experts opinion the number of workstations should be increased for more efficient achievement of the learning outcomes.

According to SAR p.102, the training ship "Namejs" is available for the deck students to perform practical activities related to rigging work, lowering/raising the lifeboat, etc. It is also stated that in the library, students have an access to the different informative materials and have an opportunity to use computers, as well as copiers and printers. Informative provisions, including library resources such as text books, publications relevant to the study programme etc., are available for both students and teaching staff. Also some digital teaching aids (CBT - computer based programs) are used for the delivery of the study programme.

2.3.2. Not applicable

2.2.3. The funding available for the implementation of the study program is sufficient to ensure the part time and full time study process. It is important to highlight that taking into account the relatively small number of enrolled students and graduates, the profitability of the study program is not high. However, taking into account information provided in SAR p.103, the study program has the minimum number of students to ensure the positive profitability. According to the college management, the minimum number of learners per course to ensure the profitability of the program is 16 individuals. The source of funding for the navigational study programs is state budget financing and tuition fees. According to SAR p.103-104, an analysis of the funding and available resources of the study area is carried out every year, identifying the current needs and planning long-term necessary investments (SAR p.104). Also it is important to note that the director of the study program has a comprehensive plan for continuous improvements in material and technical provision taking into account the financing available.

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

The study infrastructure, equipment, and simulators available for the study program Maritime Transport are modern and correspond to the goals and planned results of the program. It is important to note that a large part of the practical training provided in the study process is currently carried out while on board.

Strengths:

1. Efforts of the director of the study program for continuous improvements in material and technical provision.

Weaknesses:

1. A relatively small number of workstations (only four) for the ECDIS simulator to achieve the learning outcomes.
2. Relatively small number of enrolled students and graduates.

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 relevant provision corresponds to the goals and planned results of the program Maritime Transport

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1. Number of teachers and other personnel ensure delivery of intended learning outcomes in the program. As said in SAR (page 86) and confirmed during visit the teaching staff (number, qualification) complies with the requirements specified in Law on Higher Education Institutions. The teaching personnel (instructors, supervisors and assessors) of the general and professional subjects are education and/or maritime professionals with the relevant seafarer's qualification, and with the relevant seagoing service. Moreover, as required by the regulation I/6 of the STCW Convention, the teaching personnel involved in the implementation of the professional subjects is qualified for the particular types and levels of training or assessment of competence of seafarers, and certified by the Registry of Seamen of the Maritime Administration of Latvia. These teachers generally don't have scientific or academic degrees however their possessional experience is longer than required minimum of 5 years. Totally in the implementation of the program 29 lecturers are involved. Taking into account the current number of students 255 (full time and part time students) the ratio of teachers per student is 9. It means that students have unrestricted access to the teachers. Teachers are competent, however, not one subject is delivered in English, which could lead to resistance from taking part in international mobility programs (except lectures of English language).

Recent experience connected with Covid pandemic and distance learning should encourage reflection within the college. Some teachers need to improve their IT competences. Teachers should not have free choice of communication platforms with students while implementing the study program. This shows that college has not been well prepared to provide education using remote techniques. It is also not good if, from the student's perspective, subsequent classes can be held using different online platforms - dependent on the will of the teacher and not the college policy.

2.4.2. Teaching staff seems to be stable for a longer period of time taking into account their competences but considering also quite a high average age. Teachers are enthusiastic, they provide good support for the operation of the college. According to information provided in SER (3.4.2) the number of teachers with appropriate qualifications and professional experience has increased compared to previous evaluation. This is a positive tendency ensuring the achievement of intended learning outcomes in the study program. On the other hand some of the teachers have double employment which significantly restricts their availability. In some cases, the college relies on professionals from industry. On the one hand, this is very positive because students receive up-to-date knowledge from these people. On the other hand, the work of these teachers in college seems to be less important. This has for example led to lesson plans being arranged dynamically, in order to meet the seafarer lecturers current needs or work opportunities. This introduces unnecessary unstable scheduling negatively affecting students, administration and other teachers. Such practices should be eliminated.

2.4.3. Not applicable

2.4.4. According to the evaluation team, teachers are not obliged to conduct research, however they should possess knowledge of the current state of knowledge/research results/developments in their field so that the current state of knowledge is passed on to students. For that reason, teachers should at least monitor the progress of research, they should e.g. participate in conferences, symposia, maybe development/scientific projects.

2.4.5. It seems that teachers work together to implement the education program well. Teachers' representatives are part of program councils. Teachers participate in improving the educational process. Among other things, they have jointly prepared training materials in the new simulator. The level of mutual cooperation among teachers seems to be adequate.

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

The selection of teaching staff and their number in relation to the number of students ensures proper delivery of classes. Teaching staff have competences that enable the proper delivery of classes both in stationary form and most with the use of distance learning techniques and methods. The College staff policy, including the selection of teachers, is appropriate to the needs of the delivery of classes and in each case takes into account the competence of the teachers, their academic achievements and especially professional maritime experience.

Strengths:

1. Involvement in the program of teachers having maritime professional qualifications and current experience.

Weaknesses:

1. Some teachers seem not to have adequate IT competences for online advanced teaching methods.

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

Despite minor comments (like IT challenges), teachers ensure good delivery of intended learning outcomes

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 program fully complies with the Cabinet Regulations No.141 "Regulations on the first level Professional Higher Education State Standard".

- 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

Comply with the standard of the ship mechanic (operational level) PS 0407. Accepted at the meeting of professional education and employment of tripartite cooperation on 23.02.2007.

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Descriptions of the study courses do not contain all necessary information as defined in Law on Higher Education Institutions. It is necessary to:

1. determine clearly the planned learning outcomes;
 2. determine the study course calendar, mandatory and supplementary literature, indicate other sources of information;
 3. describe the organisation and tasks for the independent work of students;
 4. determine the evaluation criteria of learning outcomes.
- 4 4 - The sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme complies with the procedure according to which state recognised documents of higher education are issued.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The sample of diploma complies with the Cabinet Regulations No.202, according to which state recognized documents of higher education are issued. Qualification is missing brackets with note (operational level).

- 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 director of LJK has submitted a certificate that the knowledge of the national language of all teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study program complies with the regulations on the amount of knowledge of the national language.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

LJK has an agreement with Ltd. "Novikontas Maritime College" and Latvian Maritime Academy to provide students with the opportunity to continue their education in another college in case the implementation of the LJK study programmes has been terminated.

- 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

LJK has confirmed that students are guaranteed compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the study programme's license is revoked.

- 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

Planning, organization and implementation of the study process takes place in accordance with the Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers of 15.12.2015. No. 710 "Regulations of certification, implementation and monitoring of professional training programs for seafarers", and other regulatory enactments relevant to the sector and LMC internal regulatory enactments.

The course content of the study program is reviewed every academic year according to the requirements of the IMO, which makes various changes according to market requirements.

The content and requirements of the study programs comply with the STCW Convention Code A/II-1 standard and relaxed A/II-2 standard requirements, which are also IMO model course 7.03 requirements

Assessment of the requirement [8]

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Improvements are needed in the study course descriptions.

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

The study program complies with the study field indicators, conditions and criteria. The duration and scope of the study program implementation as well as the implementation language, are reasonable and justified. The goals, objectives, learning outcomes are in line and in compliance with required standards. Overall, the program is in demand for regional students and there is a flow of incoming students every study year. The content of the study program is topical, and the study courses/modules correspond to the objectives of the program while descriptions of the study courses do not contain all necessary information. The study program includes practical training in order to strengthen and supplement the theoretical knowledge acquired, obtain appropriate competence and gain necessary practical skills as per requirements in STCW 78 as amended. The Maritime Transports program is very similar to the Navigation program both in content and in the identical qualifications achieved after completion of the program. The panel therefore recommends that LJK merge these programs into one program giving the qualification of deck officer.

