

# Expert group joint opinion

Evaluation Procedure: Assessment of Study Field

Higher Education Institution: Baltic International Academy

Study field: Management, Administration and Management of Real Property

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# Summary Assessment of the Study Field

## Summary Assessment of the Study Field

The limited liability company "Baltijas Starptautiskā akadēmija" (Baltic International Academy) was established in 1992 as the Baltic Russian Institute. In 2006 the Baltic Russian Institute was renamed the Baltic International Academy (hereinafter referred to as the BIA). The main goal of the BIA is to provide the students with higher education and qualification, competitive in the international labour market, in accordance with the current international requirements and the Constitution of the BIA. The owners of academy have big experience and are involved in making strategic decisions of Higher education institute.

BIA Study Direction "Management, Administration and Management of Real Property" has clearly defined attainable goal, which well-suites the new BIA Vision. BIA has established a quality policy and has developed and maintains a quality assurance system that contributes to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the Study Programmes and Study Direction. The system ensures continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the Study Direction and the relevant Study Programmes. The procedures for the development and review of the Study Programmes of the Study Direction and the feedback mechanisms are defined and they are logical. BIA collects and analyses the information on Study Programmes of the Study Direction on a regular basis and uses it to improve the study direction. Student support and student-centred learning is current development area for BIA and there is some progress. BIA has good resource base and the students and the teaching staff have access to the necessary resources to ensure the quality of teaching and learning process. The Academy has set challenging goals in research, and they are taking actions to reach these aims

During the evaluation, expert team identified positive aspect is regular reflection on objectives of Study Direction. The Study Direction "Management, Administration and Management of Real Property" at BIA provides opportunities to study in different forms of studies: full-time studies, parttime studies and e-studies (distance learning).

The Study Direction and the relevant Study Programmes are not fully complying with the main fields of the strategic development of the higher education institution, but definitely meet the needs and the development trends of the society and national economy especially in regions. Expert team identified that for a long time BIA niche was - professional and higher education in Russian language, and more than 20% of students were coming from former USSR republics. But considering big changes concerning education in Russian language in Latvia - due to government decision it exists till year 2023 only even in private schools and high schools, the owners and top management of Academy should react very fast. So, the number of students had significantly decreased and probably will go down in a future.

The support provided by the administrative and technical staff contributes to meeting all needs with regard to the relevant Study Programmes of the Study Direction.

The strategic aim of the Study Direction "Management, Administration and Management of Real Property" has been defined on the basis of the Baltic International Academy operation and development long-term strategy for 2016 - 2020. The university has developed a system that would require financial resources for the implementation of their Study Directions. The University has determined the infrastructure resources and material and technical support necessary for the implementation of the Study Direction in order to ensure the efficient operation of the staff and the sustainable education of students, local and foreign. BIA has branches in Riga, Liepaja and Daugavpils, which is a big bonus for the academy, offering some students to study in their hometowns or near them. The BIA income consists of the following main sources of financing: income from studies, income from scientific activities and other income, for example, Latvian or international project funds, income from rent, etc. The main role of the BIA study process is played by the income from tuition fees, which makes up 85.17% - 90.57% of the total income.

The Study Direction "Management, Administration, and Real Estate Administration" at the Baltic International Academy since 1999 has been receiving a licence for the professional Bachelor Study Programme "Entrepreneurship" with professional qualification - Company and Organisation Manager.

For further development of the education field and to create the opportunity for Bachelor students to continue their education, the professional Master education programme "Business Management and Administration" was licenced at the Baltic International Academy in June 2001, and the professional Master Study Programme "Human Resources Management" was licenced in June 2009.

In May 2013, the education field "Management, Administration, and Real Estate Administration" with the education programmes included in it was licenced for six years.

Following the provisions of Section 48 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions, the accreditation period for the Study Direction "Management, Administration, and Real Estate Administration" was extended until 31 December 2020.

The Study Programmes "Entrepreneurship" and "Business Management and Administration" included in the Study Direction not only provide theoretical knowledge and practical skills in business management, but also knowledge about their interconnection.

According to Self-Assessment Report (hereafter - SER), BIA defined its quality policy and established quality assurance (hereafter - QA) system. Although the SER indicates the composition of Quality Assurance system of BIA composed and corresponding to internationally recognised quality management systems the meetings with management and representatives of other groups clearly showed that there is a lot to do for further development of this system, especially in terms of implementation and grounding documentation and procedures to higher education study process.

The BIA has been developed by the higher education institution and it implements and follows procedures to attract highly qualified faculty who are knowledgeable in their field and ensure the successful education of students.

The main directions of the scientific research activities of BIA are in line with the scope and content of scientific activities of similar HEI and also comply with the development aims of HEI and they are relevant to the Study Direction. Information presented in SER is somewhat misleading as it discusses Economics as a scientific field. Scientific activities in the Study Direction lack clearly set responsibilities and accountabilities. In terms of scientific activities of the Branches, they mostly involve students' scientific research during their study process. BIA's international cooperation in the field of scientific research and scientific activities (other than conferences) is limited but BIA had made plans on how to improve it.

## **1. Management of the Study Field**

### **Analysis**

The main goal of the BIA is to provide the students with higher education and qualification, competitive in the international labor market, in accordance with the current international requirements and the Constitution of the BIA approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia in 2014. Since the Study Direction is focused on the preparation of specialists in different sectors of national economy, it can be stated with certainty that it corresponds to the interests of the Republic of Latvia. Latvian businesses are interested in employing young and ambitious staff. There is no doubt that the training of highly qualified specialists for the local market is very important, but it must be balanced with the preparation of these specialists for work on a global scale.

The strategic aim of the Study Direction "Management, Administration and Management of Real Property" has been defined on the basis of the Baltic International Academy operation and development long-term strategy for 2016 - 2020 (<https://bsa.edu.lv/en/documents/>), the design of

which follows the laws and other rules and regulations of the Republic of Latvia, and the Constitution of the Baltic International Academy, on the basis of strategic planning documents of the EU and Latvia – the National Development Plan of Latvia for 2020-2027. Specialists with extensive professional experience are involved in the management of the Study Direction.

Evaluation and monitoring of strategy implementation in order to implement the BIA strategy the progress towards the achievement of goals has been evaluated and the indicators were set to achieve the strategic goals. The Operational Management Plan of the BIA contains these indicators which are planned for a certain period of time and at the end of this period they are centrally measured to compare the actual results achieved with the planned ones. It is necessary to conduct every year the self-assessment of implementation of the BIA long-term strategy and development which is to be approved by the BIA Senate.

