

Expert group joint opinion

Evaluation Procedure: Assessment of Study Field

Higher Education Institution: Maļnavas koledža

Study field: Mechanics and Metal Processing, Heat Power Engineering, Heat Technology, and Mechanical Engineering

Experts:

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Summary Assessment of the Study Field

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Malnava College is the only higher education institution that provides comprehensive training of specialists in the field of Automotive Transport in Latgale region and Eastern Latvia region. The programme development is aimed and in accordance with the College mission and strategic plans. The College priorities set as assuring a modern, high-quality offer of educational services focused on the development of highly valued skills in the labour market, which includes the development of educational content and process, development of educational environment and formation of partnerships important for educational development in the Latgale region according to the local job market needs best assured by the feedback from the regional companies.

From January 2022 Malnava College has become an Agency of Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies (LLU). Expert's group believes that those changes are positive and will extend possibilities for cooperation, access to information, pedagogical training of academic staff and research.

Interviews with the staff of the College showed that the management of the College and study programme and the team that compiled the Self-Assessment Report is dedicated and well prepared. The Management structure of the College and the Study Department is clear and the Self-Assessment Report assures that the College management has a clear understanding of the aims of the study programme - as the topicality of the study field is determined by the requirements and possibilities of the labour market and the meeting of the experts with the employers.

The information published on the College website is comprehensive and detailed enough for the respective study programme and potential new students and it is in the language of the study programme.

Malnava College has developed a policy document "Quality Management Policy" which contains general guidelines and principles of quality management within the College. The document is publicly available on the College webpage. The document determines the respective quality assurance system where the implementation of the quality assurance system is described in the Self-Assessment Report. The expert group noted that the College staff is well informed about the system and follows the principles in everyday work and teaching. The introduction of the EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management) model into the quality management system guarantees the use of best practices for continuous improvement of the study programme and achieving the desired learning outcomes.

The Malnava College has developed a system to determine the financial resources required for the implementation of the study field and the relevant study programmes. The sources of funding for the College and study programme are specified in the regulations of Malnava College. Based on the agreement between the Ministry of Education and Malnava College on the training of specialists from the state budget. According to Self Assessment Report, the provision of financial resources is stable but insufficient. At the same time, there is no system for financing scientific or practical research activities.

The students and academic staff are provided with well-maintained buildings, lecture rooms and laboratories. According to the Expert's group, technical study provisions are basically sufficient for the current version of the study programme, but some equipment is outdated.

The study programme Automotive Transport was created to comply with National Profession Standard PS0057, which was replaced by a newer Standard PS-203 on December 15th 2021. The main difference between previous and new Profession Standards is a change of focus from technical to managerial competencies. Malnava College recognizes in its statement "Compliance of the study programme with the standard", that the study programme should be corrected to comply with the new Profession Standard of Automotive Workshop Specialist.

Analysis of academic staff CV's and Expert's team's interviews showed that the largest part of

academic staff is young and enthusiastic about their work. They are active within their laboratories. At the same time, the Experts noticed that there are no research activities and no peer-reviewed publications by academic staff. Also, the incoming and outgoing mobility of students and academic staff is almost non-existing.

According to the Expert's group, to improve international cooperation and get involved in research, College academic staff should first improve their English skills.

1. Management of the Study Field

Analysis

Malnava College is the only higher education institution that provides comprehensive training of specialists in the field of Automotive Transport in Latgale region and Eastern Latvia region. The programme development is aimed and in accordance in general with the College mission and strategic plans defined in "2021-2027 Development and investment strategies of Malnava College". The College priorities set as assuring a modern, high-quality offer of educational services focused on the development of highly valued skills in the labour market, which includes the development of educational content and process, development of educational environment and formation of partnerships important for educational development in the Latgale region according to the local job market needs best assured by the feedback from the regional companies.

Interviews with the staff of the College showed that the management of the College and study programme and the team that compiled the Self-Assessment Report is dedicated and well prepared. The Management structure of the College and the Study Department is clear and the Self-Assessment Report assures that the College management has a clear understanding of the aims of the study programme - as the topicality of the study field is determined by the requirements and possibilities of the labour market and the meeting of the experts with the employers and report "Demand for and supply of labour force with higher education in transport sector education programme groups" assures this.

The study direction priorities stated in the Self-Assessment Report are as follows: 1. to prepare highly qualified, comprehensive, service specialists competitive on the labour market; 2. to ensure the study process with methodological materials, to improve the material and technical basis of the study programme "Automotive Transport" with a modern car diagnostics and repair base; 3. to ensure the participation of employers in the development of study content and qualification examinations in the organization; 4. to co-operate with related Latvian and foreign educational institutions and employers in the field of vocational education; 5. to carry out applied research in the field of car service, to organize scientific-practical conferences of the students and to publish the results; 6. to improve the system of student study traineeship in accordance with the requirements of the modern labour market.

During the visit, experts noticed that despite the specialist preparation and teaching programme development aims being met there are gaps in meeting the international collaboration and research priorities. The study field priority 2) is met partially as the methodological and study materials (especially e-materials) prepared in Moodle e-learning platform are comprehensive and well prepared, though the material and technical basis for the modern car diagnostics could be improved especially considering new technology trends in the automotive industry (electric cars, hybrid cars, novel sensor technique related to increasing autonomy of vehicles, etc) as experts noticed during the lab visits. The study field priority 3) could be also improved as many employers and graduates mentioned during the interviews that they would be interested in having more input into the study programme improvement and especially to introduce new technologies into the programme. The study priority 4) needs some more attention as well and these aspects are analyzed in more detail in section 5 of this report. The study field priority 5) deserves particular attention as implemented

weakest at the study field and analysed in more detail in section 4 in this report. The Report and List of staff publications do not mention or demonstrate international or industrial R&D projects involvement or international publications of the College main teaching staff of the programme. The study field priority 6) has been developed well in the College and the students and employers expressed satisfaction during the interviews with the system.

Development plans of the study field are defined in the document "Development plan of the Study Direction "Mechanics and metal processing, heat energy, heat engineering and mechanical engineering" in accordance with the 1st revision of "Strategy for Development and Investment of Malnava College for 2021-2027". The brief content and responsible persons are defined in detail though the plan does not include the criteria of how and when the College will assess whether one or another element of the plan is realized and desired outcomes achieved. The "Management Structure of the University/College " describes the study field management structure consisting of three stages(sub-units): Department of Studies and Research (Deputy Director of Studies); Council of Studies and Department of Field Studies (Head of the Programme). On the other hand, the "Development Plan of the Study Direction "Mechanics and metal processing, heat energy, heat engineering and mechanical engineering" states that the Head of the Study programme (and lecturers) is responsible for the development of the study programme and improvement of the study process, which has performance deadline once per year. The Self-Assessment report states that the Head of the Study Direction, at the same time also the Head of the Study Program, organizes and manages the work of the Council of Studies of the program, the work of evaluation of study achievements. The scheme of the Quality management of the study direction (Self-Assessment Report fig.21) does not show any involvement of the sub-units mentioned in the study field management structure. Therefore it is unclear who and when will assess the efficiency of the study programme and its development and steps taken. The Department has the name "Department of studies and research" in the College management scheme but it is completely unclear the involvement of the Deputy Director in studies and the Head of the programme in research or their respective tasks. Council of Studies organized by the Head of the Study programme without reporting obligation (not described in the report) to the Department of Studies and Research (or to College Council) and without involvement Students Council' and dense collaboration with employers may not assure the most effective recommendations implementation. It is also unclear whether the Head of the Study Programme reports to the Council of Studies periodically or the Council will forward only the collected feedback from the students and lecturers to the Head of the Programme and will propose respective improvements. So, it might be concluded that a clear definition of who and when will assess the efficiency of the steps taken to improve the study programme, who will make the final decision about the programme improvements and the periodicity of the performance deadlines would be shortened. The involvement of only a few representatives of the employers seems not enough for effective considering the employers opinions in the work of the Council of Studies. As there is only one programme the role of the Deputy Director in studies in parallel of the Head of the Programme is questionable. The management scheme of the College shows a direct link between the Council of Studies in the field and the College Director but not a direct link between the College Council and the Council of Studies in the field, which in some sense is opposite to the principles of the Quality Management (document "Quality Management Policy"). As the students and graduates expressed interest in more extracurricular activities it might be suggested some synchronization link in between the Council of Studies in the field and the Deputy Director in instruction work in the education sphere in the management structure.

The Self-Assessment Report (section II - Description of the Study Direction (1. Management of the Study Direction) describes the management and decision-making process in the College. Experts noticed during the interviews that the employers and graduates are involved weakly in these processes and aren't aware of the processes. It was mentioned by the employers that they would be interested and ready to be more involved in the study programme improvement processes, which is

one of the great potential indicators. The Experts recommend to involve stakeholders (employers and graduates) in the study programme improvement. The document “2021-2027 Development and Investment strategies of Malnava College” describes sufficiently future aims and plans and the students and teachers expert group met were aware of the document and its content and related plans, which is an indicator of the involvement of both - the students and teachers in the development of the College and study programme. The support structure provided by the administrative and technical staff contributing to meeting the needs of the programme is described and the list of lab equipment and the study environment infrastructure in the Self-Assessment Report (pages 38-40 and pages 37-38) is detailed enough though it is mentioned in the report that the material and technical support for the study field has been purchased from the State budget, and cost per student in the study programme in 2020 — EUR 4568. The Self-Assessment report mentions some EU funds, which were also attracted within the framework of the projects but these EU funds/projects were focused only on increasing the energy efficiency of the College buildings. Therefore it should be concluded that some urgent steps should be taken to start some new projects or collaboration to finance the improvement of lab equipment/resources. The teachers were aware of the procedures improving the support structure of the programme during the interviews though the described procedures don't include information on how to support more self-initiative of the teachers and students. Teachers have strong trust in the College management. The expert group couldn't find information on the existence of clear plans concerning the College joining the Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies (LLU) that would include information on how to increase the efficiency of the use of the resources and how to increase the competitiveness of the programme after merging. The Experts recommend to create action plans on how to benefit from merging the Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies.

Procedures for the admission and examinations are sufficiently described in the presented Self-Assessment Report and interviews with the teachers and students confirmed the common understanding of these procedures. The documents defining the admission procedures in detail are “Malnava College Student Admission Regulations and Matriculation Procedure for the Study Year”, (specifically “Student Admission Regulations and Matriculation Procedure of Malnava College for the 2021/2022 academic year” - Report p.21 and on the p.27 probably the same document mentioned with little bit different title “Student Admission Rules and Matriculation Procedure of Malnava College”) and “Malnava College Admission Commission Regulations”, which are following the Latvian Cabinet Regulations No. 846 “Regulations on Requirements, Criteria and Procedures for Admission to Study Programs”. The admission is organized on a competition basis considering the average evaluation of the certificate/diploma transcript, the centralized exam of the general secondary or vocational secondary education without additional entrance examination. Considering the low number of applicants and high drop-out rate the procedure seems to be reasonable at the moment but the selection procedures of the potential students need improvement in the sense of selecting highly motivated students to reduce the drop-out rate. It was the experts opinion that the process could be improved hand in hand with involving more employers in the study programme introduction to potential students and introducing more project-based and innovative courses as well as increasing the international collaboration and students exchange making the study programme more attractive. The Experts recommend to create clear criteria for the internal assessment of realization of the study programme development plan.

Students have to pass the practice in a company regulated with documents “Malnava College Regulations on the Organization of Study and Qualification Practice” and “Description of the organization of students' practice in the study program “Autotransport” and “Methodological instructions for preparation and defense of qualification traineeship report”. The professional skills and knowledge are mainly assessed during the defense of the Qualification Practice Report and by the feedback from the training company (Report p. 31 and 53). The College has established the examination, reports assessment and tests system and respective rules to assess the learning

outcomes described in the documents: “Regulations of Malnava College regarding the procedures for studies and examinations”; “Procedures for development and defending of the qualification works of Malnava College”; “Regulations of the State qualification examination commission of Malnava College” and “Quality Policy of Malnava College”. Despite these well-prepared documents it is still not clearly defined the options to recognize extra-curricular or non-formal or previous experiences. Experts were satisfied with the prepared documents and interviews with the students and teachers and assured that the opinion that student assessment system at the for formal courses works well but there is a space for improvement in respective recognition and assessment for non-formal courses and innovative professional activities.

Common academic integrity principles and mechanisms are described in the Self-Assessment Report and the College documents (mainly “Quality Policy of Malnava College”; “Procedures for ensuring the academic integrity of the Study Department of Malnava College” and Cabinet Regulations No. 367 “Regulations of Malnava College”) and interviews with the students and teachers confirmed the existence and use of these principles. It was confirmed during the interviews that checks for plagiarism are used for the student homeworks and final projects. Despite this confirmation during the interviews it is still unclear whether the main method for plagiarism check is the teachers personal experience or some systematic use of a tool. The College has approved the documents defining respective plagiarism policy: “Regulations on Ethics and Conduct”; “Quality Management Policy”. The use of Moodle e-learning platform enables the use of the special Moodle platform plagiarism checking module. The Report discusses only the manual plagiarism check and not the automated plagiarism check with Moodle. Some teachers confirmed that they are aware of the respective Moodle tool but the systematic use of it was not mentioned. The experts got the impression that both the students and teachers are aware of the plagiarism problem and are aware of the plagiarism checking formal rules and are working to avoid plagiarism but systematic use of a tool is missing. Stakeholders are aware of the academic principles as most of them are graduates of the same College or long time employers of the graduates and students doing their internships in respective companies. It was discussed during the interviews that there might be some discrepancies between academic principles and practical industrial requirements, i.e. use of some confidential company related documents, which could not be fully cited in a student work or company requirement to use a kind of client-specific references required by the project the student is working for. All the employers confirmed clear support for the academic principles during the studies.

The students and teachers confirmed during the interviews that they were informed and had meetings to discuss main College management documents (“Quality Policy of Malnava College”; “Regulations of Malnava College regarding the procedures for studies and examinations”; “2021-2027 Development and Investment strategies of Malnava College”; “Development plan of the Study Direction “Mechanics and metal processing, heat energy, heat engineering and mechanical engineering”, etc.). The experts noticed during the interviews that the staff of the College and graduates are really keen on the programme study field and are ready to go ahead with improving the study programme. The top management of the College has already initiated some good steps to improve the management (introducing “Quality Policy of Malnava College” and “2021-2027 Development and Investment strategies of Malnava College”) and has potential for further improvements.

The information published on the College website is comprehensive and detailed enough for the respective study programme and potential new students and it is in the language of the study programme, i.e. in Latvian (<https://malnavaskoledza.lv/>). The information on the website complies with the information in the official registers.

On the other hand, the College related website in English (<https://latlit.eu/malnava-college/>) is very limited and project-oriented and does not support very much wider international collaboration, i.e. visiting teachers or students from other countries and even only a few strategic documents and

plans in English are accessible from this website. No information about the College study programmes or facilities/equipment or research. Therefore it is a common opinion of the experts that for the international collaboration general information about the study programme or programmes involved in the international collaboration and respective courses and facilities should be available in English too.

Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

Management and developed managerial documents are showing good potential for the only study programme in the study field. All stakeholders are positive about the study programme and respective need for the specialists. The study programme complies well with the country and industry development plans and trends and in this sense, there is no question about the need for the respective programme. The respective aims are set correspondingly and they are attainable.