The study infrastructure, equipment, and simulators available for the study program are modern and correspond to the goals and planned results of the program. It is important to note that a large part of the practical training provided in the study process is currently carried out while on board.

Teaching staff have competences that enable the proper delivery of classes both in stationary form and most with the use of distance learning techniques and methods. The college staff policy, including the selection of teachers, is appropriate to the needs of the delivery of classes and in each case takes into account the competence of the teachers, their academic achievements and especially professional maritime experience. Scientific activities should be improved.

As a result of evaluating all the information available from SAR, various documents, and the evidence received during the site visit the group of experts has identified the following strengths and weaknesses.

Strengths:

1. Regionally needed program to prepare specialists which are in demand;
2. Efforts of the director of the study program for continuous improvements in material and technical provision.

Weaknesses:

1. Several platforms in use within courses and across courses;
2. Descriptions of the study courses do not contain all necessary information, and information on the higher requirements of independent work for part time students should be reflected in the study course descriptions;
3. Lack of defined requirements for the commencement of the acquisition of the study courses;
4. Relatively small number of workstations (only four) for the ECDIS simulator to achieve the learning outcomes;
5. Relatively small number of enrolled students and graduates.
6. The Maritime Transports program is very similar to the Navigation program

Evaluation of the study programme "Maritime Transports"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Maritime Transports"

Short-term recommendations

College should standardize use of digital platforms within and across courses
College should make improvements in study course descriptions (learning outcomes, study course calendar, literature, organization and tasks for independent work, evaluation criteria of learning outcomes) are necessary
College should ensure information on the high requirements of independent work for part time students are reflected in the study course descriptions
College should ensure predictability in study schedule
College should ensure defined requirements for the commencement of the acquisition of the study course in compliance with the Law on Higher Education Institutions Section 56.1.
College should ensure that a sufficient number of workstations for student's training in place, e.g. more ECDIS stations.
College should consider changing the code for the program to include it in the STEM program group "Machine Science (Mechanical vehicles, ships, and aircraft)".

Long-term recommendations

College is advised to consider merging the Maritime Transports program and the Navigation program into one program giving the qualification of deck officer

College should conduct surveys regularly and provide more recent data on graduate employment as the last data that has been mentioned in the SAR is from 2013

College should ensure that all lecturers have adequate IT competence for online lecturing

College should ensure that the students have a more active role in all aspects of education process for instance in choosing topic for their final thesis

II - "Navigation" ASSESSMENT

II - "Navigation" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1. The first level professional higher education program Navigation complies with indicators, conditions and criteria of the study field of Seafaring. The study program is approved by the Registry of Seamen and certified by the Ministry of Transport. The programme is compliant with the study field. The main focus of the study program is to prepare “ship navigators” (as stated by the College), however, experts believe that the correct phrasing would be “deck officers” in compliance with the requirements of the STCW Convention and Code. The length of the implementation of the study program, which is 3 years (full-time studies) and 4 years (part-time extramural studies), is evaluated as sufficient for acquiring the necessary practical and theoretical skills to enter the labor market.

2.1.2. According to the SAR p.71, the aim of the study program is to ensure the acquisition of theoretical knowledge and practical skills, so that learners reach the level of professional competence in accordance with the requirements of the STCW Convention and Code A/II-1 standard and relaxed A/II-2 standard.

According to the SAR p. 71, the title of the study programme is Navigation in the study field of Seafaring with education classification code 41840 which stands for - (41 - first level professional higher education (EQF level 5); to be implemented after obtaining general or vocational secondary education; duration of studies in full-time studies from two to three years; 840 - thematic area “Transport Services”, according to the classification of Latvian education which can be accessed here: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/291524-noteikumi-par-latvijas-izglitiba-klasifikaciju>. There is a qualification obtained after successful completion of Qualification work, Maritime English Qualification exam in accordance with SAR p.73 of a deck officer. This is the same qualification as the Maritime Transports program, and the similarities between the two programs extends also to containing many similar courses taught by the same lecturers.

According to the information provided in the SAR p.73, the admission requirements of this program implemented in full-time and part-time studies differ. For full-time studies students can apply if they have secondary education, while for part-time studies they must have secondary education and the professional of watch or qualified watch sailor qualification and with a 12-month sea license. The program is implemented in Latvian. Students need to acquire 120 CP or 180 ECTS to finish their studies.

In the opinion of the experts, the title, qualification to be obtained of the study program, aims,

objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study program implementation as well as the implementation language, are reasonable and justified. Learning outcomes achieved in the program are the same despite the form of study. According to the SAR p.72, the tasks and objectives of the study program are - 1. To plan and carry out a voyage of the ship; 2. To determine the location by all possible means; 3. To handle all the ship's electronic navigation equipment and apply the obtained information to verify the vessel's location; 4. To know the working principles of the magnetic and gyrocompass, determine and take into account the compass corrections; 5. To determine the most likely location of the ship according to the Sun, stars or planets and apply meteorological information; 6. To coordinate search and rescue operations; 7. To perform a safe navigational watch and know the resources management of the ship's bridge team principles and others. In the expert opinion, the learning outcomes are in compliance with the skills, knowledge and competencies needed to be achieved for a successful preparation of deck officers.

It is important to highlight that educational programmes of College for ship deck officers and ship engineers are licensed in two groups of educational programmes: Machine Science (Mechanical vehicles, ships, and aircraft) (ISCED code 0716) and Transport Services (ISCED code 1041). Therefore, because both programmes are related to the regulated training of STEM specialists to work on board ships, and considering the technical nature of ship deck officers' programmes and the fact that a significant part of the study courses included in the deck officers' programme are related to the engineering science block, these programmes should be classified in one group as the Machine Science.

According to the SAR p.72, the study program is that at the end of the 1st level of the professional higher education program "Shipmaster", the graduates obtain the professional qualification deck officer, which corresponds to the 4th professional qualification level. This gives the right to work as a watch helmsman on ships of 500 GT and larger without navigation district restrictions and to receive the certificate of competence of the International Convention STCW-78/95 "Watch helmsman on ships of 500 GT and larger" in the prescribed manner.

2.1.3. According to the SAR p.74, there have been corrections made in the study program parameters since the last accreditation cycle.

The changes made are the following:

1. In the mandatory part (A), the amount of CP is increased from 24 CP to 25 CP: The study course is supplemented with "Research methods" so that students learn the design of writing scientific papers, without credit points.
2. The study course is supplemented with "Civil Protection" because it is determined by Cabinet of Ministers (CoM) regulations no. 716 "Minimum requirements for the content of the mandatory civil defense course and the content of civil protection training for employees" with the amount of 1 CP.
3. In the mandatory part (B), the amount of CP is reduced from 46 CP to 45 CP: 1. The number of hours and the number of credits for the study course "Ship's energy equipment" have been reduced in order to provide 1 CP for the course program "Civil Protection" in accordance with Cabinet of Ministers (CoM) regulations No.716 2. Updated list of academic staff of the study programme due to changes in the academic staff. Experts support the changes made in the study programme.

2.1.4. According to the data provided by the College on the SAR p.75, transport services in Latvia are important areas of the national economy which ensure both the development of maritime shipping and the circulation of cargo, including transit, in the country. The specialty of deck officers is currently in great demand not only within the EU, but also throughout the world, and its deficit is between 20% to 30%. According to the information provided in the SAR p.95, there is no separate

record of how many LJK graduates work in their chosen profession. But the last known survey of the Register of Jurists in 2013 shows that in the first years after graduating from school, even 99% work in their chosen profession.