Every year the BIA executives and those responsible for the implementation of the specific tasks measure the values of all indicators and compare them to the planned ones; the deviations from the target indicator are analyzed, and the values of indicators that should be achieved next year are determined or adjusted in order to contribute to the achievement of strategic goals. During the implementation of the BIA strategy the performance target achievement indicators can be adjusted and supplemented. This is the regular work of the responsible heads of the structural units. The Strategy document gives the direction to the indicators and their target values. The BIA strategy was discussed and considered at the annual BIA structural unit head meeting on February.

The aims of the Study Direction are clearly defined and attainable. The BIA mission is implemented by the academic activities of its structural unit Study Programmes. The BIA units are organized in the transparent and logical hierarchy. The BIA decision-making bodies are the Constitutional meeting, Senate, Rector and the BIA arbitration court. The powers and responsibilities of each institution are regulated by the normative documents. The BIA Constitutional meeting has 27 members, among them 17 academic staff representatives 4 general staff representatives and 6 students. At the same time, the panel of experts had the impression that there was a lack of a clear accountability and accountability system and performance indicators in some areas of activity.

Student Parliament of the BIA ensures the implementation of democratic principles in management of the BIA. Student Parliament of the BIA acts as a bridge between the students and administration of the BIA. Student Parliament of the BIA consists of the students from various Study Programmes who organize activities and student life of the BIA, represent the students' interests in the Study Direction and Study Programme councils and nominate the representatives to the BIA decision-making bodies.

Study Direction “Management, Administration, and Real Estate Administration” is a part of the BIA Faculty of Economics, Finance and Management and their work is coordinated by the Faculty Council, which develops the direction development strategy, mission, vision, goals and tasks, controls their implementation, plan study and methodological work. The Faculty Council is elected by the BIA Senate for three years. The numerical composition of the Faculty Council depends on the number of faculty study programs. The council consists of study or program directors, senior academic staff, student representatives and representatives of employers or professional associations. The Faculty Council may involve experts, including members of the Promotion Council, practitioners, etc. The Faculty Council is a collegial management body that oversees the implementation of the study program and programs, and its purpose is to facilitate the implementation of study programs, to formulate goals and objectives, to follow their implementation and to promote the improvement of study program quality.

As it turned out during the experts' visit to Daugavpils and Liepaja branches, the implementation of the Study Programmes in them takes place in accordance with the procedures and normative documents approved by BIA in Riga. Any changes are coordinated with the Head of the Study Direction and the Directors of the Study Programmes. A large branch network that allows the implementation of various national and regional development programs is undoubtedly a great

advantage of BIA. At the same time, when visiting the BIA branch, the experts got the impression that they are strictly controlled from the center and do not play a significant role in the development and implementation of the academy's strategy. In this way, their role in the regions is diminished. The experts failed to find out in which areas the branches are entitled to make independent decisions. Thus, the opportunities for branches to cooperate with local businesses and regional authorities are not fully realized.

The BIA supports programme quality self-assessment activities which involve the social partners and the public on a voluntary basis. Rector, Vice Rectors, Heads of Study Directions, Programmes Directors and study department staff of the BIA provide the administrative support and service to the academic process and ensure its supervision. In order to meet the growing market demand for obtaining the education closer to home, BIA opens branches in the regions of Latvia. As it turned out during the experts' visit to branches of BIA sometimes communication with stakeholders is insufficient and/or incomplete.

The Study Programmes "Entrepreneurship" and "Business Management and Administration" included in the Study Direction not only provide theoretical knowledge and practical skills in business management, but also knowledge about their interconnection. The Study Programmes form a succession: Bachelor and Master level.

Rules of development, approval and amendment of the Study Programmes at the BIA have been worked out and approved at the meeting of the BIA Senate. These Rules regulate the procedure of development and approval of the Study Programmes, principles of the Study Programmes structure, content and management of the professional bachelor's and professional master's studies, requirements for obtaining the professional qualification.

Regulations of opening and accreditation of Study Directions the BIA compiles the self-evaluation report for each accredited Study Direction which is updated every academic year. The self-evaluation report as well as any changes made to this report are approved by the BIA Senate by January 15 of the current academic year.

The enrolment of graduates to the Academy is by following the Regulations approved by the BIA Senate - "Terms of admission and Procedure of Matriculation to the Baltic International Academy" (<https://bsa.edu.lv/en/provisions-and-statements/>).

Recognition of professional experience, previously acquired formal and non-formal education for students who want to continue their studies at the Academy at a later stage of study is by following Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 932 of 16 November 2004 "Procedure for Starting Studies in Later Study Stages", regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 505 of August 14, 2018 "Regulations for Recognition of Competencies Acquired Out of Formal Education or Professional Experience and Previous Educational attainment" and Regulations approved by BIA Senate - "Terms of admission and Procedure of Matriculation to the Baltic International Academy" and "Regulations on the Recognition of Learning Outcomes in Prior Education outside of Study Programs or Professional Experience".

Rules of assessment of the study results of the BIA have been developed and approved at the BIA Senate meeting. The Rules have been developed in accordance with Clause 5 of Part 2 of Article 561 of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education Description of Study Course which sets forth requirements to determine criteria for assessment of study results in accordance with the regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers Regulations on the National Standard of First Level Professional Higher Education and, Regulations on the National Standard for Second Level Professional Higher Education, relating to the basic principles and platforms of assessment for Programmes acquisition.

Procedure of organisation of the Study Course examinations and assessment of student competence is applicable to full-time and part-time extramural students enrolled in the Study Programmes of all levels. Acquisition of the Study Course is evaluated according to the content, assessment criteria and requirements specified in the Course description. Rules of drafting and defending the final

theses at the BIA have been developed and approved at the BIA Senate meeting (Protocol No.134 23.05.2018). Regulations on the activities of the State Examination Commission of the BIA have been approved at the BIA Senate meeting (Protocol No. 118 25.11.2014).

Criteria for assessment of the students' success are incorporated in the Study Course descriptions compiled by the lecturer of the respective Study Course, and the Course description is coordinated with the director of the respective Study Programme. Study Course descriptions are approved by the Study Direction council. The BIA has established a system and procedures for the admission of students, the recognition of the study period, professional experience, and the previously acquired formal and non-formal education, as well as for the evaluation of the achievements and learning outcomes of the students, and these procedures are logical and efficient.