The management structure of the study field is logical. The student government and employers involvement could be improved as once per year some representative feedback is not the most effective and fast. Tighter collaboration between all of the study field development stakeholders (College top management, study field management, employers, graduates and students) could help to make the decision-taking more efficient and to contribute to meeting all needs with regard to the relevant study programmes.

The College has developed a system and implemented procedures for the admission of students, the recognition of the study period, professional experience, and the previously acquired formal education. All these procedures are logical.

The College management is aware and following the academic procedures. Both the College development plans and academic procedures (classes attendants, procedures for homeworks and examinations, plagiarism rules etc.) are well communicated to the students. The communication with the stakeholders is good though their involvement should be improved at the study programme development.

The first steps in internationalization are taken (College website in English, some documents are available in English, international collaboration projects were started etc.) and it would be expected to see intensified efforts at the College in this direction in coming years. Merging with the Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies opens new perspectives for the College but the respective step by step plan would support the merging effect, especially in putting more attention into the R&D activities. The information published on the College website is comprehensive and detailed enough for the respective study programme and potential new students and it is in the language of the study programme, i.e. in Latvian and the information on the website complies with the information in the official registers.

Strengths:

1. The College and the study programme have clearly defined aims which are in good accordance with the Latvian and regional development policy and real need from the industry.
2. Dedicated and initiative College managerial staff.
3. Well developed and comprehensive strategic plan documents for the years 2021-2027.
4. High awareness and involvement of the College staff and students in the development of the "Self-Assessment Report" and "Quality Management Policy" and "Strategy for Development and Investment of Malnava College for 2021-2027".
5. Well defined and widely recognized use of academic principles.

Weaknesses:

1. Weak involvement of stakeholders (employers and graduates) in the study programme improvement.

2. Lack of clear plans on how to maximize the benefit from merging with the Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies.
3. Lack of clear criteria for the internal assessment of realization of the study programme development plan and respective efficiency.
4. Weak involvement of the main teaching staff in R&D activities.

2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System

Analysis

Malnava College has developed a policy document "Quality Management Policy" which contains general guidelines and principles of quality management within the College. The document is publicly available on the College webpage. The document determines the respective quality assurance system where the implementation of the quality assurance system is described in the Self-Assessment Report in Chapter II - Description of the Study Direction (2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System). The expert group noted that the College staff is well informed about the system and follows the principles in everyday work and teaching. The introduction of the EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management) model into the quality management system guarantees the use of best practices for continuous improvement of the study programme and achieving the desired learning outcomes.

In order to improve the performance of the study programme of the study field the College has determined the following focus points and described the respective measures to be applied: Approval and periodic evaluation of programs and degrees to be awarded; Student-centered learning, teaching, and assessment; Student matriculation, study process, recognition and certification of qualifications; Teacher quality assurance (teaching staff); Learning resources and student support. As an integral part of the above, it is described how to employ information (management) systems and inform the public. Respective information is given in the Report section II - Description of the Study Direction (2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System) and specifically sub-section 2.1. Description of internal quality assurance measures containing 16 points (Report p. 29) is comprehensive and well defined.

The Self-Assessment Report describes the feedback collected at the College (Report sections 1.3; 2.1 and 2.2): 1) End-of-semester anonymous student survey regarding overall study satisfaction; 2) At least once a year anonymous student survey regarding the performance of teaching staff; 3) Internship report by the student; 4) At least once a year teaching staff Self-Assessment Report; 5) Study result report at end-of-semester in commission meeting; 6) Evaluation report of the intern by its supervisor; 7) Graduate survey.

The feedback system from the students and teachers is specified. Feedback system from the graduates and employers is described in the Self-Assessment Report p. 25-33 but during the interviews with the graduates and employers it was revealed to be insufficient and these two groups of stakeholders (graduates and employers) would be ready to contribute more into the study programme improvement. It is essential to mark that interviewed students were aware of the College Quality Management Policy and respective activities for the implementation which is a good sign for future improvements. The college collects and analyzes the feedback information about the study programme once per year and introduces needed changes into the study programme.

The college collects and analyses the statistical data on the relevant study programme of the study field on a regular basis. The Self-Assessment Report p.5 demonstrates the dynamics of the number of students on the study programme during the years 2014-2020 and it could be concluded that the number of students is relatively stable varying between 56 to 72 depending on the year. There is another document presented to the experts "Student Statistics" giving more detailed statistical information which raises some concerns as the number of graduates have diminished from 32 (the year 2014) to 6 (the year 2020) and the number of expelled students has increased from 0 (the year

2014) to 26 (the year 2020). There is also an overview of the number of students by the type of students (part-time vs. full-time) and state-funded vs. individual-funded. The Report states that the Study Council analyzes the dynamics of the number of students (number of enrolled students, reasons for dropping out, etc.) but the report does not contain a detailed analysis of the reasons for this tendency and the measures taken to invert the tendency. The Head of the Study Department is responsible for the collection, storage, and processing of statistical data. It is not defined who and how it should be proceeded to use these data efficiently to improve the study programme or take any other actions. A clear action plan is expected by the experts to change the situation. The Report contains the study programme improvement formal procedures and these procedures were discussed during the interviews with teachers and Head of the Study Programme.

Therefore it can be concluded that the feedback system and statistical data collection system exist in the College. Despite the mentioned fact, the feedback and changes introduction system seems to be quite slow because once per year analyzed results and respective suggestions are possible to introduce into the teaching practice, usually after a year the suggested changes are planned, which makes the cycle time for reacting to the feedback at least two years. The Experts recommend an increase in the frequency of feedback and data analysis systems. The Quality Management System also defines procedures for the involvement of stakeholders in the process. On the other hand, the stakeholders (employers and graduates) expressed greater interest during the interviews to be involved more in the study programme improvement. The Experts recommend increasing the involvement of the graduates and employers in the quality management system.

The document "Regulations on the development, implementation, and improvement of study programs" defines the mechanism for obtaining and providing feedback, including with regard to the work with the students, graduates, and employers. The above-mentioned regulations determine the duties and deadlines of the College administration for the review of the process. The report (p.30) states stages of analysis and review of the study program where the integral part is the programme self-assessment. It would be expected to see the respective self-assessment document included in the set of documents presented to the experts. The results of this kind of programme self-assessment were discussed orally during the interviews. The document Statistics on Students During the Reporting Period shows dynamics of the number of students, which is a little bit warning in the sense of decrease of the number of students.

Although College states that periodic review of study courses takes place, some study courses still have problems, for example, mandatory reading material which is not available within the institution, limited access to databases, or an unrealistically excessive amount of mandatory reading - for example up to 11 whole books per course out of which some are not available in the library. Therefore the implementation of the quality system still has space for improvement. To improve the performance of the study programme the clear realization measures and introduction of KPI-s and analyzing these KPI-s dynamics would help to improve the system.

The College has integrated standards and guidelines of Part 1 of the ESG for internal quality assurance in the study process as discussed in the Report (p.34), i. quality assurance policy (Part II, Paragraph 2.1, 2.2) in the Report pages 8, 13 and 25, program development and validation (Part II, Paragraph 2.1)2 described in the separate document "Development plan of the study direction ...", student-centered learning, teaching and assessment (Part II, Paragraph 2.2, Part III, Paragraph 2.3) described in the Report p.26 and p.29-31, student matriculation, course of study, recognition of qualifications and certification (Part III, Paragraph 2.3, 2.4) described in the Report p.27, teaching staff (Part III, Paragraph 4.1) given in the separate document "Teaching staff CV-s", teaching resources and student support (Part II, Paragraph 3.1, 3.2) described in the Report p.27-28, information management (Part I, Paragraph 2, Part II, Paragraph 1.1, 1.2) , informing the public (Part II, Paragraph 2.2., 3.3., 5.1., 5.3.) described in the report p.28-29. Therefore it can be concluded that the College has determined aims and measures, which are integrated into a joint quality assurance system in order to improve the performance of the relevant study programmes of the study field.

Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

The College has introduced the Quality Management Policy and respective quality assurance system, which is an essential step for the study programmes continuous improvement. The feedback mechanisms and the study programme improvement formal procedures are defined and the teaching staff is aware of and follows the defined procedures. Therefore it should be concluded that the College staff is aware of the procedures stated in the Quality Management Policy, which creates great potential for improvements. A kind of survival or promotion plan for the study programme should be expected when integrating the Malnava College quality assurance system with the system of the LLU after merging with them. The experts noted that the College has integrated standards and guidelines of Part 1 of the ESG for internal quality assurance in the study process and has determined aims and measures, which are integrated into a joint quality assurance system in order to improve the performance of the relevant study programmes of the study field and the College is taking relevant steps to achieve this goal.

Strengths:

1. Staff awareness of the quality management importance and introduced EFQM procedures for the study programme improvements.
2. Existing feedback collecting system and procedures for the analysis of the feedback.
3. Students awareness about the quality management system.

Weaknesses:

1. Relatively slow reaction to feedback and system of implementation of changes.
2. Relatively weak involvement of the graduates and employers in the quality management system.
3. Unclearly defined measures and KPI-s assessing the implementation and effect of the quality system into the improvement of the study programme.

3. Resources and Provision of the Study Field

Analysis

The Malnava College has developed a system to determine the financial resources required for the implementation of the study field and the relevant study programmes. The sources of funding for the College and study programme are specified in the regulations of Malnava College. Based on the agreement between the Ministry of Education and Malnava College on the training of specialists from the state budget, the Protocol to the Agreement No. 2 (31.01.2019) has defined a state budget grant, which is divided into study programs. The Malnava College funding for the reporting period is shown in SAR. There are three main financial sources - government grants for higher education, EU Structural Funds, and own revenue. The main use of funding is remuneration and social contributions, goods and services, the creation of fixed capital, and scholarships. According to SAR, the provision of financial resources is stable, but insufficient (SAR, Description of the Study Direction (3. Resources and Provision of the Study Direction)).

There is no system for financing the scientific research activities in place, as it is stated in SAR, that no funds were allocated for research purposes during the reporting period (SAR, Description of the Study Direction (3. Resources and Provision of the Study Direction)). As there is no such system, it is impossible to evaluate its efficiency.

The Experts recommend to create a system for financing scientific or practical research by redistributing existing remuneration funds as part of the academic staff motivation system. Experts also recommend seeking additional funding by applying to National and EU projects as an Agency of LLU.

According to SAR and Expert's visit to the premises, the College has identified the infrastructure resources and the material and technical provision required for the implementation of the study field. There are Work Laboratory of Locksmiths, Turning and Milling Laboratory, Car Construction Laboratory, Car Repair Laboratory, Internal Combustion Engine Construction Laboratory, and Car Electrical Equipment Laboratory, and they are available for the College (SAR, II - Description of the Study Direction (3. Resources and Provision of the Study Direction, 3.2; Expert's group visit to the laboratories).

The students and the Academic staff have access to the provided technical resources. During the interviews students and graduates admitted and also during the visit to the laboratory it was observed that students have the necessary support from lecturers and the ability to use laboratories for practical activities and additional studies and even for extracurricular student activities (Expert's group visit to the laboratories, interviews with Academic staff and students).

Technical training equipment is sophisticated and even unique (diesel injector station), allowing legacy vehicles (mostly vehicles with diesel injection pumps, EURO 3 emission norms, or inferior) to be mended and studied at a high level. Basic technology examples are available and actual but it was observed that there is only one permanently available training vehicle – Volkswagen Jetta. Other vehicles used for the training are borrowed from elsewhere (Expert's group visit to the laboratories). If equipment planning would be in place, experts would suggest acquiring the latest technology demonstration vehicle from the manufacturer – either hybrid or with driving assistant functions, not necessarily roadworthy. This can be planned with the help of manufacturer representatives. Experts also suggest future work as an Agency of Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies (LLU) might open opportunities to borrow/exchange training vehicles and expand student experience, possibly even jointly purchasing training vehicle(s) with the latest technology drivetrains, equipment, or other significance. It could also be useful to have access to LLU scientific support, laboratories, and, especially, libraries to expand Malnava College student learning opportunities. Equipment can and should be updated, focusing on new technology items and, especially genuine car manufacturer databases. According to the Expert's group, technical study provisions are basically sufficient for the current version of the study programme, but some equipment is outdated. Experts agree that aligning the study programme with the new Profession Standard PS-203 and current developments of the automotive industry will require update and upgrade of technical study provisions.

Description of existing study environment infrastructure is provided in SAR (SAR, II - Description of the Study Direction (3. Resources and Provision of the Study Direction, 3.2).

According to the Experts, it wasn't possible to identify a clear methodology and planning of all kinds of resource acquisition and maintenance of existing provisions (SAR, Expert's group interviews with academic staff and management). The new principal of Malnava College has significant administrative experience as Chairperson in "Rezeknes speciālā ekonomiskā zona" (Annexes, CV.docx). Becoming an Agency of LLU could result in improvements in resource planning (<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/324682-par-malnavas-koledzas-reorganizaciju>).

Meanwhile, the Experts suggest that needs analysis should be carried out based on the latest industry developments, which, in turn, should be identified in the scope of lecturer development, courses, or Latvian car park tendency reports (Latvian Automotive Association reports as an example).

Experts also recommend that current material-technical inventory running and costs should be also analyzed and reviewed, like maintenance costs of technical resources, notably laboratory equipment with maintenance plans.

The Expert's group recommends to set up procurement and needs analysis systems for developing material and informative provisions.

The process of selection and admission of lecturers at Malnava College is determined by IR "Regulations on Academic and Administrative Positions of Malnava College" (SAR, II - Description of the Study Direction (3. Resources and Provision of the Study Direction)). Academic personnel is skilled and motivated to work in Malnava College as the institution provides unique job opportunities for the region, most of them are locals and employed for years (Experts group interview with Academic staff, Annexes, VV.docx). As explained by the College management, the College would launch a hiring campaign to fill potential lecturer vacancies (Experts group interview with management). Employed lecturer CVs are proving their competencies and selection qualities (Annexes, CV.docx).

As reported by Malnava College their lecturers have a workload rate of 0,1 to 0,52 (one lecturer is 0.52, for three lecturers 0.35-0.45, for six lecturers 0.2-0.35, and for other lecturers 0.1-0.19). At the time of preparing the self-assessment report, there is no full-time lecturer in the study direction. Experts found no research workload allocated for academic staff (AIKA Annexes, Additional information after visit answ._MK_M_1.1.docx, SAR, II - Description of the Study Direction (3. Resources and Provision of the Study Direction)).

Experts agree that the academic and research workload of the Academic staff is unbalanced.

The Expert's group recommends to allocate financial resources and assign workload dedicated to practical research for academic staff as part of the motivation and remuneration system.

The Experts agree that the College has developed and implements and complies with the procedures for attracting highly-skilled Academic staff for the study field and the study programme "Automotive Transport".

According to SAR, the College management organizes regular meetings to discuss staff needs and observations. Malnava College also encourages and supports lecturers to participate in seminars, congresses, courses. Lecturers have participated in pedagogic and didactic development classes, they communicate with Riga Technical College who provide a very similar study programme (SAR, II - Description of the Study Direction (3. Resources and Provision of the Study Direction)). Collaboration, competition with Riga Technical College is evident in karting competition events organized by LMT Autosporta Akadēmija (<http://karsava.lv/malnavas-koledza-turpina-dalibu-lmt-autosporta-akademijas-skolu-kartinga-kausa-otraja-sezona/>).