According to the SAR pp.76-77, there has been a large decrease in matriculation in the full-time study programme Navigation in the last few years. In 2018/2019 - 31, in 2019/2020 - 31, in 2020/2021 - 22, 2021/22 -16. In part-time study mode, there has been a gradual decrease of 50% in the last year but rather even numbers before that - in 2018/2019 - 19, in 2019/2020 - 20, in 2020/2021 - 19, 2021/22 -9.

2.1.5. Not applicable

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

All of the indicators of the study program are in compliance with the existing preconditions of the implementation of the study program. The study program Navigation complies with the study field indicators, conditions and criteria. In the opinion of the experts, the title, code, qualification to be obtained of the study program, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated. The expert committee does note the similarities between this program and the Maritime Transports program, and recommend to merge these two programs into one program qualifying for deck officer. The duration and scope of the study program implementation as well as the implementation language, are reasonable and justified. The study program is implemented in Latvian. The goals, objectives, learning outcomes are in line and in compliance. The program is in demand for regional students and there is a flow of incoming students every study year. There has been a decrease of matriculated students in the last few years which is not a good indicator.

Strengths:

1. Regionally needed programme to prepare specialists which are in demand.

Weaknesses:

1. A decrease in students in the last few years;
2. Very similar to the Maritime Transports program;
3. The latest available data on graduates employment is from 2013;
4. Inclarity of the qualification provided to the students after graduation as experts believe it should be "deck officer", while the College uses "ship master".

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1. The Navigation program complies with national regulations (state education standard, professional (occupational) standards) and professional qualification requirements. Planning, organization, and implementation of the study process takes place in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia, Law on Higher Education Institutions, the Law on Universities, the Law on Professional Education and the Council of LMC. The training of navigation specialists is carried out in accordance with regulations under The International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW), 1978, as amended, European Union Directives, in accordance with the Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers of 15.12.2015. No. 710 "Regulations of certification, implementation and monitoring of professional training programs for seafarers", and other regulatory enactments relevant to the sector and LMC internal regulatory enactments. The assessment of the current content of study courses and compliance with industry

and labor market needs, and scientific trends is carried out in accordance with LMC Procedure Manual: Procedure No. P6-2 "Development of study course documents" and Procedure No. P6-5 "Updating the programmes of study courses". Descriptions of study courses (DSC) are updated as necessary, where the valid version of the DSC is approved at the beginning of each study year at the department meeting. The director of study programs is responsible for the quality, actuality and compliance of the DSC with current study plans and updated regulations.

The content of the Navigation program is relevant, and the study courses of the program meet industry expectations and regulatory requirements. The study course descriptions did not have separate information about the course plan for full time and part time students. The courses of the program correspond to the objectives and tasks of the program and ensure achievement of learning outcomes and partly to regulatory requirements (SAR study program documentation and meetings with study directors, teaching staff, students, industry partners and graduates). For the regulatory requirements, there are not defined requirements for the commencement of the acquisition of the study course as requested in Law on Higher Education Institutions Section 56.1. In the period since the last evaluation, some changes have been made (see chapter 2.1.3 above). The changes are by the experts seen as necessary and justified, as changes in legal regulations needs to be followed.

The panel notes that several platforms are in use both in the same course but also use of digital platforms (Mykoob, Moodle, Google classroom, etc.) differs between courses. This can lead to misunderstandings for students, uncertainty on where to find materials and information and make it challenging for the students to obtain updated information. The LJK should ensure a more specific policy towards platforms in use and make sure to standardize this more (meeting with teaching staff, students, facilities tour). The meetings with graduates and industry partners confirm that the graduates from LJK do have the necessary knowledge and competence required by the maritime industry.

2.2.2. Not applicable

2.2.3. Study implementation methods for the Navigation study program are chosen to achieve the learning outcomes for the course, and different methods are used: lectures, practical lessons, self-guided work, group work, discussions, seminars, educational excursions and simulation. The course description displays the methods used in each course. For part time students, the requirement for independent work is higher than for the full-time program (meetings with study program directors and teachers). This is currently not displayed in the study course descriptions, and should be included. Students in all programs are both invited to and expected to have an active role during their studies, and LJK have to some extent implemented principles of student-centered education through implementation of independent work, projects etc. (SAR, p. 79). For the students, it is challenging to plan their studies, as the schedule is not known in due time. This makes the student centered learning challenging for the students as a result of how the LJK organizes the study schedule. This must be improved.

2.2.4. The Navigation study program includes practical training including both on shore and on-board training. The practical training is divided into three parts: maritime pre-internship (on shore), 1st maritime internship and 2nd maritime internship. The content of the practical training period corresponds to 38 credit points, where the on-shore training in the maritime pre-internship is 2 credit points and the two maritime internship periods total 36 credit points. On board training is organized in accordance with the LMC regulations on the organization, implementation of qualification practice and practice project preparation and presentation for the first-level higher professional full-time and part-time studies.

Purpose of the practice is to strengthen and supplement theoretical knowledge acquired, obtain competence appropriate to the study program, and gain practical skills necessary for specialists in the relevant field.

The procedure for organizing student/learning practice is determined by the LJK practice regulations and quality management system procedure P8-3 Practice. The evaluation of practice results is based on the pass/fail system, and the procedure is described in the LJK Practice Regulations (SAR p. 122-123).

Practical training is carried out on board vessels owned or manned by industry partners of the LJK. During the meeting with industry partners, it became clear that the collaboration with industry partners can be further developed through a more active collaboration also including other activities than practical training on vessels.

2.2.5. Not applicable

2.2.6. The students write a final thesis which is a final examination at the end of their studies. The thesis is a demonstration of the results of the student's independent applied research. Through the thesis, the students demonstrate their knowledge, skills and abilities acquired through their studies.

According to the SAR item 3.2.6, the students choose the subject of the qualification thesis based on their professional interests. As per description in the SAR (p.101), the topic of the thesis must arise from actual problems identified in practice and correspond to the relevant study program. The department offers a list of topics, if the students want to choose from the suggested topics.

As the study program description for the Navigation program did not include a description of the framework of the final thesis, the full description was not available to the panel. The list of student's theses, the titles indicate that all students work on a passage between two ports (as per document List of student's final thesis for all five programs). From the LJK, in the meetings with members of the group responsible for the preparation of the SAR and study program directors, the thesis was stated to be research on passage planning from port to port. This means that the students are not required to find a topic of interest to research themselves or in collaboration with industry. Working on a predefined assignment limits the student's research activity in the thesis. The level of independence in the work can also be questioned, as the predefined task is quite similar to the work of the other students in class, only differing by chosen ports (as per document List of student's final thesis for all five programs).

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

The content of the study program is topical, and the study courses/modules correspond to the objectives of the program. The Navigation program complies to a large extent with national regulations, professional standards and professional qualification requirements.

The study implementation methods contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study courses and the study program. Several digital platforms are in use. Student-centered learning and teaching principles are considered to an extent, but the lack of predictability due to changing schedules and short planning horizon makes it unnecessarily hard for the students and thereby challenging the student's ability to plan their own learning. LJK must improve the organization of the study schedule. The requirement for independent work differs between the full time and part time programs.

The Navigation program includes practical training in order to strengthen and supplement the theoretical knowledge acquired, obtain appropriate competence and gain necessary practical skills as per requirements in STCW 78 as amended. The practical training is carried out on board vessels owned or manned by industry partners such as shipping and manning companies. LJK does have regulations for organizing and evaluating on board training.