Academic integrity is the principle of mutual behavior between BIA faculty, students and researchers. Instructions for dealing with academic integrity violations and types of plagiarism are by following the approved Code of Academic Integrity and Ethics of the Baltic International Academy (<https://bsa.edu.lv/en/documents/>). They are intended for use by students, academic and general staff. The principles of academic integrity are objectivity, responsibility, mutual respect and trust, and exclude deception and fraud.

Information about the Study Direction «Management, Administration and Management of Real Property" and its corresponding Study Programmes, their contents, the expected learning (study) outcomes is available on the BIA website. The information published on the website about the Study Programmes corresponding to the Study Direction corresponds to the information available in the official registers, provides applicants and students with important information that is published in all Study Programme implementation languages. At the same time, it should be noted that the information available in Latvian and Russian is more extensive and is updated more regularly than the information in English. During the visit, the experts were of the opinion that the teaching of English, the application of knowledge in the Academy is not at a very high level.

## **Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses**

### Conclusions

In general, the Study Direction can be assessed as meeting the requirements, well organized and professionally managed. Despite the difficulties related to the demographic situation and the ban on teaching in Russian, BIA in general, as well as management of Study Direction, overcomes these problems and maintains Study Direction and the Programmes included in it, which allows maintaining its place in the Latvian higher education market. Undoubtedly, the strength of the Study Direction is that its Programmes are implemented not only in Riga, but also in branches. This allows the BIA to maintain its specific niche as an educational institution that is well known throughout the country and which, through its network of branches, positions itself well as a regional university. The experts believe that this university's proximity to regional problems and experience in this field should be further developed.

### Strengths

1. Specialists with extensive professional experience involved in the management of the Study Direction.
2. The management structure and procedures of the Study Direction generally comply with the requirements of Latvia's higher education systems.
3. A large network of branches that allows the implementation of various national and regional development programs.

### Weaknesses

- 1.Lack of a clear system of responsibilities and accountabilities and performance measures in some areas of operations.
- 2.Communication with stakeholders is insufficient and/or incomplete.
- 3.Great attention to the local labor market, poor preparation of students for global competition.

## **2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System**

### **Analysis**

According to Self-Assessment Report (hereafter – SER), BIA defined its quality policy and established quality assurance (hereafter – QA) system. The system of BIA QA consists of the following elements. The quality assurance system has been implemented based on the Excellence Model of the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM). Rector himself manages quality management. Head of the Higher education institute (hereafter-HEI) also confirms the Quality Manager responsible for quality implementation. The BIA Senate approves study quality manager. The quality manager, in cooperation with the study quality manger and other unit managers, identifies and documents the processes. To provide "evidence-based" decisions, BIA uses the selfevaluation model collecting and analysing data from various surveys as well as financial indicators. Internal study quality assurance system contains the objectives of the quality policy, principles of quality assurance and internal quality assurance measures and their description. According to EFQM criteria, the study quality assurance system evaluates investments, processes and results. Noticeable that quality management system for studies composed of three interrelated parts Overall management, Study process management and Resource management. Such composition corresponds to the models of typical quality management systems. The web page of HEI provides information on BIA quality management – BIA Study Quality Assurance System; Quality Policy statement (<https://bsa.edu.lv/en/documents/>).

The internal quality management system of education within the Study programmes of the Study Direction reflected in the diagram "Internal education quality management system", however, the content is different from that provided in the web page of HEI - "BSA Studiju kvalitātes nodrošināšanas sistēma" in Latvian. BIA analyses the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance system by following assurance and control methods and procedures, such as expert evaluation, questionnaire method, registration method, calculation method, and feedback from students. The most important criteria are measured to assess the operational efficiency. These criteria are the following: student satisfaction level, employers' feedback, graduate competitiveness in the labour market, accreditation, admission rates. Students are involved in the quality assurance process through feedback procedures, participation in the Faculty Council, as well as through the student parliament. On-site visits pointed out that involvement in feedback surveys are not obligatory for students. Directed feedback right after the surveys from the administration to the students systematically closes the quality circle. Recommendations received from students discussed at the Faculty Council meetings. A complaint and suggestion procedure established by the BIA study quality management system based on the EFQM model helps the BIA to improve all key areas of its activities continuously. However, to submit complaints and suggestions in the paper form by filling in the application is not an appropriate procedure for contemporary HEI anymore.

BIA collects a sufficient amount of data on an annual, monthly basis or upon request. The information is collected by seven (7) different departments of the BIA, including vice-rectors. To improve Study Direction BIA analyses statistical data on the number of students – the data on accepted and expelled students, arrears in payment of tuition, non-fulfilment of the Study Programme, expulsion at the student's request.

The information provided in SER for this section quite well correspond to the section content but lack

systematisation. Conformity of the Study Direction with ESG Part 1 relies on the documents approved by the BIA Senate / Rector's order and followed by internal quality assurance procedures. However, the elements of the study process such as learning outcomes, monitoring and supervision of the study programmes, motivation and reflection of students, procedures for student complaints, students introduction to the programme, student satisfaction and drop-out rates that require increased attention are not specified clearly in the SER and were not fully recognisable during the on-site meetings with stakeholders. On the other hand, on-site visits revealed strong support to BIA from local stakeholders and their involvement in the QA procedures.

## **Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses**

### **.Conclusions**

Although the SAR indicates that Quality Assurance system of BIA is composed and corresponds to internationally recognised quality management systems the meetings with management and representatives of other groups clearly showed that there is a lot to do for further development of this system, especially in terms of implementation and grounding documentation and procedures to higher education study process.

### **Strengths**

1. QA system is based on the EFQM model.
2. BIA collects the data from various surveys on a regular basis.
3. BIA actively cooperates with its stakeholders' local companies and employers.

### **Weaknesses**

1. Due to this, the alumni association is not established, the relations with graduates and monitoring of their career paths lack systematisation.
2. The requirement to submit complaints and suggestions in the paper form is outdated and not efficient.
3. Meetings with representatives did not always identify the practical elements of the QA system implementation.

## **3. Resources and Provision of the Study Field**

### **Analysis**

The Academy has determined the infrastructure resources and material and technical support necessary for the implementation of the Study Direction in order to ensure the efficient operation of the staff and the sustainable education of students, local and foreign. BIA has branches in Riga, Liepaja and Daugavpils, which is a big bonus for the academy, offering some students to study in their hometowns or near them.