At the same time, when the Experts reviewed lecturer CVs, they found that professional development courses during reporting period could be identified only for three lecturers, and those courses were mostly pedagogical. (Annexes - CV.docx). There is no evidence of profession-related lecturers participating in the industry-organized training apart from sales presentations in the region (Annexes - CV.docx). The Experts could not confirm that the needs of the Academic staff for professional and didactic improvement are identified and fulfilled in a target-oriented manner. It can also be said that appropriate improvement measures have not been undertaken for most of the Academic Staff, and the outcome and efficiency of the implemented measures are not assessed.

The Experts recommend to develop a system for professional and didactic improvement and its periodical assessment. The Experts suggest kindly request assistance from LLU in the matter of professional and didactic improvement when the College becomes an Agency of LLU.

According to SAR, only one lecturer has participated in outgoing mobility. There have been no guest lecturers from abroad ((SAR, II - Description of the Study Direction (3. Resources and Provision of the Study Direction), interviews with academic staff). Experts conclude that Academic staff mobility is very limited, which fails to bring added value to the implementation of the study process and the study quality. Experts agree that it could be likely due to lack of English language knowledge and

this is projected to many other aspects, especially in planning – staff lack experience and knowledge on latest trends, technology, and creative methodology (Expert's group interviews with academic staff).

The Experts recommend to encourage outgoing mobility by creating a motivation system that benefits Academic staff who successfully participated in mobility. Experts also recommend providing English language training for Academic staff, as the lack of foreign language skills makes mobility practically impossible. Experts also recommend for Management of the College to actively seek international mobility partners in EU countries, using the Erasmus+ framework (<https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/>).

The college support system for the students is well documented in SAR. The system is involving psychological support; informational support; instructional support and career support each of which has defined content according to the objective and subjective needs of the students and the students are aware of the support options as revealed during the interviews. The responsibilities in the support system are well defined ((SAR, II - Description of the Study Direction (3. Resources and Provision of the Study Direction)). Both the full-time and part-time students were in general satisfied with the support system and confirmed that it is based on the needs of the students (Expert's group interviews with students).

Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

The Malnava College has developed a system to determine the financial resources required for the implementation of the study field and the relevant study programmes. According to SAR, the provision of financial resources is stable but insufficient.

There is no system for financing the scientific research activities in place. The College has identified the infrastructure resources and the material and technical provisions required for the implementation of the study field. The students and the Academic staff have access to the provided technical resources. According to the Expert's group, technical study provisions are basically sufficient for the current version of the study programme, but some equipment is outdated. Technical training equipment is sophisticated and even unique but focused on the technologies of legacy vehicles. Experts agree that aligning the study programme with the new Profession Standard PS-203 and current developments of the automotive industry will require an update and upgrade of technical study provisions. Experts also suggest future work as an Agency of Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies (LLU) might open opportunities to borrow/exchange training vehicles and expand student experience, possibly even jointly purchasing training vehicle(s) with the latest technology drivetrains, equipment, or other significance. It could also be useful to have access to LLU scientific support, laboratories, and, especially, libraries to expand Malnava College student learning opportunities.

According to the Experts, it wasn't possible to identify a clear methodology and planning of all kinds of resource acquisition other than maintenance of existing provisions.

Academic personnel is skilled and motivated to work in Malnava College as the institution provides unique job opportunities for the region. The Experts agree that the College has developed and it implements and complies with the procedures for attracting highly-skilled Academic staff for the study field and the study programme "Automotive Transport". Experts found no research workload allocated for academic staff, therefore the academic and research workload of the teaching staff is unbalanced. There is no evidence of profession related lecturers participating in the industry organized training apart from sales presentations in the region (Annexes - CV.docx). The Experts

could not confirm that the needs of the Academic staff for professional and didactic improvement are identified in a target-oriented manner. It can also be said that appropriate improvement measures have not been undertaken for most of the Academic Staff, and the outcome and efficiency of the implemented measures are not assessed.

According to SAR, only one lecturer has participated in outgoing mobility. There have been no guest lecturers from abroad. Experts conclude that staff mobility is very limited, which fails to bring added value to the implementation of the study process and the study quality. Experts agree that it could be likely due to lack of English language knowledge and this is projected to many other aspects, especially in planning – staff lack experience and knowledge on latest trends, technology and creative methodology. The college has developed a support system for the students. The system is involving psychological support; informational support; instructional support and career support each of which has defined content according to the objective and subjective needs of the students and the students are aware of the support options as revealed during the interviews.

Strengths:

1. The Malnava College has developed a system to determine the financial resources
2. The provision of financial resources is stable.
3. Students have the necessary support from lecturers and the ability to use laboratories for practical activities and additional studies and even for extracurricular student activities.
4. Future work as an Agency of Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies (LLU) rises hope for opportunities to borrow/exchange training vehicles and training equipment and expand student experience.
5. Becoming an Agency of LLU could result in improvements in resource planning.
6. Academic personnel is skilled and motivated to work in Malnava College.
7. By becoming an Agency of LLU the College can request and receive assistance from LLU in the matter of professional and didactic improvement.
8. The college has developed a support system for the students according to the objective and subjective needs of the students and the students are aware of the support options.

Weaknesses:

1. There is no system for financing the scientific research activities in place, and no funds are allocated for research purposes.
2. Technical training equipment is focused on technologies of legacy vehicles and is outdated in respect of current developments of the automotive industry.
3. There are no clear methodology and planning of all kinds of resource acquisition and then the maintenance of existing provisions.
4. The academic and research workload of the Academic staff is unbalanced.
5. The needs of the Academic staff for professional and didactic improvement are not identified and fulfilled in a target-oriented manner.
6. Academic staff mobility is very limited, which fails to bring added value to the implementation of the study process and the study quality.

4. Scientific Research and Artistic Creation

Analysis

The development aims of Malnava College are defined in two Strategy Papers, one for the time frame 2015 – 2020, and the other for years 2021 – 2027. Both papers are published on the College website, in Latvian: Malnavas koledžas attīstības stratēģija 2015.-2020. gadam (further mentioned as SP 2015-2020); Malnavas koledžas attīstības stratēģija 2021.-2027. gadam (further mentioned as SP 2021-2027). The development aims for the study field are briefly stated in the Self-Assessment

Report 2020, which is published on the College website (SAR, p.14).

In Strategy Paper 2015 – 2020 of Malnava College, development aims for scientific research are weakly stated. The list of existing and planned Cooperative Agreements with other Higher Education Institutions (HEI), both national and international, are presented. Participation and co-working in research, as well as participation in Scientific conferences, are planned with some national HEI (SP 2015-2020, p. 15).

In Strategy paper 2021 – 2027 for Malnava College, 4 priorities are stated (SP 2021-2027, pp.11-12). Two of them contain actions, which can be related to research:

1st priority - Highly qualified, competent, and representative-oriented educators and academic staff / Action: Training, recruitment, and development of teachers and academic staff

4th priority - Sustainable and efficient education system and resource management / Action: Research and evidence-based, user-centred education policy

As for the first priority and corresponding action, the Expert's opinion is that training and development of academic staff for research activities should be stated in detail and implemented.

Research fields - automotive transport and commercial marketing - are defined in Operational Rules (Regulation of Cabinet of Ministers Nr 367, section 7.4, <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/134797-malnavas-koledzas-nolikums>) of Malnava College and they are relevant to the study field and the industry. The development aims of Malnava College, as stated in Strategy Papers, are less clearly relevant to the aforementioned research fields. Scientific research fields, as defined in Malnava College Operational Rules are broadly related to the study field and process. The research fields are not specified clearly in the Strategy Papers of Malnava College (SP 2015-2020, SP 2021-2027).

According to the Self-Assessment Report (submitted to AIKA), there has been no international cooperation in research during the reporting period (SAR, section 4.3).

Strategy paper 2021 – 2027 includes support for internationalization (Priority 2, “A modern, high-quality and high-skilled supply of educational services oriented towards the development of skills in the labor market”) (SP 2021-2027, p. 13). Aims for the improvement of international cooperation for scientific research are not clearly stated in the Strategy Paper and Self-Assessment Report (SP 2021-2027, SAR). One of the basic requirements for international cooperation with EU partners in research is proficiency in English. Analysis of academic staff CV's and outcomes of assessments visit discussions reveal that only a few members of academic personnel can freely communicate in English and access specialty literature in English, which is the main language within the international and EU academic community (Annexes - CV, Experts group's interviews with academic staff). According to Expert's group, to improve international cooperation, College academic staff should first improve their English skills. Experts suggest having a personal English language improvement plan for each teacher supported by the College management. Research activities should be proposed and developed, cooperating internationally.

The College supports the research and creative activities of academic staff by providing an attractive and supportive working environment. The buildings are in good condition, and laboratories are well equipped for practical research. The Welding laboratory has various welding systems and materials. The Automotive Repair laboratory is equipped with an exhaust gas analyzer and modern diagnostic systems for diesel injectors and high-pressure pumps (as seen during the Experts group's visit). The College Library can provide access to the EBSCO Research Platform (AIKA Annexes - Additional information after visit answ).

Malnava College will become an Agency of Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies (LLU) on January 2022 (<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/324682-par-malnavas-koledzas-reorganizaciju>).

Experts recommend that by becoming an Agency of LLU, access to different IT tools and scientific databases and platforms (Scopus, Web of Science, etc.), should be requested and gained.

According to the paper “Salaries of a first level higher education academic staff of Malnava College (Internal Rules Nr 9.24, <https://malnavaskoledza.lv/pages/studentiem.html>), duties of academic staff

- lecturer and assistant include the teaching of study courses and/or research work (<https://malnavaskoledza.lv/pages/studentiem.html>). Preparation and organisation of research conferences are also considered a work task. Also in the same paper, visiting assistant professors and visiting lecturers are not considered academic staff but rather “other pedagogical personnel”. A basic formal framework that supports research and creative activities of academic staff exists in Malnava College though a clear strategic plan for the improvement wasn’t noticed in the report. No funds were allocated for research purposes during the reporting period (SAR, Description of the Study Direction (3. Resources and Provision of the Study Direction)). Experts recommend defining and implementing financial support for the research work of academic staff.

Analysis of academic staff CV’s and Expert’s team’s interviews showed that the largest part of academic staff is young and enthusiastic about their work. They are active within their labs - automotive electronics, metalworking, and automotive design (Annexes - CV, Expert’s team’s interviews with academic staff, Expert’s team’s visit to the labs). According to the Expert’s opinion, encouragement and motivation could help them start research activities.

Measurable results of scientific research are peer-reviewed publications in scientific journals and conference proceedings and reports in scientific conferences. In the paper “Publications” there is a long list of 75 scientific publications. The academic staff of Malnava College aren’t authors of them and a considerable part of the publications are more than 5 years old. All the publications in the list are authored or co-authored by visiting lecturers (Annexes - Publications). There are no statements in the publications that the research was performed in Malnava College. More to it, Malnava College is not listed as affiliated to the author (visiting lecturer) in the headings of the scientific papers (<https://www.scopus.com>). According to the Experts group, the publications list should be amended, to include only research and authors that are directly related to Malnava College during the assessment reporting period. In this case, it might involve deleting invalid documents - Annexes - Publications.

Experts group opinion is that existing mechanisms for involvement of the academic staff in the research activities are dysfunctional and inefficient, as there are no measurable scientific activities or results.

Experts recommend College to kindly ask visiting lecturers from LLU to collaborate with academic staff and students on scientific work and get involved in practical research. Some parts of the research should be done in Malnava College. The results should be peer-reviewed and published in indexed scientific proceedings or journals. Experts strongly advise to clearly show in publications that the authors (Academic staff) are affiliated to Malnava College. The Experts hope that future work as an Agency of Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies (LLU) might create new opportunities to begin collaboration in research activities.

The Experts recommend to actively seek collaboration with LLU and use the experience and resources of the University to help start work on practical research.

Students perform research during their studies and while writing qualification thesis (<https://malnavaskoledza.lv/pages/metodiskie-materiali-autotransports.html>). According to the Expert group’s interviews with academic staff, students and graduates, students can choose qualification thesis topics related to automotive transport, which are then approved by the thesis supervisor (Experts group’s interviews with students and academic staff). During Expert’s visit to the College laboratories and during the interviews, it became clear that students also participate in innovative creation. Students can participate in Welding coterie, where they learn practical and artistic skills. There is also a Go-kart team. Students can improve and repair two types of go-karts: with internal combustion and electrical propulsion. The College Go-kart team also participates in National Go-kart competitions. According to Experts’ discussions with academic staff, there is also an Automotive bodywork repair coterie (Experts group’s interviews with academic staff, visit to the facilities). There are also various artistic and sports activities

(<https://malnavaskoledza.lv/pages/interesu-izglitiba.html>). An essential interest from the students side was noticed during the interviews into the creative activities and especially into the innovative project work, which should be considered as an unused resource for the College to improve the teaching and research. Similar interest was noticed from the graduates and employers side to participate in this kind of projects as supervisors or supporters filling the gap between the conventional teaching and practical innovative research-related learning in student teams (Experts group's interviews with academic staff and students).

The Expert's group recommends involving graduates and industry employers in artistic and research activities as consultants.

Some qualification thesis results in electro-mechanical layouts of automotive systems with some artistic features. Students of Malnava College can voluntarily take part in creative activities but their participation in scientific research is very limited as is the case with the teachers (Experts group's interviews with academic staff).

Student conferences have not been organised in Malnava College, except for the yearly review of the Qualification Thesis. According to the Expert's group, mandatory review of the Qualification thesis is not a conference. Malnava College participated in a conference of students of the Latvian Association of Colleges on October 23, 2020 (AIKA Annexes - Additional information after visit answ). Expert's analysis of the conference programme reveals that only one publication is affiliated with Malnava College. Furthermore, this publication is not related to Automotive Transport (http://kolasoc.lv/LKA_rakstu_krajums.pdf).

Expert's group recommends organising national or international Student conferences, with requirements to publish abstracts. Recommended working language should be English. Preparation of conference abstract and report can be included in the curriculum in one or more study courses.

Participation in student conferences, organised by other HEI (LLU, Riga Technical University (RTU), etc.) is also recommended.

Malnava College has not introduced innovations in the research, yet there are several innovative digital solutions in the study process (Experts group's interviews with academic staff). The cornerstone is the e-learning environment, open-source e-learning platform Moodle. As Moodle itself is just a framework, the key to success is the creation of e-learning content. As it was shown during the visit to the Experts group, the e-learning content of several unrelated study courses was rich, orderly arranged in a similar style, and contained links to videos, lecture conspectus, presentations, and interactive tests. When asked about rules and centralised control over the Moodle content, the academic staff did not confirm that there are specific requirements or control from the management of the College (Experts group's interviews with academic staff). According to the Self-Assessment Report and the interviews, other e-learning platforms, such as Quizizz, Electude, Padlet, Google Classrooms are also in use (SAR, section 4.6).

Distance teaching and learning are essential nowadays. The College academic staff has used Google Meet, Cisco Webex, Zoom, Jitsi Meet, and Skype. Starting 2021, by decision of the College management, only Microsoft Teams is allowed to be used (SAR, section 4.6). The students have been issued College-assigned Microsoft accounts for secure and successful authentication. Limited access to today's electronic R&D technical databases was noticed and mentioned by the students during the interviews, which is considered as a limiting factor for R&D (Experts group's interviews with students).