The topics of students' final theses cover work with a passage from one port to another, which is relevant to the field and corresponds to the study program. The fact that all students work on a predefined assignment limits the student's research activity, and also the level of independence in the work, as the theses only differ by chosen ports.

Strengths:

1. Content of program is relevant and updated.
2. Topic of final thesis is relevant to the study program and the field.

Weaknesses:

1. All students use the same assignment as starting point for their final thesis.
2. Several platforms in use within courses and across courses.
3. The higher requirements of independent work for part time students should be reflected in the study course descriptions.
4. Lack of defined requirements for the commencement of the acquisition of the study course in compliance with the Law on Higher Education Institutions Section 56.1.
5. Study schedule changes on short notice and lacks predictability, which makes it hard for students to plan their own learning.

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Doesn't apply to the programme

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1. Taking into account the opinion received from the Registry of Seamen and results of the interviews with the teaching staff involved and the head of navigational department, it was observed that the study provisions as well as material and technical provisions of the study program Navigation (41840) are mostly compliant with relevant requirements to ensure achievement of the learning outcomes.

According to SAR p.102 there are available such common equipment for the implementation of the study program as projectors and screens, interactive whiteboards, 3D printers, copiers, printers, scanners, portable computers, document binding machines, laminating devices, acoustic systems and sound amplifiers, video cameras and photo cameras, audio and video equipment, voice recorders, video projectors, etc.

During the tour of facilities the experts had an opportunity to see the different simulators used in the

implementation of the study program. For instance, full mission Bridge Simulators provides students with the competence “To carry out navigational watch”. There are many other examples of successful use of simulators in the study process. It is important to highlight that experts were concerned about the relatively small number of workstations (only four) for the ECDIS simulator. From experts opinion the number of workstations should be increased for more efficient achievement of the learning outcomes.

According to SAR p.102, the training ship “Namejs” is available for the deck students to perform practical activities related to rigging work, lowering/raising the lifeboat, etc. It is also stated that in the library, students have an access to the different informative materials and have an opportunity to use computers, as well as copiers and printers.

2.3.2. Not applicable

2.3.3. The funding available for the implementation of the study program is sufficient to ensure the part time and full time study process. It is important to highlight that taking into account the relatively small number of enrolled students and graduates, the profitability of the study program is not high. However, taking into account information provided in SAR p.103, the study program has the minimum number of students to ensure the positive profitability. According to the college management, the minimum number of learners per course to ensure the profitability of the program is 16 individuals. The source of funding for the navigational study programs is state budget financing and tuition fees. According to SAR p.103-104, an analysis of the funding and available resources of the study area is carried out every year, identifying the current needs and planning long-term necessary investments (SAR p.104). Also it is important to note that the director of the study program has a comprehensive plan for continuous improvements in material and technical provision taking into account the financing available.

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

The study infrastructure, equipment, and simulators available for the study program Navigation are modern and correspond to the goals and planned results of the program. It is important to note that a large part of the practical training provided in the study process is currently carried out while on board.

Strengths:

1. Efforts of the director of the study program for continuous improvements in material and technical provision.

Weaknesses:

1. As a weak point it should be noted that there are a relatively small number of workstations (only four) for the ECDIS simulator to achieve the learning outcomes.
2. Relatively small number of enrolled students and graduates.

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 relevant provision corresponds to the goals and planned results of the program Navigation.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1. Number of teachers and other personnel ensure delivery of intended learning outcomes in the program. As said in SAR (page 95) and confirmed during visit the teaching staff (number, qualification) complies with the requirements specified in Law on Higher Education Institutions. The teaching personnel (instructors, supervisors and assessors) of the general and professional subjects are education and/or maritime professionals with the relevant seafarer's qualification, and with the relevant seagoing service. Moreover, as required by the regulation I/6 of the STCW Convention, the teaching personnel involved in the implementation of the professional subjects is qualified for the particular types and levels of training or assessment of competence of seafarers, and certified by the Registry of Seamen of the Maritime Administration of Latvia. These teachers generally don't have scientific or academic degrees however their professional experience is longer than required minimum of 5 years. Totally in the implementation of the program 29 lecturers are involved. Taking into account the current number of students 89 (full time and part time students) the ratio of teachers per student is 3. It means that students have unrestricted access to the teachers. Teachers are competent, however, not one subject is delivered in the English language which could lead to resistance from taking part in international mobility programmes (except lectures of English language).

Recent experience connected with Covid pandemic and distance learning should encourage reflection within the college. Some teachers need to improve their IT competences. Teachers should not have free choice of communication platforms with students while implementing the study program. This shows that college has not been well prepared to provide education using remote techniques. It is also not good if, from the student's perspective, subsequent classes can be held using other online platforms - dependent on the will of the teacher and not the college policy.

2.4.2. Teaching staff seems to be stable for a longer period of time taking into account their competences but considering also quite a high average age. Teachers are enthusiastic, they provide good support for the operation of the college. According to information provided in SAR the number of teachers with appropriate qualifications and professional experience has increased compared to previous evaluation. This is a positive tendency ensuring the achievement of intended learning outcomes in the study program. On the other hand some of the teachers have double employment which significantly restricts their availability. The College does also rely on professionals from industry. On the one hand, this is very positive because students receive up-to-date knowledge from these people. On the other hand, the work of these teachers in college seems to be less important. For this reason, for example, lesson plans are arranged dynamically to accommodate for their current needs or work opportunities. This introduces unnecessary unstable scheduling negatively affecting students, administration and other teachers. Such practices should be eliminated.

2.4.3. Not applicable

2.4.4. According to the evaluation team, teachers are not obliged to conduct research, however they should possess knowledge of the current state of knowledge/research results/developments in their field so that the current state of knowledge is passed on to students. For that reason, teachers should at least monitor the progress of research, they should e.g. participate in conferences, symposia, maybe development/scientific projects.

2.4.5. It seems that teachers work together to implement the education program well. Teachers' representatives are part of program councils. Teachers participate in improving the educational process. Among other things, they have jointly prepared training materials in the new simulator. The level of mutual cooperation among teachers seems to be adequate.

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

The selection of teaching staff and their number in relation to the number of students ensures proper delivery of classes. Teaching staff have competences that enable the proper delivery of classes both in stationary form and with the use of distance learning techniques and methods. The College staff policy, including the selection of teachers, is appropriate to the needs of the delivery of classes and in each case takes into account the competence of the teachers, their academic achievements and especially professional maritime experience.

Strengths:

1. Involvement in the program of teachers having maritime professional qualifications and current experience.

Weaknesses:

1. Some teachers seem not to have adequate IT competences for online advanced teaching methods.

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

Despite minor comments, teachers ensure good delivery of intended learning outcomes

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 program fully complies with the Cabinet Regulations No.141 "Regulations on the first level Professional Higher Education State Standard".

- 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 content and requirements of the study programs comply with the profession standard "Ship Navigation", registration number PS 0406. Accepted at the meeting of professional education and employment of tripartite cooperation on 23.02.2007.

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Descriptions of the study courses do not contain all necessary information as defined in Law on Higher Education Institutions. It is necessary to:

1. determine clearly the planned learning outcomes;
 2. determine the study course calendar, mandatory and supplementary literature, indicate other sources of information;
 3. describe the organisation and tasks for the independent work of students;
 4. determine the evaluation criteria of learning outcomes.
- 4 4 - The sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme complies with the procedure according to which state recognised documents of higher education are issued.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The sample of diploma complies with the Cabinet Regulations No.202, according to which state recognized documents of higher education are issued. Qualification is missing brackets with note (operational level).