In Riga, BIA can use two buildings, each located on its own side of the street. The total area of these buildings is more than 10 thousand square meters, which allows to rent premises to other higher education institutions, including RMK. Riga has 29 auditoriums with space for at least 30 people, 10 computer classes and 163 computers, 6 conference and meeting rooms, 37 administrative rooms, a student self-government room, a library and a reading room with used literature, 14972 copies in Latvian, 3085 in English, , 48268 in Russian, as well as a book kiosk. There are 36 printers, copiers and scanners, as well as 49 multimedia projectors and televisions.

Liepāja branch has 7 auditoriums, 3 computer classes with 49 usable computers, 1 conference hall, 5 administrative rooms and a library and reading room with used literature, 5334 copies in Latvian, 366 in English, 12571 in Russian. 4 printers, copiers and scanners, as well as 10 multimedia projectors, televisions are provided to be able to ensure a successful study process.

Daugavpils branch has 22 auditoriums, 3 computer classrooms with 56 computers, 3 conference and

meeting rooms and a large hall, 3 administrative rooms, 3 auxiliary rooms, which will include a lecturer's room, service room and archive, library and reading room with used literature, 11305 copies in Latvian, 631 in English, 25628 in Russian, and a book kiosk. This information clearly shows that academy has extremely low number of books but it is not critical because most people in academy are speaking in Russian which mean that this high number of books in Russian compensates number of books in English.

All branches have auditoriums that are provided with the necessary equipment (photocopying equipment, visual presentation equipment, computer equipment, TV equipment that provides teleconferencing) to be able to conduct remote lectures, which are necessary for both the study process and the quality of the study process. . A centralized system has been established for libraries between BIA branches, which ensures the delivery of library materials from the branch to the branch in case of need. The library is able to view and use the available literature, periodicals (Balance iFinances, Вопросы государственного и муниципального управления, Деньги и кредит, Экономика образования, Экономический журнал ВШЭ) as well as electronic databases as EBSCO, LNB Digital Library, Hein Online, Financial Times, SCOPUS, ScienceDirect, Latvian Journal, Letonika, LURSOFT, RUBRICON. Currently, the study process is provided with the necessary resources in sufficient quantities, which include computer classes, conference halls and administrative premises. There is a unified system and procedures for material, technical, methodological, informative provision, etc. among all BIA branches. improvement and acquisition that is centralized. The groups involved have a common Moodle system that is understandable and practical. The TV-bridge system of the Baltic International Academy is actively used within the Study Direction, which allows reading lectures in Riga in real time to BIA branches in Daugavpils and Liepaja, thus expanding the opportunities for lecturers, foreign visiting professors, public and political staff to contact as large an audience as possible. also provide lectures for distance learning students. BIA in Riga and Liepāja branches has also ensured accessibility for people with movement disorders.

The BIA has been developed by the higher education institution and it implements and follows procedures to attract highly qualified faculty who are knowledgeable in their field and ensure the successful education of students. This is evidenced by the scientific biographies of the academic staff as well as the results and feedback of students, which are reflected in the internships obtained by students and in the feedback of employers. 63 lecturers are involved in the development of the Study Direction, of which 40 (63.5%) have a doctoral degree and 13 (20.6%) are visiting lecturers. As the studies are conducted in Latvian and English, the teachers have the necessary English language skills, as evidenced by the results of the teachers' tests of foreign language skills, but they could be further improved to make the exchange of information even better and faster. BIA organizes various professional development events for academic staff, such as scientific conferences, research and methodological seminars, the attendance of which is mandatory at least once a year. Among other things, a methodological seminar is organized once a month, in which attention is paid to innovative teaching methods. Financial support is now provided by the university to cover the expenses of doctoral students' participation fees related to scientific activities. The academic activity of BIA lecturers is higher than the research activity, which is evidenced by the amount of scientific publications. Teachers' professional development needs - such as the use of various types of IT programs to provide lectures, materials and advice online - are identified and supported through in-house training.

The BIA has developed a system that would require financial resources for the implementation of their Study Direction. The BIA Study Direction consists of the following main sources of financing: income from studies, income from scientific activities and other income, for example, Latvian or international project funds, income from rent, etc. The main role to finance the BIA study process is played by the income from tuition fees, which makes up 85.17% - 90.57% of the total income. BIA financial resources are applied to: salary fund (academic staff, teaching staff, general staff),

academic staff for research activities, payment of taxes, student self-government (1: 200 of the centralized corresponding Article 53 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions), development of material and technical base, libraries stock expansion, building utilities, management, marketing, etc. Financial resources and all cases of declining student numbers have also been noticed in recent years. This is evidenced by the information provided in the appendix: Study Direction income from tuition fees, Study Direction expenses in EUR per 1 student. It is possible for students to pay for the Study Programme in general, one study year, one semester or one month, as well as to offer a discount system, which students can view on the BIA website. Research funding is obtained without own resources and EU structural funds, which has decreased by almost 25% over the last 3 years, and in 2018 amounted to EUR 76.73 thousand. These funds are necessary, as well as related to the publication of scientific activities, which is also a good motivation for teachers.

The academy has determined the infrastructure resources and material and technical support necessary for the implementation of the Study Direction in order to ensure the efficient operation of the staff and the sustainable education of students, local and foreign. BIA has branches in Riga, Liepaja and Daugavpils, which is a big bonus for the academy, offering some students to study in their hometowns or near them. Branches are provided with ramps and elevators for people with disabilities.

The BIA has been developed by the higher education institution and it implements and follows procedures to attract highly qualified faculty who are knowledgeable in their field and ensure the successful education of students. This is evidenced by the scientific biographies of the academic staff as well as the results and feedback of students, which are reflected in the internships obtained by students and in the feedback of employers which is the only way how employers are included in the study process. Gathering the information given by employers, students lack knowledge about various computer programs. 63 lecturers are involved in the development of the Study Direction, of which 40 (63.5%) have a doctoral degree and 13 (20.6%) are visiting lecturers. As the studies are conducted in Latvian and English, the teachers have the necessary English language skills, as evidenced by the results of the teachers' tests of foreign language skills, but they could be further improved to make the exchange of information even better and faster. BIA organizes various professional development events for academic staff, such as scientific conferences, research and methodological seminars, the attendance of which is mandatory at least once a year. Among other things, a methodological seminar is organized once a month, in which attention is paid to innovative teaching methods. Financial support is now provided by the academy to cover the expenses of doctoral students' participation fees related to scientific activities. The academic activity of BIA lecturers is higher than the research activity, which is evidenced by the amount of scientific publications. Teachers' professional development needs - such as the use of various types of IT programs to provide lectures, materials and advice online - are identified and supported through inhouse training, but the room for improvement was noticeable in meetings when personnel were not able to handle simple IT procedures. Based on information which the academy provided and what heard on meetings, a large number of lecturers participate in both outgoing and incoming mobility but still number of incoming mobility is higher than outgoing (2018. /2019. 89 incoming lecturers, 23 outgoing lecturers) in cooperation with partner universities, which creates added value for the implementation of the study process and the quality of studies. In the analysis of outgoing and incoming mobility, it can be observed that outgoing mobility has decreased over the years from 44 to 23, while incoming-increased from 29 to 89 lecturers.