The requirement to use only Microsoft Teams for online lectures was reported as problematic during the Experts group interviews with students. Users have difficulty using College issued Microsoft accounts. They claimed that internet bandwidth and user's hardware specification requirements are higher for MS Teams, compared to other online meeting tools. Users turned Expert group's attention that internet bandwidth in the rural environment sometimes is low, preventing stable connection to online lessons. Some students do not have the means to afford new and modern computers and smartphones (Experts group's interviews with students). At the same time, the number of PC-s in

the College is remarkable even though today's specialty-related technology simulation solutions and software used in teaching were not mentioned (Experts group's visit to lecture rooms).

The Expert's group recommends providing technical assistance and training for students on the use of Microsoft cloud-based products or reviewing the policies that enforce the use of MS Teams.

Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

The fields of scientific research - automotive transport and commercial marketing - are defined in the operational rules of Malnava College and they are relevant to the study field and the industry. Relation between scientific research and the study field has been defined in Strategy Papers and study course descriptions. At the same time, the relation between scientific research and the study process is only partially efficient, as only results and outcomes that can be related to research are Qualification thesis.

The research work is limited mainly at the student level, for it is a part of study activities and qualification thesis. There is no international cooperation in the field of scientific research. The reasons for the lack of international cooperation can be the absence of research work itself and weak knowledge of English among academic staff.

Scientific publications that are presented in Self-Assessment Report annexes are not related to Malnava College and its academic staff. The College provides an environment and some tools for practical research and supports scientific research by internal regulation (operational rules). There is no financial support for the research activities of the academic staff.

No measurable results, such as reports in scientific conferences or scientific publications have been produced.

Existing mechanisms for involvement of the academic staff in the research activities are dysfunctional and inefficient, as there are no meaningful scientific activities or results. The Experts hope that future work as an Agency of Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies (LLU) might create new opportunities to begin collaboration in research activities.

The College supports student artistic creation by organising various art and technical coteries. No involvement of students in scientific and research activities was noted, apart from the mandatory Qualification thesis. Also, no Student scientific conferences were organised or taken part in during the assessed period.

The College has included innovative digital solutions in the study process, such as Moodle e-learning system.

Strengths:

1. Research fields - automotive transport and commercial marketing - are defined in Operational Rules of Malnava College and they are relevant to the study field and the industry.
2. The college academic staff is relatively young and enthusiastic.
3. The facilities and tools for practical research are provided.
4. Becoming a Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies (LLU) Agency can improve access to information databases and IT tools.
5. Students and academic staff can participate in practical research and creative activities as the facilities and technical support are provided.
6. Future work as an Agency of Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies (LLU) raises hope for new opportunities to begin collaboration in research activities.
7. Innovative solutions in the study process within the e-learning system have been developed.

Weaknesses:

1. In Strategy Papers, development aims for scientific research are weakly stated.
2. Proficiency in English among academic staff is low.

3. International cooperation in research is not developed.
4. Scientific or practical research practices have not been developed.
5. No funds are allocated for research purposes.
6. Student conferences are not being organised.
7. Existing mechanisms for involvement of the academic staff in the research activities are dysfunctional and inefficient.
8. There are no measurable scientific activities or results.
9. The students are unable to fully use mandatory online teaching tools which are based on MS Teams.

5. Cooperation and Internationalisation

Analysis

Malnava College has developed the “2021-2027 Internationalization Strategy of Malnava College”, which stipulates that internationalization at Malnava College includes not only international traineeship and study mobility of students, academic staff, and pedagogical staff, but also strategic cooperation between two or more vocational education institutions, as well as the integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the main function of Malnava College - the implementation of vocational education programmes. In the future, Malnava College plans to intensively develop internationalization in study programmes, involving students there. The international cooperation of the College envisages diversification of the available network of cooperation partners. The strategy and the tasks for improving internationalization work are sufficient to achieve the aims and learning outcomes of the study field. However, it will have a positive effect only in the further period of the study field implementation.

According to SAR, only one lecturer has participated in outgoing mobility. There have been no guest lecturers from abroad ((SAR, section 3.6), interviews with academic staff).

There were not many international activities during the assessed period, still, Malnava College implemented the Interreg V-A Latvia-Lithuania cross-border cooperation program 2014-2020 project “INTERREG V-A 2014-2020 Latvia-Lithuania program project “Labour market without borders”/“MOBILITY”. The main target group of the project was the learners, students, and teachers of 8 educational institutions involved in the project, who improved their skills to meet the requirements of the cross-border labour market through participation in a cycle of in-service training for teachers and students in theoretical and creative workshops (SAR, section 5.1).

Malnava College has a well-developed and widespread local partner network that serves the development of the study field and the relevant study programme. Within the study field, the College cooperates with industry associations and companies. The forms of cooperation are various and are based on mutual cooperation in order to prepare new specialists for the growing needs of the labour market. Within the study field, there is active cooperation with employers. In recent years, employers themselves have made proposals for the establishment of long-term cooperation, because graduates and students of the study field are needed in the labor market. A total of 19 cooperation agreements have been concluded, incl. agreement with the Rezekne SEZ Authority, which unites 14 employers, and the Association of Agricultural Machinery Manufacturers and Traders, which unites 22 employers (SAR section 5.1). The main directions of cooperation that the College could develop are the provision of traineeships, review of qualification papers, participation in the work of the state final examination commission, assessment of students' knowledge, skills, and abilities, involvement of labour market representatives in improving the study process (updating study course content according to labour market needs), guest lectures, excursions. The College has developed and approved the “2021-2027 Internationalization Strategy of Malnava College” where the following activities are foreseen: to expand the number of international partners — cooperation with new partners has been commenced; to increase the number of mobilities — for students; to

increase the number of mobilities — for teachers, management and teaching staff; students are provided with quality traineeships in the best European companies; admission of foreign students; to accept foreign teachers (SAR, p. 52). These steps are in accordance with the study field priority 4 - to co-operate with related Latvian and foreign educational institutions and employers in the field of vocational education;

During the expert visit, the representatives of the labour market, as well as students and graduates, confirmed that the provided information is correct and the cooperation with local partners has been developed intensively. Using close cooperation with employers, Malnava College teachers improve the material and information base necessary for the implementation of the study programme (the information was provided during the meeting with administration and companies; (SAR section 5.1).

Malnava College cooperates with four higher educational institutions in Latvia: Riga Technical College, Rēzekne Academy of Technologies and Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies, Daugavpils University (SAR, Annex List of cooperation agreements). However, cooperation with foreign higher education institutions that implement similar study fields and study programmes should be developed and intensified. The College has provided a list of cooperation agreements with international HEI, however, they should focus more on West European countries. Also, the cooperation agreements are signed with vocational schools and centers, but for study field and study programme it would be more useful to have agreements with universities of applied sciences (SAR, Annex List of cooperation agreements). The experts recommend to sign cooperation agreements with universities of applied sciences.

The college website is only in Latvian (<https://malnavaskoledza.lv/>). It is recommended by the Experts to create English version of the College website to attract international students, academic staff and partners.

Students of the programme have the opportunity to participate in student exchange within the framework of the ERASMUS + program and bilateral cooperation programs. The first KA103 student study mobility project has been successfully approved. During the expert visit, students expressed a positive attitude towards mobility activities and confirmed that the College staff provided the information about mobility possibilities. Only one lecturer has participated in outgoing mobility (SAR). Students of the programme have the opportunity to participate in student exchange within the framework of the ERASMUS + program and bilateral cooperation programs. Taking into account the epidemiological situation in Latvia due to the pandemic, the ERASMUS+ program has not yet been implemented, and the College has extended the Erasmus + project No.2020-1-LV01-KA103-077413 for 8 months, within the framework of which student and faculty mobility is envisaged. During the reporting period, there was no recognition of courses acquired during outgoing mobility (SAR) and the College did not attract teachers or students from abroad. One of the reasons could be the requirements set in the procedure for attracting and/or employing the teaching staff: the requirement for foreigners to speak the state language at a sufficient level for the subject of study could serve as a limitation for foreigners to be employed (SAR, section 3.4). The Experts recommend to create a framework that allows to provide teaching in some study courses in English. However, the College has developed a system and procedures for the attraction of the teaching staff and students from abroad within the study field. Also, the College has a successfully approved Erasmus + project that will contribute to the improvement of the study process internationalization (SAR, section 5.2).

The organization of the traineeship work offered to students in the college is implemented in accordance with the “Regulations of Malnava College on the organization of the study and qualification traineeships”. The traineeship of College students is an integral part of the study process. The traineeship is implemented in accordance with the study programme plan. Based on the “Malnava College Regulations on the Organization of Study and Qualification Practice”, methodological guidelines have been developed for the preparation and defense of the Qualification Practice Report.

The traineeship is based on a triple agreement between the College, the traineeship company, and the student. For successful implementation of the traineeship, the traineeship manager is approved in the College and the person responsible for the traineeship in the company is determined. In order to provide traineeships, Malnava College has concluded cooperation agreements with the auto services cooperative society "Latraps", with the Rēzekne Special Economic Zone Authority, "NORDEKA", Individual merchant "SĀTA", "VELS" Ltd, "EZ1" Ltd, "Niktransports" Ltd, economic operator Vilnis Paršovs, "Janka XXL" Ltd, Economic operator Oskars Orste (SAR, Annex List of cooperation agreements). The representatives of companies have emphasized a good level of student's knowledge and skills that they demonstrate during the traineeship and employment and many companies offered later job for the students. This information was confirmed during the interviews with the representatives of employers, academic staff, and students.

Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

The College cooperates with institutions from Latvia and to a limited extent abroad within the study field, and such cooperation contributes to the study field priority 4 - to co-operate with related Latvian and foreign educational institutions and employers in the field of vocational education. The cooperation partners are selected in view of the automotive transport and automotive service study field and the relevant study programme. However, the College has not yet developed a sufficient system and procedures for the attraction of the teaching staff and students from abroad within the study field. A common system for the provision of traineeships and the organization thereof has been developed within the study field.

Strengths:

1. Malnava College has established cooperation with institutions in Latvia and such cooperation contributes to the study field priority.
2. The cooperation partners are selected in view of the study field of automotive transport and automotive service and the relevant study programme.
3. The companies are satisfied with the knowledge and skills of the students of the study programme, a well-developed network of local partners offers traineeships for students and later - jobs for graduates.
4. A well-documented system organizing and reporting the traineeship, as well as cooperation with local companies.

Weaknesses:

1. International cooperation is focused more on limited number of vocational schools, there are only a few agreements with schools in the EU.
2. There is no incoming and limited outgoing mobility, as for academic staff and also for students.
3. The system or mechanisms which are used by the College to attract the students and the teaching staff from abroad have not been efficient.
4. The implementation of studies only in the Latvian language is an obstacle to attracting teaching staff from abroad.
5. The college website is only in Latvian.

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

Analysis

The main outcomes and recommendations from the previous College assessment report of the year 2011 were as follows:

The report states that the College has developed an infrastructure and study materials and have made a suitable environment for the study process. The Self-Assessment Report and experts visit showed considerable development of the infrastructure and especially development of new e-learning course materials in the Moodle platform, which should be considered as a general positive indicator. Laboratory equipment has been improved and e-learning materials support respective laboratories and practical works. Some infrastructure elements are still behind today's technology development. Attention is needed for access to new R&D and professional electronic databases and some laboratories equipment related to greener automotive technology development and electric cars technologies.

General areas of concern in the previous assessment report were: academic staff involvement in research and staff ability to use the English language for teaching and reading the newest professional literature as well as student activity and creative work.

As a result of the College visit, interviews and reading the Self-Assessment Report and the document "REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS" the experts consider that almost the same concerns are still valid, however, some improvements were noticed. The presented list of the College and study programme teachers publications is not sufficient in the sense that real participation of the College teachers and students is hard to notice. Most of the R&D activities are related to visiting lecturers or out-of-school activities. The report and interview results state some steps towards improving teachers' English language knowledge through ERASMUS+ visits to some other countries or through some other training activities but the effect seems to be insufficient and systematic English training was not mentioned. During the interviews both - teachers and students agreed that in most cases students' English skills are higher than teachers'. Employers emphasised the importance of teachers knowing the English language for getting acquainted with the newest professional literature. The College management's active involvement in organizing English language training for teachers wasn't noticed, but that should be considered as strongly advised. During the interviews students and graduates expressed great interest in more creative and innovative project work during their studies, especially in combination with obtaining entrepreneurial skills.

Therefore the main concerns from the previous assessment report are still valid.

Previous assessment report states that "The experts still recommend defining learning outcomes in a more structured way." The Self-Assessment Report and Descriptions of Study Courses and Programme show some improvements in defining the learning outcomes more clearly but the overall and systematic structure of sequence and mutual effects of the outcomes still isn't very clear. If improved it could help students to progress in their studies and to reduce the drop-out rate. Also, it would help teachers if there is a clear sequential and mutual effect demonstrating structure of the learning outcomes. On the other hand, the association of the learning outcomes and content of the courses with the R&D is lacking due to insufficient running of R&D activities.

The laboratories infrastructure deserves acknowledgement but there isn't enough discussion of future plans for the speciality related laboratory infrastructure development. Experts expect the plans how the merging with the LLU could qualitatively improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the speciality and study programme related infrastructure development and/or use of it.

From the point of sustainability, the previous assessment report stated "concerns which are connected to academic staff involvement in research and creative work. There is space for improvement in research and creative activities. Nevertheless, students should be more active in these kinds of activities and could be more encouraged." On the other hand, it was stated in the previous assessment report "The content and implementation of the study programme ensure its sustainable development and meet the four main aims of higher education." Therefore the key factor for sustainability should still be considered as an improvement of R&D activity and involvement of students in it and dissemination of the respective activity results.

Previous assessment report mentioned cooperation as the main problem of the teachers' insufficient

English language skills. The document “LIST OF COOPERATION AGREEMENTS” lists a number of collaboration agreements. Malnava College has institutional level collaboration agreements only with Latvian, Lithuanian, Russian and Belarus educational institutions, which experts consider insufficient for international collaboration development. At the same time involvement in ESF and ERASMUS+ projects has increased.

Numerous e-learning courses are developed and introduced in Moodle platform through the experts could not notice how this had an influence on the student mobility and exchange options during the reporting period. The Self-Assessment Report mentions that only one lecturer has participated in outgoing mobility. Taking into account the epidemiological situation in Latvia due to the pandemic, the College has extended the Erasmus + project No.2020-1-LV01-KA103-077413 for 8 months, within the framework of which student and faculty mobility is envisaged. Mobility activities for students and academic staff have only just started. In order to promote the incoming and outgoing mobilities of students, the “2021-2027 Internationalization Strategy of Malnava College” has been developed and approved. During the reporting period, there was no recognition of courses acquired during outgoing mobility and the student mobility is still very low.