- 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 director of LJK has submitted a certificate that the knowledge of the national language of all teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study program complies with the regulations on the amount of knowledge of the national language.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

LJK has an agreement with Ltd. "Novikontas Maritime College" and Latvian Maritime Academy to provide students with the opportunity to continue their education in another college in case the implementation of the LJK study programs has been terminated.

- 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

LJK has confirmed that students are guaranteed compensation for losses if the study program is not accredited or the study program license is revoked.

- 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

Planning, organization and implementation of the study process takes place in accordance with the Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers of 15.12.2015. No. 710 "Regulations of certification, implementation and monitoring of professional training programs for seafarers", and other regulatory enactments relevant to the sector and LJK internal regulatory enactments.

TRANSAS (Wartsila) simulators are maintained at LJK to meet STCW Convention and IMO modular course requirements.

The content and requirements of the study programs comply with the STCW Convention Code A/II-1 standard and reduced A/II-2 standard requirements, as well as the requirements of the IMO model course 7.03.

Assessment of the requirement [8]

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Improvements are needed in the study course descriptions

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

The study program complies with the study field indicators, conditions and criteria. The goals, objectives, learning outcomes are in line and in compliance. The program is in demand for regional students and there is a flow of incoming students every study year while there has been observed a decrease of matriculated students in the last few years. The content of the study program is topical, and the study courses/modules correspond to the objectives of the program while improvements in study course descriptions (learning outcomes, study course calendar, literature, organization and tasks for independent work, evaluation criteria of learning outcomes) are necessary.

The study implementation methods contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study courses and the study program. The Navigation program is very similar to the Maritime Transports program both in content and in the identical qualifications achieved after completion of the program. The panel therefore recommends that LJK merge these programs into one program giving the qualification of deck officer. For the students, it is challenging to plan their studies, as the schedule is not known in due time. This makes the student centered learning challenging for the students as a result of how the LJK organizes the study schedule. This must be improved.

The topics of students' final theses cover work with a passage from one port to another, which is relevant to the field and corresponds to the study program. The fact that all students work on a predefined assignment limits the student's research activity, and also the level of independence in the work, as the theses only differ by chosen ports.

The study infrastructure, equipment, and simulators available for the study program are modern and correspond to the goals and planned results of the program and a large part of the practical training provided in the study process is currently carried out while on board. The program includes practical training in order to strengthen and supplement the theoretical knowledge acquired, obtain appropriate competence and gain necessary practical skills as per requirements in STCW convention.

Teaching staff have competences that enable the proper delivery of classes both in stationary form and with the use of distance learning techniques and methods. The College staff policy, including the selection of teachers, is appropriate to the needs of the delivery of classes and in each case takes into account the competence of the teachers, their academic achievements and especially professional maritime experience. Scientific activities should be improved.

As a result of evaluating all the information available from SAR, various documents, and the evidence received during the site visit the group of experts has identified the following strengths and weaknesses.

Strengths:

1. Regionally needed program to prepare specialists which are in demand;

2. Content of program is relevant and updated;
3. Efforts of the director of the study program for continuous improvements in material and technical provision.

Weaknesses:

1. All students use the same assignment as starting point for their final thesis;
2. Several platforms in use within courses and across courses;
3. Improvements in study course descriptions are necessary;
4. Lack of predictability for students due to changing study schedule
5. Relatively small number of workstations (only four) for the ECDIS simulator to achieve the learning outcomes;
6. Relatively small number of enrolled students and graduates;
7. The Navigation program is very similar to the Maritime Transports program.

Evaluation of the study programme "Navigation"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Navigation"

Short-term recommendations

College should make improvements in study course descriptions (learning outcomes, study course calendar, literature, organization and tasks for independent work, evaluation criteria of learning outcomes) are necessary
College should standardize use of digital platforms within and across courses
College should ensure information on the high requirements of independent work for part time students are reflected in the study course descriptions
College should ensure predictability in the study schedule
College should ensure defined requirements for the commencement of the acquisition of the study course in compliance with the Law on Higher Education Institutions Section 56.1.
College should update the data on graduates' employment as the most recent data is from 2013, which raises the question on the last graduate surveys
College should clarify the qualification provided to the students after graduation as it is believed it should be "deck officer", while "ship master" is used
College should consider changing the code for the program to include it in the STEM program group "Machine Science (Mechanical vehicles, ships, and aircraft)"

Long-term recommendations

College is advised to consider merging the Navigation program and the Maritime Transports program into one program giving the qualification of deck officer
College should work on attracting more students in the study programme

College should ensure that the students have a more active role in all aspects of the education process, for instance in choosing a topic for their final thesis

College should ensure that all lecturers have adequate IT competence for online lecturing

II - "Organization of International Transportation" ASSESSMENT

II - "Organization of International Transportation" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1. After reading the SAR and completing the institutional visit, the panel finds the inclusion of the Organization of International Transport program in the study field Seafaring hard to understand, as this program neither is under STCW regulations nor educates personnel for any job on board vessels, which the study field name "seafaring" indicates. The panel therefore recommends considering including the Organization of International Transport program into another study field.

The main focus of the study program is to prepare logistics specialists. The length of the implementation of the study program, which is 2 years (full-time studies) and 3 years (part-time extramural studies), is evaluated as sufficient for acquiring the necessary practical and theoretical skills to enter the labor market.

2.1.2. According to the SAR p.52, the aim of the study program is in line with the mission of LJK - within two years, prepare theoretically knowledgeable and practical able specialists for the national economy, able to fulfill logistical functions, establish and analyze freight transport routes, be able to organize warehouse work and plan the procedures for servicing different transport modes, organize cargo handling processes, observing the characteristics of transport, transshipment terminals and agency regulations, keep cargo accompanying documentation and apply international law, manage professional terminology and conversations in foreign languages.

According to the SAR p. 52, the title of the study program is Organization of International Transport in the study field of Seafaring with education classification code 41840 which stands for - (41 - first level professional higher education (EQF level 5); to be implemented after obtaining general or vocational secondary education; duration of studies in full-time studies from two to three years; 840 - thematic area "Transport Services", according to the classification of Latvian education which can be accessed here: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/291524-noteikumi-par-latvijas-izglitiba-klasifikaciju>. There is a qualification as logistics specialist obtained after successful completion of State Examination, Professional English Qualification Thesis in accordance with SAR p.52. According to the information provided in the SAR pp.52-53, the admission requirements of this program implemented in full-time and part-time studies are the same - secondary education. The program is implemented in Latvian. Students need to acquire 80 CP and 120 ECTS to finish their studies.

In the opinion of the experts, the title, code, qualification to be obtained of the study programme, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated. The main objective of the study program is to ensure theoretical knowledge and practical skills to achieve professional competence corresponding to a certain standard of profession and first level professional higher education (SAR p. 55). The general objective is to prepare logistics specialists able to perform logistical functions establish and analyze freight transport routes, organize warehouse work, plan procedures for different modes of transport, organize cargo handling

processes, observe characteristics of transport, handle terminal and agency regulations, cargo documentation and international law and communicate in professional terminology and foreign languages (SAR item 3.1.2, p.55). In order to achieve these objectives, the program includes a set of learning outcomes describing the graduates expected knowledge, skills and competence. The learning outcomes achieved in the program are the same, regardless of study form (full time or part time). Learning outcomes in form of knowledge include e.g. "Planning and organizing procurement of goods and services, transport routes and schedules"; "Organization of warehouse work and inventory management and modeling" and "Transport economics and marketing; basics of price formation". Skills include e.g. "Organizing logistics processes at the operational level" and "Collecting and analyzing statistics on the turnover of goods and services", and competence include e.g. "Ability to evaluate the performance of supply chains" and "The ability to ensure compliance with the norms of labor relations, international transport and international trade rules governing documents; to ensure compliance with the requirements of environmental and civil protection regulatory acts". The duration and scope of the study program implementation as well as the implementation language, are reasonable and justified. Learning outcomes achieved in the program are the same despite the form of study.