The academy has identified the necessary support for students and created a well-functioning support system based on student needs. BIA organizes open days providing applicants with information about the academy, however BIA official website does not look attractive and has empty pages with no information. At the beginning of the academic year, an introductory week is created for students to acquaint new students with the academy premises, lecturers, library resources, etc. BIA works at the Study Information Center to provide consultative assistance to students in all

matters related to the organization of the study process, communication with the administration and the establishment of lecturers where help could provide also graduates which is important as they have experience with academy, internships and could share this information with students, providing them internship as well. If necessary, as far as possible, the academy provides psychological support to support students, including foreign students, in various life situations to resolve current issues. Within the framework of the mobility program, both local students and international students have the opportunity to gain new professional and life experience abroad. Statistics show that the number of students in Latvia who use the opportunity to participate in Erasmus +, which is one of the mobility programs, is small and decreasing (from year 2015. /2016. 5 to 1 students), while incoming mobility is high (about 25 students average). Reasons are different: job, children, homesickness. motivating students to participate in Erasmus + programs would improve students' knowledge of English, which is insufficient. This became clear during the visits where experts interviewed graduates and got information that BIA has no alumni association. BIA has also a student self-government, which activity is not particularly noticeable among students. Rarely self-government organizes events for student entertainment and education or any other study process related field.

## **Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses**

### Conclusions

In general, BIA has developed a successful system to successfully ensure the implementation and continuous development of the Study Direction. Most of the financial resources are provided by tuition fees. To facilitate the student payment schedule, students have the opportunity to pay for their studies for different terms. The academy has taken care of the necessary infrastructure resources, which supplement the financial resources in Riga, Liepaja and Daugavpils. RTU (Riga Technical university) and RMK (Riga Management College) rent BIA premises. Students and lecturers are provided with general information about the field of study, as well as the necessary informative resources, books, periodicals, databases, which are updated every year as much as possible, but more attention should be paid to increasing up to date information resources in English. BIA has attracted knowledgeable and qualified teachers to ensure successful student education, which has also been recognized by employers. Faculty members participate in both incoming and outgoing mobility, but the number of students taking advantage of this opportunity is significantly lower. In order to provide distance education for students, BIA pays attention to the education of teachers in the field of IT but it is still not sufficient and should be improved.

### Strengths

1. Students are provided with a flexible payment system.
2. HEI has taken care for people with disabilities (elevator, ramp) in Riga and Liepaja branches.
3. High number of teaching staff outgoing and incoming mobilities.
4. BIA branches in Liepaja and Daugavpils.

### Weaknesses

1. IT knowledge of academic staff is not sufficient.
3. Low number of student's participation in outgoing mobilities.
4. Low involvement of employers and graduates in study processes.
5. Underdeveloped and not active students' self-government bodies.
6. Library resources are short of up to date books and periodicals in English.

## **4. Scientific Research and Artistic Creation**

### **Analysis**

Scientific activities of BIA are led by Vice Rector for Science. Based on SER, scientific activities are

the integral and one of the main parts of BIA operations. The main directions of the scientific research activities of the BIA are set in accordance with BIA long-term strategy for the period 2016-2021. They are aimed at promoting the research activities of teachers and students; to cooperate with business structures, by developing applied researches; to develop and expand the scientific and methodical co-operation with national and international universities; to promote the development of commonly used scientific infrastructures; to attract the funding of the EU social and structural funds, for the researches of the BIA teaching staff; to involve students in the development of the EU structural funds and social projects. In general, the main directions of the scientific research activities of BIA are in line with the scope and content of scientific activities of similar HEI, comply with the development aims of BIA and are relevant to the Study Direction and the relevant industry. Yet, the information presented in SER is misleading as it discusses Economics as a scientific field.

Every three years BIA sets its priority research directions taking into consideration research directions supported by the EU funding, national priorities for the scientific research; also, internal needs towards development of high-level scientific research. Then the set directions of the scientific research shall be used in multiple ways listed in the SER. The expert panel received the evidence that the priority research directions are used to conduct research prepare the high-level international publications, to set topics for students' scientific research in the Study Direction. Yet the expert panel was not convinced or received sufficient evidence that the set directions of the scientific research were used to promote the development of the applied market-oriented research or to promote the practical usage of such activities. The expert panel felt that well planned and thoughtfully set directions of scientific research are somewhat short in their implementation in practice. Scientific activities in the Study Direction lack clearly set responsibilities (who organises and supervises the process) and accountability (what are the key performance indicators (KPIs) to assess the results on an institutional, Study Direction or Study Programmes level).

The SER claims that BIA coordinates and ensures connection between the scientific research and the study process by setting the general objectives and the detailed objectives for the BIA Science Council. The general objectives concentrate on coordination of the scientific research activities in the BIA, their integration into the study process as well as development and coordination of research activities of students of the BIA. The SER further lists the detailed objectives and claims that they have been achieved. The SER also claims that connection of scientific research with the educational process is carried out in several ways: students are involved in research work during the development of the course works and final thesis. They can also participate in research projects (based on availability of funds), students have the opportunity to participate in research conducted by teachers in this field; teachers use their own research and the research of their colleagues in the study courses to facilitate their content with newest knowledge and empirical results.

In general, the above mentioned arguments provided the Expert panel with evidence that the main directions and activities of the scientific research activities of BIA are in line with the scope and content of scientific activities of similar 1st level HEI. They also comply with the development aims of HEI and are relevant to the Study Direction. Yet, the implementation of scientific activities in BIA still need attention, as discussed below.

During the visit the expert panel discussed scientific activities in the Study Direction with multiple groups both in the main unit in Riga and in also in Daugavpils and Liepaja Branches. Representatives in the branches claimed that planning, implementation and execution of scientific activities are concentrated in Riga (so are the main researches). In Liepaja and Daugavpils branches only a few professors claimed conducting scientific research with internationally recognised publications. In terms of scientific activities Branches are mostly involved with students' scientific research during their study process.