During the experts' visit to the laboratories, some of the laboratories introduced options for the student creative/innovative activities (car diagnostics laboratory, welding laboratory) but most of the students and graduates mentioned during the interviews that they would be interested in more creative work/activities related to the study field. The welding laboratory has many welding workplaces for the students with today's welding equipment available and the diagnostic laboratory is spacious enough with certain diagnostic equipment. On the other hand, many laboratories lack modern equipment (electric and hybrid car systems and components, modern automotive sensors and autonomous driving equipment elements, etc), which was noticed by the experts during the laboratories visits. It became evident from the interviews of the teachers and the Head of the Study Programme that the options for creative team projects in the framework of the programme are missing. The employers and graduates mentioned during the interviews that combining the creative team projects with traditional learning methods could raise the interest of the students and increase the efficiency of the learning process. During the interviews, the employers and graduates expressed clear interest to be involved more delivering interesting quest lectures and proposing and supporting creative project topics for the students and the students showed clear interest in having more creative project work introduced into the programme and especially introducing project work focusing on creativity and entrepreneurship.

The College has introduced the document “2021-2027 Development and Investment strategies of Malnava College” but this is for the coming period and was introduced only a year ago. On the other hand, the Report does not include a plan on how to develop laboratory bases further and make the more effective use after merging with LLU. The College Quality Management Policy defines the feedback system but the document is also quite recently approved at the College to assess how it is working in long term. During the interviews, many teachers and students mentioned that personal feedback works best and fastest to help improve courses and the study programme. This shows great personal trust between the students and teachers on the one hand but on the other hand, options to improve the efficiency of the College standard study feedback system. The graduates and employers stated during the interviews that they would like to see faster and more effective reactions of the study programme development on the technology trends and changes in company needs.

The recommendations from the previous assessment report were:

1) Continue Auto transport study program.

Fully implemented

2) Create a plan on how to improve student mobility in terms of e-learning accessibility and exchange possibilities, if available.

Partially implemented

3) Provide wider possibilities for creative work connected with the study field.

Partially implemented

4) Plan getting modern diagnostics equipment and tools to raise laboratory base in the higher research and creative level.

Partially implemented

5) Develop an efficient feedback system that provides feedback opportunities at least once every year.

Partially implemented

Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

Experts concluded that the Malnava College has worked to fulfill the recommendations but there are still problems with the students' mobility and exchange programs. During the reporting period, there were only a few outgoing mobility instances.

On the other hand, the e-learning system has made a great step towards and improved. There were some good examples of the student creative works in some laboratories (for example, welding laboratory) and student club activities but the students and employers would expect even more creative and innovative project work. Laboratories had some good modern equipment but lacked a clear study programme related plan on how to achieve a considerable jump in improving laboratories equipment or how to collaborate with the LLU or some other institutions to increase considerably the use of modern equipment.

Strengths:

1. Supportive and interested employers, graduates and companies, and specialty interested students.
2. Some relatively good laboratories (welding, diagnostics).
3. Enthusiastic and responsive academic staff and management of the College making first steps to plan some improvements, introduction of the documents "2021-2027 Development and Investment strategies of Malnava College" and " College Quality Management Policy".
4. Personal approach to the students and personal feedback plays an essential role.
5. Well developed e-learning course materials in Moodle

Weaknesses:

1. Problems with the teacher's English language skills.
2. Limited international collaboration and non-existing student mobility.
3. Lack of modern diagnostics equipment in the field of modern automotive technology (electric and hybrid cars, modern automotive sensors and autonomous driving equipment elements, etc)
4. Still insufficient options for students' creative and innovative project teamwork, weakly combined project-based and traditional teaching methods.

7. Assessment of the Requirements for the Study Field

- 1 R1 - Pursuant to Section 5, Paragraph 21 of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education, the higher education institution/ college shall ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study direction whilst implementing their internal quality assurance systems:

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

The improvement and development scheme is defined in these documents though the periodicity for assessing the efficiency is only once per year and the period for introducing the

improvements makes it even slower.

Efficient performance is determined by the satisfaction of the employers and students. The respective groups during the interviews mentioned that there are options to increase the efficiency. (Self-Assessment Report - Description of the Study Direction (2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System). Part 1.3. of the Self-Assessment Report: Description of the mechanism for the implementation of the quality policy and the procedures for the assurance of the quality of higher education. The document "Quality Management Policy of Malnava College").

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The College has introduced the Quality Management Policy and respective quality assurance system, which is an essential step for the study programmes continuous improvement. The feedback mechanisms and the study programme improvement formal procedures are defined and the teaching staff is aware of and follows the defined in the Quality Management Policy document procedures. Therefore it should be concluded that the College staff is aware of the procedures stated in the Quality Management Policy, which creates great potential for improvements. The experts noted that the College has integrated standards and guidelines of Part 1 of the ESG for internal quality assurance in the study process and has determined aims and measures, which are integrated into the joint quality assurance system in order to improve the performance of the relevant study programmes of the study field and the College is taking relevant steps to achieve this goal.

(Self-Assessment Report - Description of the Study Direction (2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System). Part 1.3. of the Self-Assessment Report: Description of the mechanism for the implementation of the quality policy and the procedures for the assurance of the quality of higher education. The document "Quality Management Policy of Malnava College"). Therefore it should be stated that the quality policy exists and the procedures are discussed in the respective document "Quality Management Policy" though the document "Student Statistics" does not show significant improvement of the study programme outcomes. Therefore the implementation of the procedures should be examined.

- 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: Partially compliant

Document "Study direction development plan". Self-Assessment Report p 61-62.

The procedures and periodicity of inspection are described but the internal assessment criteria for the inspection are unclear.

- 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 made public.

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Self-Assessment Report p.63-67.

The criteria and procedures are described in general terms and known for the students but a clear description of reassurance of the achievements of the learning outcomes is missing.

- 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

Self-Assessment Report p.72-73.

A sufficient description is provided in the Quality Management Policy. The teaching staff is aware of the document. Therefore it should be concluded that there has been created great potential for improvements. The College is taking relevant steps to assure the qualification of the academic staff defining the procedures in the respective documents (Self-Assessment Report - Description of the Study Direction (2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System). Part 1.3. of the Self-Assessment Report: Description of the mechanism for the implementation of the quality policy and the procedures for the assurance of the quality of higher education. The document "Quality Management Policy of Malnava College". Interviews with students and graduates and employers revealed the qualification of the academic staff is highly recognized. On the other hand, the mechanism to increase the specialty-related qualification that is not strictly defined in these documents and even not followed in practice as the research work of the academic staff is missing and professional practice in other academic institutions or High-Tech companies does not exist. Therefore it should be stated that the procedures are discussed in the respective document "Quality Management Policy" through practical implementation of the mechanisms is weak. Therefore the implementation of the procedures should be improved.

- 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

General procedures are described in the Self-Assessment Report. Students' satisfaction and feedback collecting once per year don't seem sufficient and fast enough to react to raising problems. Clear KPI-s definition and their assessment methodology are missing.

- 7 1.6. The higher education institution/ college shall ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study direction whilst implementing their quality assurance systems.

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Quality assurance system and development/ improvement procedures are described on a sufficient level in the Quality Assurance Plan and Self-Assessment Report. However, the descriptions do not convince that the procedures and results are efficient. The main reason for this Expert's group opinion is the feedback that the experts got during the interviews with graduates and employers. The reason for this might be also the fact that the Quality Management System was implemented not long ago at the College and does not give the full effect.

- 8 R2 - The cooperation with different organisations from Latvia and abroad implemented within the study direction ensures the achievement of the aims of the study direction.

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Collaboration with organisations in Latvia ensures the achievement of the aims of the study field. Due to weak international collaboration, the aims on the international level are not ensured (documents Cooperation Agreements, SAR section 5.1).

- 9 R3 - Compliance of scientific research and artistic creation with the development level thereof (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Non-compliant

Analysis of Self-Assessment Report and List of Publications introduced to the Expert's team reveal insufficient compliance. The research work is very limited or non-existing at all, only some qualification thesis of the students seems to qualify as research, which is insufficient. There is no international cooperation in the field of scientific research.

Scientific publications that are presented in Self-Assessment Report annexes are not related to Malnava College main teaching staff. The College has an environment and some tools for practical research and as declarations support scientific research by internal regulations (operational rules) though the research projects are not running. There is no financial support for the research activities of the academic staff.

No measurable results, such as reports in scientific conferences or scientific publications have been produced during the reporting period.

In the paper "Publications" there is a long list of 75 scientific publications. The main academic staff of Malnava College isn't the authors of them and a considerable part of the publications are more than 5 years old. All the publications in the list are authored or co-authored by visiting lecturers (Annexes - Publications). There are no statements in the publications that the research was performed in the Malnava College. More to it, Malnava College is not listed as affiliated to the author (visiting lecturer) in the headings of the scientific papers (<https://www.scopus.com>).

Existing mechanisms for involvement of the academic staff in the research activities are dysfunctional and inefficient, as there are no meaningful scientific activities or results.

The Experts hope that future work as an Agency of Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies (LLU) might create new opportunities to begin collaboration in research activities.

- 10 R4 - Elimination of the shortcomings and deficiencies identified during the previous assessment of the study direction, if it has been conducted, or the implementation of the provided recommendations.

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

The shortcomings mentioned in the previous assessment report are eliminated only partially and the main problems - English language skills, insufficient scientific and research work (R&D) - still exist (documents Joint Report of Experts on the Professional Study Programme in Auto Transport of the Malnava College 2012 and SAR section 6.1)

8. Recommendations for the Study Field

Short-term recommendations

Create an action plan how to benefit from merging with the Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies within 3 months.

Create clear criteria for the internal assessment of realization of the study programme development plan within 1 year.

Increase frequency of feedback and data analysis system within 6 months.

Increase involvement of the graduates and employers in the quality management system within 1 year.
To improve the performance of the study programme introduce clear realization measures and introduction of KPI-s and analysing these KPI-s dynamics within 1 year.
Create a system for financing scientific or practical research by redistributing existing remuneration funds as part of the academic staff motivation system within 6 months.
Seek additional funding by applying to National and EU projects as an Agency or within LLU within 1 year.
For future work as an Agency of Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies (LLU) use opportunities to borrow/exchange training vehicles with LLU within 1 year.
The needs analysis should be carried out based on the latest industry developments, which, in turn, should be identified in the scope of lecturer development, courses, or Latvian car park tendency reports within 1 year.
Current material-technical inventory running and costs should be analyzed and reviewed, like maintenance costs of technical resources, notably laboratory equipment with maintenance plans within 1 year.
Set up procurement and needs analysis systems for developing material and informative provisions within 6 months.
Allocate financial resources and assign workload dedicated for practical research for academic staff as part of the motivation and remuneration system within 6 months.
Develop a system for professional and didactic improvement and its periodical assessment within 1 year.
Kindly request assistance from LLU in the matter of professional and didactic improvement , when the College becomes an Agency of LLU, within 6 months.
Encourage outgoing mobility by creating a motivation system that benefits Academic staff who successfully participated in mobility within 1 year.
Management of the College should actively seek international mobility partners in EU countries, using the Erasmus+ framework within 1 year.
Clearly state development aims for scientific research in the Strategy papers within 6 months.
Practical research activities should be proposed and developed, cooperating internationally and nationally within 6 months.
Actively seek collaboration with LLU and use the experience and resources of the University to help start work on practical research within 6 months.
Define and implement financial support for the research work of academic staff within 6 months.
Organize national or international Student conferences, with requirements to publish abstracts. Recommended working language should be English. Preparation of conference abstract and report can be included in the curriculum in one or more study courses. To be implemented within 6 months.

Participate in student conferences, organised by other HEI (LLU, Riga Technical University (RTU), etc.) within 6 months.
Kindly ask visiting lecturers from LLU to collaborate with academic staff and students on scientific work and get involved in practical research within 6 months.
The research results of Academic staff should be peer-reviewed and published in indexed scientific proceedings or journals within 1 year.
Clearly show in publications that the authors (Academic staff) are affiliated with Malnava College within 1 year.
Provide technical assistance and training for students on the use of Microsoft cloud-based products or review the policies that enforce the use of MS Teams within 6 months.
The scientific publications list should be amended, to include only research and authors that are directly related and affiliated to Malnava College during the assessment reporting period until submitting accreditation papers.
Sign cooperation agreements with universities of applied sciences within 1 year.
More events (1-2 events) for mobility advertisement in the form of open seminars/student fairs for both students and teachers should be organized within 1 year by the Department of Studies and Research and Student Self Government.
Possibilities to read lectures and/or supervise the study projects in the English language should be developed and documented in order to attract foreign teachers within 6 months.
Create a framework that allows to provide teaching in some study courses in English within 1 year.
The full website in English for internationalization, collaboration, and student mobility should be available within 6 months.
College academic staff should improve their English skills. There should be a personal English language improvement plan for each teacher supported by the College management within 1 year.
Within 2 years increase options for students' creative and innovative project teamwork, combining project-based and traditional teaching methods.

Long-term recommendations

No long-term recommendations were given, as the Experts group propose to repeat the assessment - accreditation within 2 years.

II. "Automotive Transport" ASSESSMENT

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1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

The study programme "Automotive Transport" is a first level professional higher education programme that is preparing specialists for work in automobile repair facilities with the qualification

“car service specialist”. This programme corresponds to level 5 of the Latvian qualifications framework (AIKA eplatform, Study programme, Parameters). The study programme is intended to prepare automobile repair and maintenance specialists superior in job hierarchy to a car mechanic (AIKA eplatform, Study programme, SAR).

The programme addresses automobile construction and repair technique knowledge and qualification is delivered within 2,5 years for full-time studies and 3 years for Part-time extramural studies. The original study programme “Automotive Transport” was approved on 07 February 2002. and Malnava College previously was accredited to this programme on 29 May 2013. According to Malnava College student statistics, in total 122 students have graduated with the qualification “Car Service Specialist” (98 full time, 24 part-time) (AIKA eplatform, Study programme, Annexes, Compliance with educational standard.docx, Student statistics.docx).

The aims, objectives, learning outcomes are stated in Self Assessment Report and are interrelated with the name of the study programme and the professional qualification according to Profession Standard PS057. (SAR, III - DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME (AIKA eplatform, Study programme SAR, 1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme, Section 1.3)).

The problem is that Profession Standard PS057 is no longer in force, as it is replaced by the new Profession Standard PS-203, which has been approved on 15.12.2021. The new Profession Standard PS-203 is focusing not only on automobile repair knowledge but also on automobile repair and service facility legal compliance and economical validity (<https://registri.visc.gov.lv/profizglitiba/dokumenti/standarti/2017/PS-203.pdf>).

The main difference between previous and new Profession Standards is a change of focus from technical to managerial competencies. Malnava College recognizes it in its statement “Compliance of the study programme with the standard”, that the study programme should be corrected to comply with the new Profession Standard of Automotive Workshop Specialist. The changes in the study programme are not yet implemented (AIKA Annexes - Studiju programmas atbilstība standartamEN, p.3).

According to the opinion of the Expert’s group, significant corrections should be applied to the aims, objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme “Automotive Transport” to interrelate it with the new Profession Standard PS-203. (National Profession Standard PS0057, National Profession Standard PS-203).

The Experts also noted that interviewed graduates are working productively as car technicians, but not in administrative positions in their workplaces. This observation also indicated that existing study programme learning outcomes focus on technical aspects of automotive repair, and less on managerial competencies (Expert's group interviews with graduates).

The Experts suggest to rework the study programme “Automotive Transport” for it to comply with the corresponding Profession Standard PS-203 so that graduates can acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and competencies.