2.1.3. According to the SAR p.54, there have been corrections made in the study programme parameters since the last accreditation cycle. The changes made are the following:

1. Based on the needs of society, trends in education, the need to create an opportunity for students to obtain the desired qualification in a shorter time and enter the labor market, a working group was formed at the college in the study year 2014/2015. This led to the decision to reduce the extent of the Organization of International Transportation program from 120 CP to 80 CP in order to increase competitiveness. On 19 June 2015, the higher education program accreditation No. 378 with the right to implement the study program "Transport Services" was issued with a deadline of 18 June 2021, where the Organization of International Transportation program is 80 CP with a duration of 2 years. Based on the reasoning behind the decision, the panel finds the change reasonable. However, the expert panel suggests carefully monitoring accreditation deadlines to eliminate the possibility that students may not be issued state-recognized diplomas.

2.1.4. According to the data provided by the College in the SAR (p.56), graduates of the Organization of International Transportation study program have very wide employment prospects (port companies, transport companies and terminals). Overall, the student numbers in this study program are small. Despite the demand of employers and the labor market for logistics specialists, the number of those who want to study and therefore the number of students does not increase. In our view, this is mainly due to the sufficiently complex content of the study program, which requires sufficient background in math and science subjects at secondary level. This is evidenced by the views of students, graduates and particularly disadvantaged students in the study program, who point to difficulties in successfully completing study courses precisely due to prior knowledge of mathematics and information technology, lack of finances, change of place of residence (moving abroad).

According to the Appendix 1.4. that provides statistics on matriculated students, it shows that the full-time student numbers are rather stable in the last 5 years with the average number per year being 12 students. In 2018/19 - 15, in 2019/20 - 10, 2020/21 - 15 and in 2021/22 - 9. There has been a decrease in student numbers for part-time studies which is now down to 1 in 2021/22 and before the average was around 4 students per study year. In 2018/19 - 6, in 2019/20 - 4, 2020/21 - 4 and in 2021/22-1.

According to the information provided by the College on the SAR p.56, there is no data available on

the graduate employment after finishing their studies in this study program. During the interview with graduates, it was stated that it was challenging to find relevant jobs after graduation in the local area, and that opportunities around Riga was better.

2.1.5. Not applicable

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

All of the indicators of the study program are in compliance with the existing preconditions of the implementation of the study program. The study program Organization of International Transportation does not comply with the study field Seafaring. In the opinion of the experts, the title, code, qualification to be obtained of the study program, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study program implementation as well as the implementation language, are reasonable and justified. The study program is implemented in Latvian. The goals, objectives, learning outcomes are in line and in compliance. The program is in demand for regional students and there is a flow of incoming students every study year. There has been a decrease of matriculated students in the last few years which is not a good indicator.

Strengths:

1. Regionally needed programme to prepare specialists which are in demand.

Weaknesses:

1. The study program Organization of International Transportation does not comply with the study field Seafaring;
2. A decrease of students in the last few years;
3. No data provided on graduate employment after studies.

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1. The Organization of International Transportation program complies to an extent with national regulations and standards. Planning, organization, and implementation of the study process takes place in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia, Law on Higher Education Institutions, the Law on Higher Education Institutions, the Law on Professional Education and the Council of LJK. The assessment of the current content of study courses and compliance with industry and labor market needs, and scientific trends is carried out in accordance with LJK Procedure Manual: Procedure No. P6-2 "Development of study course documents" and Procedure No. P6-5 "Updating the programmes of study courses". Descriptions of study courses (DSC) are updated as necessary, where the valid version of the DSC is approved at the beginning of each study year at the department meeting. The director of study programs is responsible for the quality, actuality and compliance of the DSC with current study plans and updated regulations.

The content of the Organization of International Transportation program is relevant, and the study courses of the program meet industry expectations through the competence of the graduates (meetings with graduates and employers). As per SAR study program item 3.2.1, the LJK ensures relevance through study program directors following current affairs of industry and the suitability of the program to the labor market, e.g. through employer surveys. Courses dealing with logistics, transport, economy and legislation ensures student's competence in relevant fields (SAR Study program documents, appendix 1.8. Plan of Study Program).

The study course descriptions did not have separate information about the course plan for full time and part time students. The courses of the program correspond to the objectives and tasks of the program and should ensure achievement of learning outcomes and regulatory requirements (SAR study program documentation and meetings with study directors, teaching staff, students, industry partners and graduates). However, not all written descriptions of the study courses clarify the purpose of the study course so that it corresponds to the learning outcomes – some study courses need slight improvement and supplementary literature and indication of other sources of information is not included – most study courses need slight improvement.

The panel notes that several platforms are in use both in the same course but also use of digital platforms (Mykoob, Moodle, Google classroom, etc.) differs between courses. This can lead to misunderstandings for students, uncertainty on where to find materials and information and make it challenging for the students to obtain updated information. The LJK should ensure a more specific policy towards platforms in use and make sure to standardize this more (meeting with teaching staff, students, facilities tour).

The meetings with graduates and industry partners confirm that the graduates from LJK do have the necessary knowledge and competence required by the maritime industry, but it underlines that it is harder for graduates from the Organization of International Transportation program to find relevant work, especially in the local area of the college. The panel recommends that the LJK obtain information on how many of their graduates from this program get a relevant job, how long it takes to get a relevant job and where their relevant jobs can be found. According to the SAR item 3.1.3, the LJK does not currently have a separate record of how many LJK graduates work in their chosen profession.

2.2.2. Not applicable

2.2.3. Study implementation methods for the Organization of International Transport study program are chosen to achieve the learning outcomes for the course, and different methods are used: lectures, practical lessons, self-guided work, group work, discussions, seminars, educational excursions and simulation. The course description displays the methods used in each course. For part time students, the requirement for independent work is higher than for the full-time program (meetings with study program directors and teachers). For the part time program, students learn the content of the study courses independently, as per SAR item 3.2.3, p. 60. This is currently not displayed in the study course descriptions, and should be included. Students in all programs are both invited to and expected to have an active role during their studies, and LJK have to some extent implemented principles of student-centered education through implementation of independent work, projects etc. (SAR, p. 61). For the students, it is challenging to plan their studies, as the schedule is not known in due time. This makes the student centered learning challenging for the students as a result of how the LJK organizes the study schedule. This must be improved.

2.2.4. The Organization of International Transport study program includes practical training which is divided into two parts: study internship and qualification internship. The content of the practical training period corresponds to 16 credit points, where the study internship is 2 credit points, and the qualification internship is 14 credit points. An internship program is prepared for each internship.

Purpose of the internships are to strengthen and supplement theoretical knowledge acquired, obtain competence appropriate to the study program, and gain practical skills necessary for specialists in the relevant field.

The procedure for organizing student/learning practice is determined by the LJK practice regulations

and quality management system procedure P8-3 Practice. The evaluation of practice results is based on the pass/fail system, and the procedure is described in the LJK Practice Regulations (SAR).