Information in SER on BIA's international cooperation in field of scientific research and scientific activities claims that teaching staff participates regularly in a variety of international projects. Yet

provided data shows that during the self-assessment period BIA had participated in 9 Erasmus + and 2 other international projects, which do not seem to be scientific in their nature. Also, the SER does not explain how those projects are related to the development of the Study Direction or execution of the Study Programmes under the assessment.

BIA's international cooperation is much more evident in organising and participating in scientific events. Over the last 8 years, the BIA has been organising the annual international scientific and practical conference for the young researchers (with international partners) and the annual international scientific and practical conferences; over the last 4 years it participated international student scientific and practical conferences, dedicated to the issues of internships and practical experience. The SER indicates areas, whereas BIA plans for joint international research, including preparation and implementation of joint scientific research and innovative draft contracts, management of the editorial board of international scientific publications or participation in their activities; participation in scientific projects both at the national and international levels, including the international project management, increasing the number of scientific articles of the BIA lecturers in the internationally cited journals; preparation of joint scientific publications with the foreign universities, etc.

Current international cooperation in scientific activities and BIA's plans for joint international research prove its dedication of towards development of the high level international scientific activities, yet, based on the information provided in SER, the BIA shall improve management of scientific activities involving not only areas of development but actual plans for scientific activities, their implementation guidelines and adequate resources dedicated towards such activities.

SER claims that to ensure coherence between scientific research in the study field and the study process students of all levels shall participate actively in scientific events and projects both in Latvia and abroad. For Master students, participation in conferences is a compulsory condition. However, the other parts of SER state that students of the Study Direction under assessment are not active and not motivated to participate in scientific events. Information collected during the visit proved that students of the main unit's in Riga (especially at master level) have been involved into scientific activities of the BIA (while preparing various term papers and final thesis, making compulsory presentations in conferences). Students and graduates also confirmed the importance of the set scientific research direction and teaching staff's dedication towards their scientific work. In contrary to information provided in the SER, the expert panel did not receive evidence that students participate in the research conducted by the teachers. Also, situation in Liepaja and Daugavpils branches was somewhat different from the main unit in Riga. Students and graduates (of the bachelor level) claimed that they neither participate in scientific conferences, projects nor had sufficient information about them (also admitting that they would have been interested about such possibilities if they better knew about them).

None of the meeting groups admitted BIA's involvement in applied scientific research activities in the Study Direction under the assessment. Such information was repeated in all three locations visited by the expert panel. Again, social partners claimed that such research would be beneficial for the BIA both from cooperation perspective and also from the scientific research development perspective. Especially in Branches, where other HEI are not much present, higher cooperation of BIA with local businesses and public organisations would allow strengthening its sustainability and visibility (see also section 5 for more detail analysis)

In regards to scientific activities of the teaching staff the Expert panel was assured that BIA has means and mechanisms for the involvement of teaching staff into scientific research. All teaching staff in the Study Direction is required to conduct scientific research. Assessment of the teachers' scientific activities is a part of their annual assessment plan and is among the main criteria to pass the competition for an academic position. It became evident during the visit that all teaching staff knows about the system in place. To facilitate scientific work of teaching staff (and students) each year BIA organises scientific conferences in which the teaching staff (and master level students from

the main unit in Riga) are actively participating. However, the experts were unclear if scientific work of teaching staff is conducted in an organised manner and if all teaching staff has equal possibilities to participate in it. Cases whereas a teacher goes directly to Vice-Rector for Science to receive approval for a conference financing proves that current system may be inefficient and nontransparent.

Review of the scientific publications of the teaching staff confirmed that all of them have publications and/or had participated in scientific events (in Latvia mostly) and projects over the evaluation period. Teaching staff of the Study Direction proved to continuously have high number of scientific publications including these in WoS/Scopus (mostly in conference proceedings), and other international scientific databases. Such results exceed the experts' expectations taking into consideration the type of HEI under the assessment. The expert panel suggest that in its publications teaching staff shall target internationally recognised scientific journals (preferably with impact factor) rather than conference proceedings.

About half of the teaching staff published results of their scientific work in Russian language (which was in line with the needs of the Study Direction when studies were provided in this language). Yet in the future more emphasis shall be placed on publications in English which would also be in line with internationalisation strategy of BIA (see section 5 for the further discussion). For this the level of English of the teaching staff shall be further developed.

Expert panel also noticed inconsistencies in the scientific activities of teaching staff of the Study direction. Based on the lists of participation in projects, participations in conferences and scientific publications, BIA is dependent on activities of a few teachers. During the last year a teacher from Estonia was invited to join the teaching staff. The expert panel suggests that BIA shall continue with such practices to support its internationalisation strategy and to strengthen its English-speaking group of the researchers.

The SER claims that the research work performed by the teaching staff is used in the preparation of the study course programmes and in the training of the students and has a direct impact on the study process. Yet very little evidence was presented in SER or collected during the meetings on how participation in conferences, projects and scientific research was used to include up to date theoretical knowledge and the newest empirical research results into study process, study programmes curriculum and/or content of study courses.

The BIA's innovations, as presented in its SER, were related to study process, study administration and scientific work. Improvements of the study process (Moodle, Big Blue Button) were both relevant and timely. They not only enabled to improve the quality of the curriculum but also provided students with opportunity to study during pandemic. Yet based on practices of the experts with online resources and learning, the BIA shall not only develop quality standards for the content of on line materials and activities, but also carefully monitor copyrights of the resources used. Establishment of Study Information Centre where students and teaching staff can receive any informative support was related to structural changes in BIA and shall facilitate to the quality of the Study Programme. The most promising innovation of BIA is Neurocognitive Implicit Laboratory, which provides an opportunity to engage into scientific and applied research areas. As further discussed in Section 5, the Laboratory may become an important tool for development of the applied research activities with local social partners.