Admission requirements for the study programme “Automotive Transport” are defined as completed Secondary education (Malnava College website, <https://malnavaskoledza.lv/pages/uznemsana-1-limena-augstaka-profesionala-izglitiba.html> (in Latvian)). According to Expert's opinion, Admission requirements are interrelated with other indicators of the study programme “Automotive Transport” and according to Expert's group opinion, will remain interrelated also with the new professional standard.

Graduates as employees and students as apprentices are in demand in industry companies. That was confirmed during interviews of the industry employers, especially Latvian Road Traffic Directorate representative, that accented their legal requirement - yearly motor vehicle technical inspection inspectors are required to have at least a first-level higher education in the automotive transport study field (Expert's group interviews with the Employers).

Malnava College student statistics report indicates that in the automotive transport study field there has been a steady number of on-site students since 2013 - averaging 67 with a decline in 2020 and 2021 to 57 and 53 students respectively (AIKA eplatform, Study programme, Annexes, Student statistics.docx).

As Malnava College management explained to the experts, this is related to the general situation with the COVID-19 pandemic (Expert's group interviews with the College management).

Student dropout, however, is increasing from 0 in 2014 to 26 in 2020 (AIKA eplatform, Study programme, Annexes, Student statistics.docx). Here, interviewed students and lecturers admitted that dropout may be attributed to the steadily high demand of professionals in the industry where they had found jobs during their studies and made a decision not to focus on education anymore (Expert's group interviews with students and academic staff). The Experts suggest to create and implement a system to motivate the students to finish their studies and successfully graduate.

Interviewed students and graduates of the respective study programme with previous vocational education in the same study field, qualification "car mechanic" admitted that the professional training course part of the first level higher education programme "Automotive Transport" closely overlaps with their vocational learning experience. Also, students admitted that previous vocational education did not provide any measurable benefit when continuing their college studies (Expert's group interviews with students and graduates). The Experts suggest to adjust the content of the study programme "Automotive Transport", while aligning it to the new National Profession Standard PS-203, to avoid possible overlaps with the vocational study programme with the same name "Automotive Transport".

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The aims, objectives, learning outcomes are stated in Self Assessment Report and are interrelated with the name of the study programme and the professional qualification according to Profession Standard PS057, which is no longer in force. PS057 is replaced with new Profession Standard PS-203, which has been approved on 15.12.2021. The main difference between previous and new Profession Standards is a change of focus from technical to managerial competencies. Malnava College recognizes that the study programme should be corrected to comply with the new Profession Standard of Automotive Workshop Specialist but the changes are not yet implemented. Admission requirements are interrelated with other indicators of the study programme "Automotive Transport" and will remain interrelated also with the new professional standard.

The graduates are working productively as car technicians, but not in administrative positions. The number of on-site students is steadily decreasing. At the same time, automotive specialists are in high demand by employers and some students decide to drop out of studies and start to work.

Strengths:

1. Graduates are demanded in local enterprises.

Weaknesses:

1. The aims, objectives, learning outcomes are interrelated with professional qualification according to Profession Standard PS057, which is no longer in force.
2. The changes in the study programme to align it with the new Profession Standard PS-203 are not yet implemented.
3. Number of student dropouts increases over the past years.

2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

The study programme Automotive Transport was created to comply with National Profession Standard PS0057, which soon will be replaced by a newer Standard (Annex - Compliance with educational standard, p.1). The Standard PS0057 emphasizes that an Automotive Workshop Specialist can carry on Automobile Aftersales technical and repair operations him/herself. Additionally, the Specialist can manage the part of the enterprise that deals with Automotive Aftersales. (<https://registri.visc.gov.lv/profizglitiba/dokumenti/standarti/ps0057.pdf>) The new Profession Standard states that an Automotive Workshop Specialist shall develop a sequence of technological processes and a production organisation system. The Specialist should analyse the needs for the development of processes and products and for the elimination of technical solutions for non-compliance. She/he can also perform tests on equipment and safety equipment. The Specialist can plan, organise, manage, and monitor the work of other employees (<https://registri.visc.gov.lv/profizglitiba/dokumenti/standarti/2017/PS-203.pdf>). The main difference between previous and new Profession Standards is a change of focus from technical to managerial competencies. Malnava College recognizes in its statement "Compliance of the study programme with the standard", that the study programme should be corrected to comply with the new Profession Standard of Automotive Workshop Specialist (AIKA Annexes - Studiju programmas atbilstība standartamEN, p.3). According to the opinion of the Expert's group, significant corrections might be applied to the contents of the study courses related to management and interpersonal communication. It is possible that the amount of technical training in the study programme should be reduced (National Profession Standard PS0057, National Profession Standard PS-203).

Analysis of study course, traineeship, and qualification thesis descriptions showed that they contain the categories required by regulatory enactment, Law on higher education institutions, Section 56 (Metodiskie materiāli <https://malnavaskoledza.lv/pages/studentiem-metodiskie-materiali.html>, Annex - Descriptions of study courses, Augstskolu likums, <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/37967-augstskolu-likums>).

The categories of study course descriptions, compliant with regulatory enactment:

- definitions of the requirements for the commencement of the acquisition of the study course;
- determination of the aims for the implementation of the study course and the planned learning outcomes;
- outline of the content of the study course necessary for the achievement of learning outcomes, contain the study course calendar, mandatory and supplementary literature, indicate other sources of information;
- description of the organisation and tasks for the independent work of students;
- determination of the evaluation criteria of learning outcomes.

The study course descriptions are included in AIKA annexes (Annexes - Descriptions of study courses, 37 p.).

The study programme does not contain elective study courses, which are required by the Regulations of Cabinet 141. (<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/6397-noteikumi-par-pirma-limena-profesionalas-augstakas-izglitibas-valsts-standartu>, Annexes - Programm). The absence of elective study courses was confirmed also by the College answers to Expert's group follow-up questions (AIKA Annexes - Additional information after visit answ._MK_M_1.1). The Expert's group suggests including elective study courses in the study programme.

The analysis of the content of the study course descriptions revealed some problems. For instance, technologies of hybrid vehicles include higher voltage and smart energy management systems are not covered by existing study courses. Furthermore, the electrical propulsion and high voltage battery technologies are also not included. Expert's opinion is that automotive specialists, who are not familiar with electrical automobile design, diagnostics, and safe working procedures will have limited opportunities in the labor market.

The description of the content of study courses Physics, Logistics, Labor and environmental protection, Internal combustion engines, Technical operation and repair of cars, Structure of cars,

Legal regulation of business, Technical documentation Standards, Material studies and technology, Car consumables is approximate, not specific. It is not clear to the experts what is planned to be taught and what is the expected outcomes of those study courses. According to the Expert's group, a description of the content of study courses should be written in an extended way, clearly stating the teaching outline.

The content of the study course Labor and environmental protection does not contain topics on environmental hazards and protection, not in a broad sense, nor specific to the automotive industry (Annex - Descriptions of the study courses). According to the Expert's opinion, the content of this study course should be amended by adding specific content that will cover safety aspects specific to automotive direct current (DC) high voltage systems. In addition, environmental protection topics related to automotive workshop operations, like recycling of used parts and consumables, should be clearly stated and included in the study course.

The experts did not find that study courses Automotive electrical equipment and electronics, Technical maintenance and diagnostics of cars, Technical operation and repair of cars contain safety precautions, design, operation principles, repair and maintenance of hybrid or electric vehicles (Annex - Descriptions of the study courses). According to the expert's opinion, the content of the aforementioned study courses should be amended accordingly.

According to Experts, the lecturers should pay more attention to the development of knowledge in the field, especially on topics related to new technologies and challenges that are caused by climate change.

The study programme content should correspond more to the labor market needs, therefore the teaching material should be updated with new literature (Annex - Descriptions of the study courses/modules). The list of basic literature contains outdated sources in study course descriptions for Computer Studies, Physics, Engineering mechanics. In some study course descriptions, the list of basic literature sources is overly long. For instance: Communication – 1 Credit Point (CP), 10 sources, Structure of cars – 5 CP, 9 sources, Legal regulation of business – 1 CP, 5 sources, Metrology, tolerances, and fits – 2 CP, 8 sources, Material studies, and technology – 2 CP, 11 sources. In the study course Automotive electrical equipment and electronics, basic and additional literature sources are unrelated to the content, but in study course Basics of management, internet resources are either: 1) outdated, 2) non-working or 3) unrelated to the subject (Annex - Descriptions of the study courses). Expert's opinion is that the basic literature of those study courses should be updated and the list shortened for some courses.

Regarding the content of the study programme, it is the Expert's opinion that amendments and updates are required to become relevant and complementary to the aims of the study programme and ensures the achievement of the learning outcomes. Furthermore, the aims of the study programme are aligned with Profession Standard PS057, which was replaced by a new one PS203 on 15.12.2021. Also, the study programme only partially meets the needs of the automotive industry, where knowledge and skills regarding electrical vehicles are required. Some recent trends and scientific needs of the automotive industry - for instance, driving assistance, autonomous driving, high voltage battery system design and safety, electrical traction, are not met. Experts recommend that the content of the study programme should be updated to include topics relevant to recent developments in the automotive industry and scientific research related to it.

Study implementation and evaluation methods, stated in study course descriptions, are rather traditional. Active work in the classroom, timely performance of individual work, tests, and exams are listed and implemented (Annex - Descriptions of the study course, Experts group's interviews with academic staff, students, and graduates). Expert's opinion is that the methods themselves contribute to the achievements of aims of outcomes of study courses. The Experts reckon that the study implementation and evaluation methods might need to be adjusted to suit new or updated study courses to reach the aims of the study programme, set by the upcoming Profession Standard. During the visit, the Experts' group also noticed well-developed e-learning study courses in the

Moodle environment. According to Experts' group interviews with teaching staff and students, student-centered learning is also implemented. For instance, students can request additional information or new topics during theoretical lessons or additional time during practical training. Students mentioned study courses Basics of Management and Automotive Electrical Equipment and Electronics as examples of student-centered learning (Experts group's interviews with students).

According to the Self-Assessment Report, outcomes of a student, graduates, and employer surveys are used to improve and update the content of study courses and the study process. At the same time, during the interviews with students, graduates, and employers, the expert group got confirmation that only student surveys are conducted, sometimes by doing interviews over the telephone (Experts group's interviews with academic staff, students, and graduates). No written example of feedback and substantial change in the study course or programme was found by the Expert's group (SAR). Documenting surveys and their results, as well as resulting improvements of studies quality, is recommended by Experts.

Expert's group's interviews with the students revealed that students are well informed about the prospects of outgoing mobility, but are reluctant to take the opportunity. Existing commitments and global pandemic were stated as the main reasons for not taking mobility opportunities (Experts group's interviews with students). At the same time, students expressed that they would like to attend lectures provided by incoming mobility by local visiting lecturers (Experts group's interviews with students). At the same time, the graduates stated that they would be glad to provide short visiting lectures. The graduates admitted that they have never received invitations to provide visiting lectures in Malnava College (Experts group's interviews with graduates). The Expert's group recommends finding appropriate international mobility partners. Additionally, outgoing mobility should be encouraged among the students. Visiting lectures by industry professionals are also recommended.

According to Malnava College Internal Rules No 9.11. On the academic recognition of study courses at Malnava College, the learning outcomes achieved during the mobility are recognised. As there has been no incoming or outgoing student mobility within the reporting period, no academic recognition has been done (Annexes - Student mobility, 1p).

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The study course, traineeship and qualification thesis descriptions contain the categories required by regulatory enactment. The content is relevant to the outgoing Profession Standard and should be amended to match the new Profession Standard and developments within the industry. Environmental protection topics related to automotive workshop operations, like recycling of used parts and consumables are not covered in the study course description. Recent trends and scientific needs of the automotive industry - for instance, autonomous driving, high voltage battery system design and safety, electrical traction, are not met.

Elective study courses are not included in the study programme.

There are also numerous inaccuracies and shortcomings in study course content and literature lists. The description of the content of many study courses is approximate, not specific. The list of basic literature in study course descriptions contains outdated sources. Furthermore, in some study course descriptions, the list of basic literature sources is overly long.

The evaluation methods contribute to the achievement of aims. Student-centered learning and teaching are used.

According to SAR, the outcomes of student, graduate and employer surveys have been used to improve the study process. But no written example of feedback and substantial change in the study course or programme was found by the Expert's group.

Students are well informed about the prospects of outgoing mobility but are reluctant to take the opportunity. According to Malnava College Internal Rules No 9.11. On the academic recognition of

study courses at Malnava College, the learning outcomes achieved during the mobility are recognised. As there has been no incoming or outgoing student mobility within the reporting period, no academic recognition has been done.

Strengths:

1. Study course, traineeship and qualification thesis descriptions contain the categories required by regulatory enactment.
2. The new Profession Standard could motivate academic staff to update the study programme and study courses content.
3. Study implementation and evaluation methods contribute to the achievements of the aims of outcomes of study courses.
4. E-learning study courses in the Moodle environment are well developed.
5. Student-centered learning is used in some study courses.
6. Students are well informed about the prospects of outgoing mobility.
7. The learning outcomes achieved during the mobility are recognised by Malnava College Internal Rules No 9.11.

Weaknesses:

1. The study programme Automotive Transport was created to comply with National Profession Standard PS0057, which is replaced by newer Standard PS-203, making the study programme obsolete if it isn't appropriately updated.
2. Actual technical trends and systems, related to hybrid and electric vehicles are not included in study course descriptions.
3. Environmental hazards and protection, that is specific to the automotive industry, are not included in study course descriptions.
4. Elective study courses are not included in the study programme.
5. The description of the content of some study courses is approximate, not specific.
6. The list of basic literature for some study courses contains outdated sources. In some study course descriptions, the list of basic literature sources is overly long.
7. The study programme only partially meets the needs of the automotive industry, where knowledge and skills regarding electrical vehicles are required.
8. Some recent trends and scientific needs of the automotive industry - for instance, driving assistance, autonomous driving, high voltage battery system design and safety, electrical traction, are not met.
9. Existing study implementation and evaluation methods will become non-aligned with the amended study programme, when it is updated to meet the aims of the new Profession Standard.
10. No written example of feedback and substantial change in the study course or programme was found by the Expert's group.
11. There was no outgoing student mobility within the reporting period.
12. Lack of visiting lectures by industry professionals.

3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

The students and academic staff are provided with well-maintained buildings, lecture rooms and laboratories. The physical environment is well documented in Study Field Self Assessment Report. The lecture rooms and laboratories are located in two separate but nearby buildings, placed in well-maintained park. The lecture rooms are equipped with furniture for students and teachers, interactive whiteboards or projectors and other IT equipment for the purpose of ensuring the study process. Four rooms are equipped with computers for the needs of students. There is also a sports

arena and stadium with football, tennis, volleyball courts and jogging tracks.

(SAR, II - Description of the Study Direction (3. Resources and Provision of the Study Direction, 3.2; Expert's group visit to buildings). According to the Expert's group, the number and floor size of lecture rooms and laboratories are sufficient for the study programme, and they are tidy and well maintained.

According to SAR and Expert's visit to the premises, there are Work Laboratory of Locksmiths, Turning and Milling Laboratory, Car Construction Laboratory, Car Repair Laboratory, Internal Combustion Engine Construction Laboratory and Car Electrical Equipment Laboratory (SAR, II - Description of the Study Direction (3. Resources and Provision of the Study Direction, 3.2; Expert's group visit to the laboratories).