Practical training is carried out in accordance with the tripartite internship agreement between LJK, the logistics company and the student. This agreement contains goals and tasks for the internship, as well as obligations and responsibilities of the parties. During the meeting with industry partners, it became clear that the collaboration with industry partners can be further developed through a more active collaboration also including other activities than practical training.

2.2.5. Not applicable

2.2.6. As per SAR item 3.2.6, the final thesis for students in the Organization of International Transport program is relevant to the industry and the company where the student has had his/her practical training. The topics of the qualification theses are developed from teaching staff experience and recommendations of employers, and are based on the standard of knowledge, skills and competences in the logistics specialist profession. The students are allowed to propose a topic themselves. The department meeting approves topics and supervisors for the qualification theses.

In the description of study courses (program annex 1.10 Study course descriptions), the goal of the thesis is to demonstrate the students' abilities to analyze theoretical and practical information and to prove ready for professional activity. The list of titles for students' qualification thesis indicate that the topics are individual for each student, and that the students prepare theses which are relevant for the maritime logistics profession and the company within this industry. Topics vary from risk management in international freight transport, analysis of the supply chain in a specific company to development of a logistics system.

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

The content of the study program is topical, and the study courses/modules correspond to the objectives of the program. The Organization of International Transport program complies mostly with national regulations and professional standards. It is more challenging for the graduates of the Organization of International Transport program to find relevant work, compared with the other programs included in the study field Seafaring. The LJK does not have a record of how many graduates work in their chosen profession.

The study implementation methods contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study courses and the study program. Several digital platforms are in use. Student-centered learning and teaching principles are considered to an extent, but the lack of predictability due to changing schedules and short planning horizon makes it unnecessarily hard for the students and thereby challenging the student's ability to plan their own learning. LJK must improve the organization of the study schedule. The requirement for independent work differs between the full time and part time programs.

The Organization of International Transport program includes practical training in order to strengthen and supplement the theoretical knowledge acquired, obtain appropriate competence and gain necessary practical skills as per requirements in STCW 78 as amended. The practical training is carried out on board vessels owned or manned by industry partners such as shipping and manning companies. LJK does have regulations for organizing and evaluating on board training.

The topics of students' final theses are individual for each student, and vary from risk management

in international freight transport, analysis of the supply chain in a specific company to development of a logistics system. Topics are relevant to the field and correspond to the study program.

Strengths:

1. Content of program is relevant and updated.
2. Topic of the final thesis is relevant to the study program.

Weaknesses:

1. There are no record of how many graduates from the program who work in their chosen profession.
2. Several platforms in use within courses and across courses.
3. The higher requirements of independent work for part time students should be reflected in the study course descriptions.
4. Study schedule changes on short notice and lacks predictability, which makes it hard for students to plan their own learning.

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Doesn't apply to the programme

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1. According to SAR p.63.,64 and information gathered during onsite meetings with management of the study program as well as students, graduates and representatives of the employers, it was evident that the the needs of the study program Organisation of International Transportation (41840), namely the necessary informative, material and technical provision as well as financial provision are covered.

According to SAR p.64, the implementation of the study program is generally ensured by the material and informational base of the College. Infrastructure of the program can be characterized by three main blocks, namely, premises for teaching and scientific work, library, and information technology provision. There are 6 auditoriums (all equipped with multimedia techniques) used for lectures and workshops, 2 computer labs (equipped with multimedia equipment and interactive whiteboard) and 3 auditoriums are used for lectures and practical workshops. It is important to highlight that there are no simulators relevant to the study program available at the premises of the College. However, as it was explained by the head of the study program, they have an opportunity to use the simulator of port operations purchased and installed by the Lithuanian Maritime Academy in the online mode.

Informative provisions, including library resources such as text books, publications relevant to the study programme etc., are available for both students and teaching staff. Also some digital teaching aids are used for the delivery of the study programme.

During the onsite visit it was verified that the Moodle e-learning platform is used to upload different

learning materials, while the Mykoob e-journal was introduced to reflect student grades and attendance. Both internet platforms allow students to follow the progress of their studies. Students also have free access to a library with a wide range of technical literature relevant to the study program.

2.3.2. Not applicable

2.3.3. The funding available for the implementation of the study program is partially sufficient to ensure the study process. It is important to highlight that taking into account the relatively small number of enrolled students and graduates, the profitability of the study program is not high. However, taking into account information provided in SAR p.65, the study program has the minimum number of students to ensure the positive profitability. According to the College management, the minimum number of students per course to ensure the profitability of the program is 10 individuals. The source of funding for the study programs is state budget financing and tuition fees. According to SAR p.64-65, an analysis of the funding and available resources of the study area is carried out every year, identifying the current needs and planning long-term necessary investments (SAR p.65).

For those admitted in 2021/2022 total tuition fee was set at 1,600EUR for full time students and 1,400EUR for part-time students. Tuition fees are updated once a year by approving it at the Council of the College with the aim of bringing the amount of tuition fees closer to the actual study costs.

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

The resources of the College are partially sufficient to ensure the efficient implementation of the study program “Organisation of International Transportation” (41840). The study infrastructure, equipment and informative provision available in the college mostly correspond to the goals and planned results of the program. Experts believe that by supplementing the material and technical provision with modern simulation equipment, improvements in the study process could be achieved.

Strengths:

1. Good cooperation with the Lithuanian Maritime Academy to provide an opportunity to use the simulators essential for the study process.

Weaknesses:

1. Lack of appropriate simulators at the premises of the College.
2. Relatively small number of enrolled students and graduates.

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

It is necessary to improve the material and technical provision for the study program. For instance, it is desirable to have simulation equipment appropriate for the study program.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1. Number of teachers and other personnel ensure delivery of intended learning outcomes in the program. As said in SAR (page 66) and confirmed during visit the teaching staff (number, qualification) complies with the requirements specified in Law on Higher Education Institutions. The teaching personnel (instructors, supervisors and assessors) of the general and professional subjects are education and/or maritime professionals with the relevant logistic/marine transport experience. These teachers generally don't have scientific or academic degrees, however, their professional experience is longer than the required minimum of 5 years. Totally in the implementation of the program 13 lecturers are involved, one of them has a doctoral degree. Taking into account the current number of students which is small, the ratio of teachers per student is at a very low level. It means that students have unrestricted access to the teachers. Teachers are competent, however, not one subject is delivered in the English language which could lead to resistance from taking part in international mobility programs (except lecturers of English language).

Recent experience connected with Covid pandemic and distance learning should encourage reflection within the college. Some teachers need to improve their IT competences. Teachers should not have free choice of communication platforms with students while implementing the study program. This shows that college has not been well prepared to provide education using remote techniques. It is also not good if, from the student's perspective, subsequent classes can be held using other online platforms - dependent on the will of the teacher and not the college.

2.4.2. Teaching staff seems to be stable for a longer period of time taking into account their competences but considering also quite a high average age. Teachers are enthusiastic, they provide good support for the operation of the college. According to information provided in SER (3.4.2) the number of teachers with appropriate qualifications and professional experience has increased compared to previous evaluation. This is a positive tendency ensuring the achievement of intended learning outcomes in the study program. On the other hand some of the teachers have double employment which significantly restricts their availability. The College also relies on professionals from industry. On the one hand, this is very positive because students receive up-to-date knowledge from these people. On the other hand, the work of these teachers in college seems to be another, less important, choice. For this reason, for example, lesson plans are arranged dynamically for their current needs or work opportunities. This introduces unnecessary unstable scheduling negatively affecting students, administration and other teachers. Such practices should be eliminated.