## **Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses**

### Conclusions

Planning of the main directions and activities of the scientific research in BIA are in line with the scope and content of scientific activities of similar HEI and also comply with the development aims of HEI and they are relevant to the Study Direction. Information presented in SER is somewhat misleading as it discusses Economics as a scientific field. Scientific activities in the Study Direction

lack clearly set responsibilities and accountabilities. In terms of scientific activities of the Branches, they mostly involve students' scientific research during their study process. BIA's international cooperation in the field of scientific research and scientific activities (other than conferences) is limited but BIA had made plans on how to improve it. International cooperation is more evident in organising and participating in scientific events. Information on students' participation in the scientific events is mixed. Involvement of Riga's students in scientific activities (especially at the master level) is at the anticipated level. Students and graduates in Liepaja and Daugavpils Branches (mostly in the bachelor level) claimed that they neither participated in scientific conferences, projects nor had sufficient information about them. None of the meeting groups admitted BIA's involvement in applied scientific research activities in the Study Direction under the assessment. BIA has means and mechanisms for the involvement of teaching staff into the scientific research. Assessment of the teachers' scientific activities is a part of their annual assessment plan. The experts were unclear if scientific work of the teaching staff is conducted in an organised manner and if all teaching staff has equal possibilities to participate in it. Teaching staff of the Study Direction proved to continuously have scientific publications including these in WoS/Scopus (mostly in conference proceedings), and other international scientific databases. During the visit a very little evidence was acquired on how results of scientific activities is used in the study process, study programmes curriculum and/or content of study courses. Innovations at BIA were related to study process, study administration and scientific work.

#### STRENGTHS

1. BIA had set clear priorities/directions of its scientific activities.
2. Evaluation of scientific activities are an integral part of employment requirements.
3. Students are engaged in research activities, including participation in conference and publications (for the master level students).

#### WEAKNESSES

1. Information and procedures on organisation of scientific work are unclear and unevenly understood by different stakeholder's groups.
2. There are no clear system of accountability and performance measurement of scientific activities of the Study Direction.
3. Mechanisms for the involvement of the teaching staff in scientific research is not clear.
4. Existing systems of the organisation of scientific work does not guarantee equal possibilities for younger scientists to work in their areas of interest.
5. About half of the scientific production over the SER period was published in Russian and/or in journals/conference proceedings with no or very low international recognition.
6. Scientific activities are mainly concentrated in the main unit in Riga with much lower involvement of the Branches.
7. Students in the Branches do not receive sufficient information about scientific activities of BIA.
8. Low involvement in applied research in all locations.
9. The relationship between scientific work and study direction development was not clearly explained.

## 5. Cooperation and Internationalisation

### Analysis

As it is presented in SER the aim of the BIA cooperation is primarily to promote the sustainability of study directions. The expert panel was assured that the level of cooperation of BIA is high. BIA cooperates with several groups of social partners: companies, public and private organisations, professional associations, universities, colleges, secondary schools. The Academy is a member of international and global initiatives, networks, associations, organisations related to the study

direction, such as United Nations Global Compact. Partnerships with the other HEI are maintained mainly aiming to attract graduates of the HEI to BIA's programmes. Contact with the programs of other universities is made using its the teaching staff at the same time working in multiple HEI. The expert panel supports the teaching staff's opinion that employment in multiple HEI allows sharing knowledge and skills and enables attracting the most suitable teaching staff to bachelor and master programmes. Yet, the experts also believe that employment in multiple HEI depreciates BIA's identity among teaching staff, social partners and students, which on a long term threatens its sustainability. Co-operation with schools is maintained by visits to secondary schools and invitation of school children to Career Days and Open Days and studies at so called BIA Small Academy for the school children.

The SER states that BIA has numerous cooperation agreements with employers and professional organisations aiming to have their involvement in the development of study fields and study programs by having professionals to work in the faculty, field or program council; implementation of study programs as guest lecturers teaching one or more study courses, acting as guest lectures; participation in science, research and creative activities; provision and management of internships; developing, discussing and approving the topics for term papers and final papers and supervising and reviewing of final papers; participation in defence committees for final papers and internships overviews. It became evident during the visit that not all forms of the involvement were confirmed by the stakeholders. Students and graduates claimed that lectures of professionals from public and business organisations were rare, so were field trips to companies and organisations. Social partners have a positive opinion towards BIA, its Study Direction and the broad scope of the study programmes under the assessment. On the other hand, they explained that they are involved into the study process mostly by providing internship places. Social partners in all Branches admitted they would be willing to get more engaged in the study process giving lectures, inviting student into their organisations, engaging in applied research. Involvement of social partners in the development of the Study Direction was not confirmed (except for internships, see below). That was especially evident during visits in Daugavpils and Liepaja Branches. The expert panel suggest that cooperation with business entities is most probably the weakest part of BIA's cooperation while knowledge of the local market, certain industries and better understanding of practical issues in operations of organisations is could also been strengthened during the study process. BIA shall strengthen cooperation with social partners to have them more engaged in study process.

The list of international BIA's cooperation agreements is listed in 89 pages (as provided in the Annexes of the SER), which prove impressive BIA's achievements in this area. The international cooperation activities of the BIA mainly focus on (but are not limited to) the EU, the Baltic Sea region and Eastern Europe. The main goal of BIA in internationalisation is to increase the international competitiveness of BIA by promoting international mobility of students and teaching staff, strengthening international cooperation and ensuring its sustainability, attracting foreign lecturers and supporting the integration of foreign students in higher education. Yet, during the visit the expert panel was not convinced that teaching staff and students of the Study direction take an advantage of such cooperation - international mobility of teaching staff and students was low, so was participation in international projects and scientific event abroad.

In the next strategic period BIA will continue to develop international cooperation in the following directions: attracting foreign lecturers to lecture study courses and conduct scientific research, implementation of international projects, establishment of joint study programs, organisation of summer schools, etc. The SER also claims that BIA regularly seeks for the cooperation opportunities. Yet, after SER analysis and meetings with groups of stakeholders the expert panel was not convinced that BIA fully and the most efficiently exploits its cooperation agreements in the study process. Therefore, BIA management should reconsider if such high amount of cooperation is required and if it represents the best use of resources.

Data provided in the SER showed that a long list of Erasmus + agreements is well employed to

attract incoming students. BIA is able to attract 20 and more students from different countries every year. Number of outgoing students is much lower and mostly comes from outgoing visits of students from the Bachelor programme. During the SER period there were also a few cases of Erasmus internships as well. Discussion with student and graduates in Daugavpils and Liepaja branches showed that these are part time students and their motivation towards mobility is very low. The expert panel believes that BIA's administration shall make more efforts to explain the benefits of international experience and advantages to their career.

The SER indicated that each year, short-term priorities are set at the management level for the implementation of the mobility activities, including the number of foreign guest lecturers planned, sectors represented, countries, etc. However, the experts panel concluded that despite the set priorities, the system and procedures for the attraction of the teaching staff and students from abroad within the study field are neither clearly explained in SER nor seems to be actually working in practice.