Equipment is sophisticated and even unique (diesel injector station), allowing legacy vehicles (mostly vehicles with diesel injection pumps, EURO 3 emission norms, or inferior) to be mended and studied at a high level. Basic technology examples are available and actual but it was observed that there is only one permanently available training vehicle – Volkswagen Jetta. Other vehicles used for the training are borrowed from elsewhere (Expert's group visit to the laboratories). If equipment planning would be in place, experts would suggest acquiring the latest technology demonstration vehicle from the manufacturer – either hybrid or with driving assistant functions, not necessarily roadworthy. This can be planned with the help of manufacturer representatives. Experts also suggest future work as an Agency of Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies (LLU) might open opportunities to borrow/exchange training vehicles and expand student experience, possibly even jointly purchasing training vehicle(s) with the latest technology drivetrains, equipment, or other significance. It could also be useful to have access to LLU scientific support, laboratories, and, especially, libraries to expand Malnava College student learning opportunities. Equipment can and should be updated, focusing on new technology items and, especially genuine car manufacturer databases. According to the Expert's group, technical study provisions are basically sufficient for the current version of the study programme, but some equipment is outdated. Experts agree that aligning the study programme with the new Profession Standard PS-203 and current developments of the automotive industry will require update and upgrade of technical study provisions.

The Malnava College Library collection consists of the study literature (textbooks) and other sources (reference publications, encyclopaedias, branch literature and fiction), as well as periodicals. The library is accessible for people with special needs. The premises are suitable for independent study and research work, as there are 6 stationary computers with Internet access and databases, with the possibility to print, scan or copy the necessary materials in both black and white and colour (SAR, II - Description of the Study Direction (3. Resources and Provision of the Study Direction)).

Current Malnava College library provisions respect of the reviewed study programme comprises mainly of textbooks in Latvian language (examples: Uldis Grunte, "Elektronika". Rīga. Jumava 2001.; V. Cikovskis, "Iekšdedzes Motori" Jumava, 2001) (Expert's group visit to the library). At the same time, some textbooks in English that are included in the study course description (for instance, study course "Internal combustion engines"), were not found by the Experts in the College library (Study Field SAR, Annexes, Expert's group visit to the library).

The Experts would advise to acquire more recent textbooks that are relevant to the automotive industry, in English and other EU languages. The Experts also suggest using opportunities provided by becoming LLU Agency. Changes in the study programme to align it with new Profession Standard PS-203 can create the need for new information sources and textbooks. According to Expert's group, there is a sufficient library collection in the Latvian language for the current version of the study programme but the collection of textbooks in English and other EU languages should be improved and aligned with study programme requirements (literature lists in study course descriptions).

Malnava College Library is using SBA (interlibrary loan), ALISE (Latvian library information system), Participates in the Joint Ludza region library catalogue, has access to LURSOFT (database), and EBSCO (international library databases) (SAR, II - Description of the Study Direction (3. Resources and Provision of the Study Direction)).

The Experts suggest investing more in literature and database licenses - locally available textbooks and databases, specific to the automotive field. The existing "Autodata" (automotive information database) provides only basic parameters and lacks specific repair or maintenance procedures that are essential in workflow management. The Experts did not find recent manufacturer-specific training and technical literature (SAR, II - Description of the Study Direction (3. Resources and Provision of the Study Direction, 3.2; Expert's group visit to the laboratories). The Experts suggest that almost all manufacturer-specific training and technical literature can be acquired in accordance with EU regulation 715/2007 (chapter III) "ACCESS TO VEHICLE REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE INFORMATION" (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A32007R0715>). Volkswagen Group manufacturers, as, for example, training vehicles, are providing this via ERWIN service (<https://erwin.volkswagen.de/>).

The sources of funding for the College and study programme are specified in the regulations of Malnava College.

Based on the agreement between the Ministry of Education and Malnava College on the training of specialists from the state budget, the Protocol to the Agreement No. 2 (31.01.2019) has defined a state budget grant, which is divided into study programs. The Malnava College funding for the reporting period is shown in SAR. There are three main financial sources - government grants for higher education, EU Structural Funds and own revenue. The main use of funding is remuneration and social contributions, goods and services, creation of fixed capital and scholarships. No funds were allocated for research purposes during the reporting period. According to SAR, the provision of financial resources is stable, but insufficient (SAR, Description of the Study Direction (3. Resources and Provision of the Study Direction)).

The College had successfully received EU Structural Funds for improvement of the material and technical base of the study program "Automotive transport" and increase the energy efficiency of the building, where studies in the programme take place (SAR, Description of the Study Direction (3. Resources and Provision of the Study Direction)).

The Experts agree that financial provision partially complies with the specific features and the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and create the prerequisites for the achievement of the learning outcomes. Experts also agree that to ensure a high-quality study process in the future, existing financial resources should be redistributed or more resources allocated to invest in relevant textbooks, vehicle manufacturer databases, to update technological training equipment, to organise and participate in scientific and student conferences and participate in international cooperation. It is also very important to motivate academic staff and students and finance their efforts in scientific or practical research.

Experts agree that College laboratories and their equipment, library premises and content and access to the EBSCO database could make practical research possible. On the other hand, local student or scientific conferences have not been organised during reporting period except for the yearly review of the Qualification Thesis. According to the Expert's group, mandatory review of the Qualification thesis is not a conference. Malnava College participated in a conference of students of the Latvian Association of Colleges on October 23, 2020 (AIKA Annexes - Additional information after visit answ). Expert's analysis of the conference programme reveals that only one publication is affiliated with Malnava College. Furthermore, this publication is not related to Automotive Transport (http://kolasoc.lv/LKA_rakstu_krajums.pdf).

According to SAR, no funds were allocated for research purposes during the reporting period (SAR, Description of the Study Direction (3. Resources and Provision of the Study Direction)).

Expert's group recommends organising national or international Student conferences, with requirements to publish abstracts. Recommended working language should be English. Preparation of conference abstract and report can be included in the curriculum in one or more study courses.

Expert's group also recommends to create a motivation system for academic staff and students to do research as well as allocate financial funds for research.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

According to the Expert's group, the number and floor size of lecture rooms and laboratories are sufficient for the study programme, and they are tidy and well maintained.

Technical study provisions are basically sufficient for the current version of the study programme, but some equipment is outdated. Experts agree that aligning the study programme with the new Profession Standard PS-203 and current developments of the automotive industry will require update and upgrade of technical study provisions.

Also, there is a sufficient library collection in the Latvian language for the current version of the study programme but the collection of textbooks in English and other EU languages should be improved and aligned with study programme requirements.

The Experts agree that financial provision partially complies with the specific features and the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and create the prerequisites for the achievement of the learning outcomes. Experts also agree that to ensure a high-quality study process in the future, existing financial resources should be redistributed or more resources allocated to invest in relevant textbooks, vehicle manufacturer databases, to update technological training equipment, to organise and participate in scientific and student conferences and participate in international cooperation. It is also very important to motivate academic staff and students and finance their efforts in scientific or practical research. College laboratories and their equipment, library content and access EBSCO database could make practical research possible. On the other hand, local student or scientific conferences have not been organised during the reporting period. Furthermore, no funds were allocated for research purposes during the reporting period. Scientific support partially complies with the specific features and the conditions for the implementation of the study programme.

Strengths:

1. Size and condition of buildings and surroundings, number and floor size of lecture rooms and laboratories are sufficient for the study programme.
2. Future work as an Agency of Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies (LLU) raises hope for new opportunities to acquire shared technical equipment and access to library resources and scientific support.
3. The College library is suitable for independent study and research work.
4. The College had successfully received EU Structural Funds for improvement of the material and technical base of the study program "Automotive transport" and increase the energy efficiency of the building.

Weaknesses:

1. Technical study provisions are outdated in respect of current developments of the automotive industry
2. The College has no access to car manufacturer-specific repair and process databases.
3. The College library lacks the latest textbooks in English and other EU languages.

4. No financial funds are allocated for research purposes.

4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

In the implementation of the study program, the number of lecturers with a Master's degree has increased (out of 16 lecturers, 12 have a Master's degree, one lecturer is studying for a Master's degree). Other lecturers have appropriate education in their field. 4 visiting lecturers with a doctoral degree are involved in the study process. The teaching staff has become 2,5 years younger with an average age of 49 years (SAR, section 4.1). The College values its academic staff and one of the strategic tasks of the College is to ensure regular professional development, methodological and consultative support of the academic staff, purposefully coordinating the involvement and cooperation of various parties (SAR, section 4.2). This helps to avoid the negative effects of the changes in the composition of the teaching staff.

The increased number of teachers with Masters degrees and invited teachers indicate the developed quality of the study program and its close connection to the real situation in the motor transport sector, as the teaching staff is not only academically educated in the fields corresponding to the study courses but also with professional experience, which is an important cornerstone of professional higher education (SAR, Annex Lecturers).

The qualification of the academic staff and visiting lecturers involved in the provision of the programme partially complies with the conditions and enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme implementation and the content of the study programme: pedagogical and professional qualification meet the requirements, but the competence and involvement in research activities should be improved. The analysis of teachers' CV, the information provided during the meetings with administration and teachers proves the staff's compliance with the requirements foreseen in the government regulations Law on Institutions of Higher Education.

One of the strategic tasks of the College is to ensure regular professional development, methodological and consultative support of the academic staff, purposefully coordinating the involvement and cooperation of various parties. Likewise, practical experience in the field of motor transport, as well as close cooperation with employers and strategic partner HEI is important. To achieve this, the College constantly encourages teachers to improve both professional and pedagogical qualifications (SAR, p. 43-44, section 3.5). The requirements and means for qualification improvement are clearly defined and supported, also financially (meeting with administration and teachers). The requirements for the academic staff development are 160 academic hours (including at least 60 contact hours) per pedagogical work term. Professional development must be certified by documents submitted by the academic staff and it may include appropriate international mobility, as well as participation in conferences, seminars, in-service training/traineeship, courses organized with the involvement of industry professionals: guest lecture, seminar, creative workshop, study tour (SAR, p. 73, section 4.2). The Experts did not find the documents and certificates that confirm professional development of academic staff. (SAR, AIKA Annexes, CV.docx).

Applied research in the study field is performed by students while working on Qualification Thesis (Expert's group interviews with students and academic staff; Analysis of Qualification Thesis samples by the Experts) Experts didn't find results of research work by academic staff. The academic staff of Malnava College aren't authors of publications listed in SAR Annexe "Publications" and a considerable part of the publications are more than 5 years old. All the publications in the list are authored or co-authored by visiting lecturers (Annexes - Publications). There are no statements in the publications that the research was performed in Malnava College. Malnava College is not

listed as affiliated to the author (visiting lecturer) in the headings of the scientific papers (<https://www.scopus.com>).

The teaching staff of the study program cooperates in the implementation and updating of the content of the study courses and coordinates the topics in the course programs in order to avoid unnecessary duplication. This is regulated by the “Regulations on the development, implementation, and improvement of study programs” and coordinated by the head of the study programme (SAR, p. 64-65 section 2.2). The analysis of the study programme proves that the mechanism for mutual cooperation between teachers helps to avoid duplication of topics in different subjects (SAR, Annex Descriptions of study courses/modules). The teaching staff also cooperates within the scientific and quality improvement research groups, offers ideas for sample topics of qualification works, discusses improvements of the study program and further development of the College. At the same time, the lecturers jointly participate in the development of the offer of the non-lecture events for students, for example, by providing study tours of the students to employers companies (meeting with students), creative workshops (SAR, p. 49, section 4.6 p. 52, section 5.1) or guest lectures related to study course topics (SAR, p. 72, section 4.1). This information was confirmed during the interviews with the administration of the College and the study field, as well as with teachers.

Malnava College has a well-developed and widespread local partner network (a total of 19 cooperation agreements have been concluded, incl. agreement with the Rēzekne SEZ Authority, which unites 14 employers, and the Association of Agricultural Machinery Manufacturers and Traders, which unites 22 employers (SAR section 5.1)) that serves the development of the teachers' professional development. Within the study field, the College cooperates with industry associations and companies (e.g. auto services cooperative society “Latraps”, with the Rēzekne Special Economic Zone Authority, “NORDEKA”, Individual merchant “SĀTA”, “VELS” Ltd, “EZ1” Ltd, “Niktransports” Ltd, economic operator Vilnis Paršovs, “Janka XXL” Ltd, Economic operator Oskars Orste (SAR, Annex List of cooperation agreements)) and different forms of cooperation allow the teachers to update knowledge of the study field subjects, to share good practice, to follow the latest innovations in the study field, and to involve labour market representatives in improving the study process.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The College employs enthusiastic and competent lecturers and support staff for the implementation of the study field. The age and education of the teaching staff meet the requirements and are sufficient to implement the study programme. The commitment to the improvement of professional and pedagogical qualification is well documented by the College administration. At the same time, the Experts did not find the documents and certificates that confirm professional development of academic staff. The applied research is performed by students, not by academic staff. There are no results of research and scientific publications by academic staff found by experts. Visiting lecturers have an extensive list of scientific publications but those are not affiliated with Malnava College.

Strengths:

1. The number of teaching staff members with Master's degrees is high.

Weaknesses:

1. Participation in applied research activities is limited to students.
2. Participation in applied research activities by the academic staff is insufficient.

5. Assessment of the Compliance of the Study Programme "Automotive Transport"

Requirements

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The provided sample of the Diploma (MALNAVA COLLEGE, FIRST LEVEL PROFESSIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION DIPLOMA, Qualification of the AUTOSERVICE SPECIALIST) complies with the procedure by which state-recognised documents of higher education are issued according to MK No. 202 "Kārtība, kādā izsniedz valsts atzītus augstāko izglītību apliecinošus dokumentus".

2. Documents confirming that the higher education institution/ college will provide the students with the options to continue the acquisition of education in another study programme or at another higher education institution/ college (a contract with another accredited higher education institution/ college), in case the implementation of the study programme is discontinued.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The cooperation agreement with Riga Technical College is in place (COOPERATION AGREEMENT, Riga 11 October 2005), Study programme "AUTOTRANSSPORTS".

3. Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college guarantees to the students a compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the higher education institution/ college (actions or failure to act) and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Annex Nr.1.11/53 confirms that the institution guarantees compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the college (actions or failure to act) and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme.

4. 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 attached information about teaching staff (BIOGRAPHIES OF FACULTY MEMBERS) and confirmation Nr.1/11/52 verifies that state language proficiency is compliant with MK Nr. 733 "Noteikumi par valsts valodas zināšanu apjomu, valsts valodas prasmes pārbaudes kārtību un valsts nodevu par valsts valodas prasmes pārbaudi".

5. 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.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

6. 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.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 7 7. 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 Institutions of Higher Education.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Sample of attached study agreement (Example of AGREEMENT on mastering of full-time study programme ...) complies with MK Nr. 70 "Studiju līgumā obligāti ietveramie noteikumi".