2.4.3. Not applicable

2.4.4. According to the evaluation team, teachers are not obliged to conduct research, however they should possess knowledge of the current state of knowledge/research results/developments in their field so that the current state of knowledge is passed on to students. For that reason, teachers should at least monitor the progress of research, they should e.g. participate in conferences, symposia, maybe development/scientific projects.

2.4.5 It seems that teachers work together to implement the education program well. Teachers' representatives are part of program councils. Teachers participate in improving the educational process. Among other things, they have jointly prepared training materials. The level of mutual cooperation among teachers seems to be adequate.

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

The selection of teaching staff and their number in relation to the number of students ensures proper delivery of classes. Teaching staff have competences that enable the proper delivery of

classes both in stationary form and with the use of distance learning techniques and methods. The College staff policy, including the selection of teachers, is appropriate to the needs of the delivery of classes and in each case takes into account the competence of the teachers, their academic achievements and especially professional maritime experience.

Strengths:

1. Involvement in the program of teachers having professional qualifications and current experience.

Weaknesses:

1. Some teachers seem not to have adequate IT competences for online advanced teaching methods.

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

Despite minor comments (like IT challengers), teachers ensure good delivery of intended learning outcomes

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 program fully complies with the Cabinet Regulations No.141 "Regulations on the first level Professional Higher Education State Standard".

- 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

Comply with the standard of the profession "Logistics Specialist", Reg. No. PS-148. Accepted at the meeting of professional education and employment of tripartite cooperation on 10.02.2021.

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Not all written descriptions of the study courses contain the following or containment is not full (as per Law on Higher Education Institutions):

1. Clarify the purpose of the study course so that it corresponds to the learning outcomes – some study courses need slight improvement;
2. Supplementary literature and indication of other sources of information is not included – most

study courses need slight improvement.

- 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 diploma complies with the Cabinet Regulations No.202, according to which state recognized documents of higher education are issued.

- 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 director of LJK has submitted a certificate that the knowledge of the national language of all teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study program complies with the regulations on the amount of knowledge of the national language. The experts were convinced of this during the visit.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

LJK has an agreement with Riga Technical university to provide students with the opportunity to continue their education in another college in case the implementation of the LJK study program has been terminated.

- 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

LJK has confirmed that students are guaranteed compensation for losses if the study program is not accredited or the study program license is revoked.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Assessment of the requirement [8]

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Improvements are needed in the study course descriptions

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

The study program Organization of International Transportation does not comply with the study field Seafaring. The duration and scope of the study program implementation as well as the implementation language, are reasonable and justified. The study program is implemented in Latvian. The goals, objectives, learning outcomes are in line and in compliance. The program is in demand for regional students and there is a flow of incoming students every study year while there is observed a decrease of matriculated students in the last few years.

The content of the study program is topical, and the study courses/modules correspond to the objectives of the program while improvements are needed in the study course descriptions. The study program complies with national regulations and professional standards. The study implementation methods contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study courses and the study program. Several digital platforms are in use. Student-centered learning and teaching principles are considered to an extent, but the lack of predictability due to changing

schedules and short planning horizon makes it unnecessarily hard for the students and thereby challenging the student's ability to plan their own learning. LJK must improve the organization of the study schedule. The topics of students' final theses are relevant to the field and correspond to the study program.

The resources of the College should be improved to ensure the efficient implementation of the study program – infrastructure, equipment and informative provision available in the college mostly correspond to the goals and planned results of the program. However, deficiencies in infrastructure are not crucial for the achievement of learning outcomes. The indicated need for new equipment, e.g. of a simulator, should be treated as a guideline, which is an indication and not a deficiency that detracts from the overall assessment of this programme. Hence, the overall assessment is good. Program includes practical training in order to strengthen and supplement the theoretical knowledge acquired, obtain appropriate competence and gain necessary practical skills.

Teaching staff have competences that enable the proper delivery of classes both in stationary form and with the use of distance learning techniques and methods. The College staff policy, including the selection of teachers, is appropriate to the needs of the delivery of classes and in each case takes into account the competence of the teachers, their academic achievements and especially professional maritime experience. Scientific activities should be improved.

As a result of evaluating all the information available from SAR, various documents, and the evidence received during the site visit the group of experts has identified the following strengths and weaknesses.

Strengths:

1. Regionally needed program to prepare specialists which are in demand;
2. Content of program is relevant and updated;
3. Topic of final thesis is relevant to the study program;
4. Good cooperation with the Lithuanian Maritime Academy to provide an opportunity to use the simulators essential for the study process.

Weaknesses:

1. Study program Organization of International Transportation does not comply with the study field Seafaring;
2. A decrease of students in the last few years;
3. Several platforms in use within courses and across courses;
4. The higher requirements of independent work for part time students should be reflected in the study course descriptions;
5. Lack of appropriate simulators at the premises of the College;
6. Relatively small number of enrolled students and graduates;
7. Improvements are needed in the study course descriptions;
8. Lack of predictability in study schedule.

Evaluation of the study programme "Organization of International Transportation"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Organization of International Transportation"

Short-term recommendations

College should change study field from Seafaring to a more relevant and suitable study field for the Organization of International Transportation program

College should standardize use of digital platforms within and across courses

College should ensure information on the high requirements of independent work for part time students are reflected in the study course descriptions, and improve study course description

College should ensure predictability in study schedule

Long-term recommendations

College should gather information and keep a record of how many graduates from the program work in their chosen profession

College should work on attracting more students in the study programme

College should ensure that the students have a more active role in all aspects of the education process, for instance in choosing a topic for their final thesis

College should ensure appropriate simulators at the premises of the college

College should ensure that all lecturers have adequate IT competence for online lecturing

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:		Partially compliant	There are various mechanisms and procedures in place of QA including a quality policy which is not currently externally available due to development of the webpage. The key procedures of the QA process are surveys of students and submission of complaints and proposals. There is a procedure in place for conducting surveys for graduates and employers, however, employer representatives stated that they have never received such surveys, which is confusing. Some of the documents as part of QA could not be accessed/found, even though experts were provided with username and password for logging in.

Requirements	Requirement Evaluation		Comment
R2 - Compliance of scientific research and artistic creation with the level of development of scientific research and artistic creation (if applicable)		Partially compliant	A small number of publications in journals/conference proceedings and no motivation for teaching staff for the realization of scientific activities.
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 full potential of cooperation is not utilized. At the national level in close proximity cooperation is adequate, even sometimes dominant manifested in pathological scheduling of classes, while at the international level it is negligible, for instance, just because information about the college for a foreign recipient is not available, as the website is only in Latvian.
R4 - Elimination of deficiencies and shortcomings identified in the previous assessment of the study field, if any, or implementation of the recommendations provided.		Partially compliant	Several recommendations from previous evaluations are implemented at LJK, e.g. equipment in mechanical workshops and participation in ERASMUS programs. There are still some challenges that need to be addressed, which also was pointed out in the previous evaluations, e.g. that it is still necessary to develop collaboration with industry partners, scientific research activities, improvement of technical facilities and staff qualifications. The panel also considered this as part of the need to further develop the LJK overall systematics in their work.

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	Maritime Transport - Marine Engineering (41525)	Not relevant	Partially compliant	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Average

No.	Study programme	R5	R6	R7	R8	Evaluation of the study programme (excellent, good, average, poor)
2	Marine Engineering (41525)	Not relevant	Partially compliant	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Average
3	Maritime Transports (41840)	Not relevant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Good
4	Navigation (41840)	Not relevant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Good
5	Organization of International Transportation (41840)	Not relevant	Partially compliant	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Good

The Dissenting Opinions of the Experts

Experts have achieved consensus in the assessment of Liepaja Maritime College