- 9 9. 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 56.1, Paragraph two and Section 56.2, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Course descriptions (document DESCRIPTIONS OF STUDY COURSES/MODULES) and study materials are in Latvian. Course descriptions reflect the goals of the course, study results, the content of the course, etc. These descriptions comply with requirements Section 56.1, Paragraph two and Section 56.2, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

The current study program is compliant with the old professional standard PS0057 (<https://registri.visc.gov.lv/profizglitiba/dokumenti/standarti/ps0057.pdf>) (annex "Compliance with a professional standart.docx") which is no longer in place (changed during assessment). Yet the study program has not been adjusted for changes proposed in the new profession standard PS-203 (<https://registri.visc.gov.lv/profizglitiba/dokumenti/standarti/2017/PS-203.pdf>) which is approved on 15.12.2021. The college has compared the study programme with newly developed professional standard (annex "Studiju programmas atbilstība standartamEN.docx").

- 11 11. 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 Institutions of Higher Education.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Current study program (documents Plan of the study program "Autotransport" (full-time studies) and CONFORMITY OF THE STUDY PROGRAM TO THE NATIONAL EDUCATION STANDARD) partially does not comply with Regulations of Cabinet No. 141 "Noteikumi par pirmā līmeņa profesionālās augstākās izglītības valsts standartu". No elective study courses are included in the study

programme.

- 13 13. The joint study programmes comply with the requirements prescribed in Section 551, Paragraphs one, two, and seven of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

- 14 14. Each member of the academic staff has either publications published in reviewed editions within the last six years, including international editions (if they have worked for a shorter period of time, the number of publications shall be in proportion to the work period), or artistic creation achievements (for instance, exhibitions, films, theatre performances, and concert activity), or a five-year practical work experience (except for the experience in the implementation of the study programme) in accordance with the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

According to the college provided Appendixes and resumes (documents: BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT THE STUDY AREA AND THE TEACHERS INVOLVED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAM; BIOGRAPHIES OF FACULTY MEMBERS; LIST OF PUBLICATIONS, PATENTS, ARTISTIC CREATION WORKS OF THE TEACHING STAFF FOR THE REPORTING PERIOD), the paper "Publications" contains the list of 75 scientific publications. The academic staff of Malnava College aren't authors of them and a considerable part of the publications are more than 5 years old. All the publications in the list are authored or co-authored by visiting lecturers (Annexes - Publications). There are no statements in the publications that the research was performed in Malnava College. More to it, Malnava College is not listed as affiliated to the author (visiting lecturer) in the headings of the scientific papers (<https://www.scopus.com>).

The elected lecturers and assistants listed in the basic information table have either an MSc degree or strong professional background and they fulfill in this sense the requirements. On the other hand, none of them participate in some R&D activities nor have research papers published. Therefore from the professionalism viewpoint, the teachers qualify but they are not active in R&D.

- 15 R5 - Overall rating

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

The Study Programme complies with the old (no longer valid) professional standard PS057. The new professional standard PS-203 is approved (during assessment procedure) and the Study Programme should be aligned with it, then analysed accordingly and reconsidered ASAP.

From the point of the state educational requirements, the Study programme is partially compliant with the State legislative documents.

The scientific and creative activity of the academic staff is almost non-existing.

No elective study courses are included in the study programme.

The aforementioned assessments by the Expert's team justify the overall rating.

Requirements (R6-R8)

- 1 R6 - The compliance of the study provision, scientific support (if applicable), informative provision (including libraries), material and technical provision, and financial provision with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and ensuring the achievement of the learning outcomes.

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

In general Malnava College provisions are sufficient and more than enough for today's and

regional needs but lack the latest technological developments. Study provisions don't have the latest technology items in laboratories. The College has no access to car manufacturer-specific repair and process databases. The College library lacks the latest textbooks in English and other EU languages.

- 2 R7 - The compliance of the qualification of the academic staff members, visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting docents, visiting lecturers, and visiting assistants with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the provisions set out in the respective regulatory enactments.

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

The College employs enthusiastic and competent lecturers and support staff for the implementation of the study field. The age and education of the teaching staff meet the requirements and are sufficient for the implementation of the study programme. But experts didn't find results of research and scientific publications done by academic staff. Visiting lecturers have an extensive list of scientific publications but those are not affiliated with Malnava College.

- 3 R8 - The study programme leading to the master or doctoral degree is based on the advances and findings in the relevant field of science or artistic creation.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The study programme "Automotive Transport" partially complies with the National educational academic requirements. No elective study courses are included in the study programme.

The main difference between previous and new Profession Standards is a change of focus from technical to managerial competencies. Malnava College recognizes that the study programme should be corrected to comply with the new Profession Standard of Automotive Workshop Specialist but the changes are not yet implemented.

Non-compliance to the new professional standard PS-203 is expected and respective adjustments should be made.

The graduates are working productively as car technicians, but not in administrative positions. The number of on-site students is steadily decreasing. At the same time, automotive specialists are in high demand by employers and some students decide to drop out of studies and start to work. The study course, traineeship and qualification thesis descriptions contain the categories required by regulatory enactment. The content is relevant to the outgoing Profession Standard and should be amended to match the new Profession Standard and developments within the industry. Environmental protection topics related to automotive workshop operations, like recycling of used parts and consumables are not covered in the study course description. Recent trends and scientific needs of the automotive industry - for instance, autonomous driving, high voltage battery system design and safety, electrical traction, are not met.

There are also numerous inaccuracies and shortcomings in study course content and literature lists. The description of the content of many study courses is approximate, not specific. The list of basic literature in study course descriptions contains outdated sources. Furthermore, in some study course descriptions, the list of basic literature sources is overly long.

The evaluation methods contribute to the achievement of aims. Student-centered learning and teaching are used.

The students and academic staff are provided with well-maintained buildings, lecture rooms and laboratories.

Technical study provisions are basically sufficient for the current version of the study programme,

but some equipment is outdated. Experts agree that aligning the study programme with the new Profession Standard PS-203 and current developments of the automotive industry will require an update and upgrade of technical study provisions.

Also, there is a sufficient library collection in the Latvian language for the current version of the study programme but the collection of textbooks in English and other EU languages should be improved and aligned with study programme requirements.

The Experts agree that financial provision partially complies with the specific features and the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and create the prerequisites for the achievement of the learning outcomes. Experts also agree that to ensure a high-quality study process in the future, existing financial resources should be redistributed or more resources allocated to invest in relevant textbooks, vehicle manufacturer databases, to update technological training equipment, to organise and participate in scientific and student conferences and participate in international cooperation. It is also very important to motivate academic staff and students and finance their efforts in scientific or practical research. College laboratories and their equipment, library content and access to the EBSCO database could make practical research possible. On the other hand, local student or scientific conferences have not been organised during the reporting period. Furthermore, no funds were allocated for research purposes during the reporting period. Scientific support partially complies with the specific features and the conditions for the implementation of the study programme.

The College employs enthusiastic and competent lecturers and support staff for the implementation of the study field. The age and education of the teaching staff meet the requirements and are sufficient to implement the study programme. The commitment to the improvement of professional and pedagogical qualification is well documented by the College administration. At the same time, the Experts did not find the documents and certificates that confirm professional development of academic staff. The applied research is performed by students, not by academic staff. There are no results of research and scientific publications by academic staff found by experts. Visiting lecturers have an extensive list of scientific publications but those are not affiliated with Malnava College.

Documents confirm that Malnava College will provide the students with the options to continue the acquisition of education at another higher education institution - Riga Technical College. Malnava College also guarantees compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the college. The academic staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme are proficient in the official language in accordance with the regulations. The sample of the study agreement complies with the mandatory provisions. The current study program partially does not comply with Regulations of Cabinet No. 141 "Noteikumi par pirmā līmeņa profesionālās augstākās izglītības valsts standartu". No elective study courses are included in the study programme.

Neither member of the academic staff has scientific publications published in reviewed editions within the last six years. The elected lecturers and assistants listed in the basic information table have either an MSc degree or strong professional background and they fulfil in this sense the requirements. Therefore from the professionalism viewpoint, the teachers qualify but they are not active in scientific or practical research activities. In general Malnava College provisions are sufficient and more than enough for today's and regional needs but lack the latest technological developments. Study provisions don't have the latest technology items in laboratories. The College has no access to car manufacturer-specific repair and process databases. The College library lacks the latest textbooks in English and other EU languages.

Strengths:

1. Graduates are demanded in local enterprises.
2. Study course, traineeship and qualification thesis descriptions contain the categories required by regulatory enactment.

3. The new Profession Standard could motivate academic staff to update the study programme and study courses content.
4. Study implementation and evaluation methods contribute to the achievements of the aims of outcomes of study courses.
5. E-learning study courses in the Moodle environment are well developed.
6. Student-centered learning is used in some study courses.
7. Students are well informed about the prospects of outgoing mobility.
8. The learning outcomes achieved during the mobility are recognised by Malnava College Internal Rules No 9.11
9. Size and condition of buildings and surroundings, number and floor size of lecture rooms and laboratories are sufficient for the study programme.
10. Future work as an Agency of Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies (LLU) raises hope for new opportunities to acquire shared technical equipment and access to library resources and scientific support.
11. The College library is suitable for independent study and research work.
12. The College had successfully received EU Structural Funds for improvement of the material and technical base of the study program "Automotive transport" and increase the energy efficiency of the building.
13. The number of teaching staff members with Master's degrees is high.

Weaknesses:

1. The aims, objectives, learning outcomes are interrelated with professional qualification according to Profession Standard PS057, which is no longer in force.
2. The changes in the study programme to align it with the new Profession Standard PS-203 are not yet implemented.
3. Number of student dropouts increases over the past years.
4. The study programme Automotive Transport was created to comply with National Profession Standard PS0057, which is replaced by newer Standard PS-203, making the study programme obsolete if it isn't appropriately updated.
5. Actual technical trends and systems, related to hybrid and electric vehicles are not included in study course descriptions.
6. Environmental hazards and protection, that is specific to the automotive industry, are not included in study course descriptions.
7. Elective study courses are not included in the study programme.
8. The description of the content of some study courses is approximate, not specific.
9. The list of basic literature for some study courses contains outdated sources. In some study course descriptions, the list of basic literature sources is overly long.
10. The study programme only partially meets the needs of the automotive industry, where knowledge and skills regarding electrical vehicles are required.
11. Some recent trends and scientific needs of the automotive industry - for instance, driving assistance, autonomous driving, high voltage battery system design and safety, electrical traction, are not met.
12. Existing study implementation and evaluation methods will become non-aligned with the amended study programme, when it is updated to meet the aims of the new Profession Standard.
13. No written example of feedback and substantial change in the study course or programme was found by the Expert's group.
14. There was no outgoing student mobility within the reporting period.
15. Technical study provisions are outdated in respect of current developments of the automotive industry
16. The College has no access to car manufacturer-specific repair and process databases.

17. The College library lacks the latest textbooks in English and other EU languages.
18. No financial funds are allocated for research purposes.
19. Participation in applied research activities is limited to students.
20. Participation in applied research activities by the academic staff is insufficient.
21. Lack of visiting lectures by industry professionals.

Evaluation of the study programme "Automotive Transport"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Average

6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Automotive Transport"

Short-term recommendations

Create and implement a system to motivate the students to finish their studies and successfully graduate within 6 months.

The content of the study course should be amended by adding content that will cover safety aspects specific to automotive direct current (DC) high voltage systems within 6 months.

Environmental protection topics related to automotive workshop operations, like recycling of used parts and consumables, should be clearly stated and included in the corresponding study course within 6 months.

Include elective study courses in the study programme within 6 months.

A description of the content of study courses should be written in an extended way, clearly stating the teaching outline, within 6 months.

The basic literature of study courses should be updated and the list shortened for some courses within 6 months.

The content of the study programme should be updated to include topics relevant to recent developments in the automotive industry and scientific research related to it within 6 months.

Adjust the study implementation and evaluation methods to suit new or updated study courses to reach the aims of the study programme, set by the actual Profession Standard PS-203 within 6 months.

Improve feedback documentation keeping and digitalization within 1 year.

Organize visiting lectures by industry professionals within 1 year.

Update technological teaching equipment, focusing on new technology items within 1 year.

Rent access to genuine car manufacturer databases in accordance with EU regulation 715/2007 (chapter III) within 6 months.

Create a motivation system for academic staff and students to do research as well as allocate financial funds for research within 6 months.

Significant corrections should be applied to the aims, objectives, learning outcomes and content of the study programme "Automotive Transport" for it to comply with the new corresponding Profession Standard PS-203, so that graduates can acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, and competencies, within 6 months.

Within 2 years increase number of the latest textbooks in English and other EU languages in The College library.

Long-term recommendations

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 21 of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education, the higher education institution/ college shall ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study direction whilst implementing their internal quality assurance systems:	Partially compliant		The improvement and development scheme is defined in these documents though the periodicity for assessing the efficiency is only once per year and the period for introducing the improvements makes it even slower. Efficient performance is determined by the satisfaction of the employers and students. The respective groups during the interviews mentioned that there are options to increase the efficiency. (Self-Assessment Report - Description of the Study Direction (2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System). Part 1.3. of the Self-Assessment Report: Description of the mechanism for the implementation of the quality policy and the procedures for the assurance of the quality of higher education. The document "Quality Management Policy of Malnava College").
R2 - The cooperation with different organisations from Latvia and abroad implemented within the study direction ensures the achievement of the aims of the study direction.	Partially compliant		Collaboration with organisations in Latvia ensures the achievement of the aims of the study field. Due to weak international collaboration, the aims on the international level are not ensured (documents Cooperation Agreements, SAR section 5.1).

Requirements	Requirement Evaluation		Comment
R3 - Compliance of scientific research and artistic creation with the development level thereof (if applicable).		Non-compliant	<p>Analysis of Self-Assessment Report and List of Publications introduced to the Expert's team reveal insufficient compliance. The research work is very limited or non-existing at all, only some qualification thesis of the students seems to qualify as research, which is insufficient. There is no international cooperation in the field of scientific research.</p> <p>Scientific publications that are presented in Self-Assessment Report annexes are not related to Malnava College main teaching staff. The College has an environment and some tools for practical research and as declarations support scientific research by internal regulations (operational rules) though the research projects are not running. There is no financial support for the research activities of the academic staff.</p> <p>No measurable results, such as reports in scientific conferences or scientific publications have been produced during the reporting period.</p> <p>In the paper "Publications" there is a long list of 75 scientific publications. The main academic staff of Malnava College isn't the authors of them and a considerable part of the publications are more than 5 years old. All the publications in the list are authored or co-authored by visiting lecturers (Annexes - Publications). There are no statements in the publications that the research was performed in the Malnava College. More to it, Malnava College is not listed as affiliated to the author (visiting lecturer) in the headings of the scientific papers (https://www.scopus.com).</p> <p>Existing mechanisms for involvement of the academic staff in the research activities are dysfunctional and inefficient, as there are no meaningful scientific activities or results.</p> <p>The Experts hope that future work as an Agency of Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies (LLU) might create new opportunities to begin collaboration in research activities.</p>

Requirements	Requirement Evaluation		Comment
R4 - Elimination of the shortcomings and deficiencies identified during the previous assessment of the study direction, if it has been conducted, or the implementation of the provided recommendations.		Partially compliant	The shortcomings mentioned in the previous assessment report are eliminated only partially and the main problems - English language skills, insufficient scientific and research work (R&D) - still exist (documents Joint Report of Experts on the Professional Study Programme in Auto Transport of the Malnava College 2012 and SAR section 6.1)

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	Automotive Transport (41525)	Partially compliant	Partially compliant	Partially compliant	Not relevant	Average

The Dissenting Opinions of the Experts