SER states that BIA has a solid network of collaborative universities whose professionals are regularly invited to be guest lecturers. During the visit students and graduates of the Bachelor programme claimed that visits of foreign lecturers to their classes were rare. Situation in the Branches was no different – according to the students, they had never had a live lecture with a visiting lecturer. In contrary, graduates from the Master programme confirmed that foreign visiting lecturers (both academics and professionals) participated in their classes quite often and were useful and highly facilitated to the study process. Data provided in the SER shows 1-3 visiting lecturers per year, yet it is not clear if they were giving lectures in this Study Direction. Also, for such an impressive list of international cooperation agreements such number of the incoming lecturers seems low and confirms earlier position of the experts that BIA shall more concentrate on implementation of the existing contracts.

It is also stated in the SER, that within the framework of international cooperation, BIA is regularly visited by delegations from foreign related higher education institutions and other institutions, who share their work experience. The expert panel was not convinced how numerous visits are related to the study process and if they do not distract teaching staff from the main activities – teaching and scientific work.

BIA students' internships are organised in accordance with the “Regulations on Internships at the Baltic International Academy”. Regulations are translated into English. The process of selecting practice place, participating in it and defending practice report is clearly described in the Regulations (and discussed in different places of SER). During the study process, different types of internship are planned in accordance with the study program practice guidelines. The place for internship is chosen by the student independently. If the student has difficulties in choosing an internship place, BIA offers internship opportunities within the framework of the signed internship agreements. English speaking students have the opportunity to find the places of practice in their home countries and also to apply for practice within the framework of ERASMUS student exchange programme. During the visit students and graduates of Riga, Daugavpils and Liepaja Branches confirmed that the process of selecting internship place, participating in the internship, writing the report and defending it was executed efficiently. They also found internships useful to for acquiring practical skills and abilities and better leaning about business processes and activities.

## **Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses**

### Conclusions

The aim of the BIA cooperation is primarily to promote the sustainability of the Study Directions and the level of cooperation of BIA is high. Some inconsistencies in the cooperation with different groups of social partners were evident. International cooperation under the Erasmus framework is well

developed and demonstrates constantly high numbers of incoming students, while numbers of outgoing and incoming teaching staff and outgoing students remain low, especially in the Daugavpils and Liepaja Branches. Cooperation with business entities and public organisations is less developed while higher their engagement in the study process was supported by all external stakeholders. The process of selecting internship place, participating in it and defending internship reports is clear and well-functioning in practice.

#### Strengths

1. Net of cooperation agreements throughout the world is well established.
2. Directions for the further development of international cooperation are clear.
3. Incoming mobility of students is constantly high.
4. System and procedures for internships are well designed and functioning.

#### Weaknesses:

1. Very extensive list of international agreements may represent non efficient use of resources. It is not sufficiently employed in practice and currently does not facilitate the development and/or execution of the studies in the Study Direction under the assessment.
2. There is no or very little evidence on cooperation with local and international business entities (apart from internships).
3. Incoming and outgoing mobility of the teaching staff and outgoing mobility of the students is very low.

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

### **Analysis**

In general, the information in self-evaluation report (SER) on the implementation of the recommendations received during the previous assessment procedures is short and not very much detailed. SER did not indicate when the last accreditation was performed. However, the fulfilment of experts' recommendations in the accreditation of Study Direction starts from the academic year 2014/2015.

The provided Annex Recommendations of the Expert Group contains the recommendations received from experts, activities undertaken by BIA, results, deadline, and status of implementation. The document consists of five activities:

For the first activity, the experts pointed out that there should be a greater difference between the content of bachelor and master Programmes and the levels of master and bachelor's papers. The BIA undertook the revision and update Programme objectives, study outcomes, requirements, and development of final paper defense regulations. Revision is taking every year from 2016, last time in 2019. Implementation status: implemented and confirmed at the Faculty Council meeting.

Experts suggested to increase use of the database, both by academic staff and students and the MOODLE platform. In response to this point, BIA expanded the number of scientific databases, and they were made more accessible to students and academic staff by increasing the number of computers in the BIA library. Also mentioned, the developments towards the use of the MOODLE platform. Almost all Study Courses in both Programmes have the necessary materials published on the MOODLE platform. Implementation status: completed.

Experts recommended providing support to the development of English language skills of students and academic staff. In response to this point, BIA refers to the increasing numbers of English speaking students and lecturers, also outgoing mobility. Although the activity was marked as completed, the on-site meetings with different representatives did not provide evidence of this question's achievements. The level of English language skills by students and academic staff is low. The experts recommended significantly improve the scientific publications - both quantitatively and

qualitatively. Review of the teaching staff's scientific publications confirmed that almost all of them have publications or participated in scientific events (in Latvia mostly), projects over the self-assessment period.

The experts also recommended significantly increase the number of free/limited choice courses. The Annex indicates that the 2019 volume of free/limited choice courses was the following: Bachelor program - 12 CP; Master program - 18 CP. Status of implementation: implemented and confirmed at the Faculty Council meeting.

## Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

### Conclusions

To correspond to the recommendations received during the previous assessment procedures, the main activities of the BIA were taken to improve the Study Programmes and study process, as well as the improve the material and technical basis of the study process. Despite the slowness in progress, the plan of activities is in force to implement the recommendations from previous assessment procedures. Although almost all activities corresponding to received recommendations from experts are indicated as completed, it requires permanent attention and periodic revisions.

### Strengths

1. Significant improvement of academic staff publications.

### Weaknesses

1. Insufficient level of English language skills by students and teaching staff.

## 7. Assessment of the Requirements for the Study Field

1 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

**Justification:** Quality Assurance system is developed, well documented but its implementation still lacks focus and systematisation. BIA's Quality Assurance system performs the function of a formal tool for the external stakeholders (AIKA, Ministry of Science) rather than guidelines or practical tool for continuous improvement of BIA. Most of the parts of the system were hardly recognisable during the on-site meetings with representatives.

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

**Justification:** BIA has developed a QA system, which is a composition of elements corresponding to the ESG provisions and also to international standard EFQM.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** BIA has the procedures for the development and review of the Study Programmes and the feedback mechanisms. The processes are functioning.

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:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** Evaluation of the achievements of learning outcomes and students' results in study courses, written works, qualification practice and qualification examination are defined in regulations and procedures of BIA.

- 5 1.4. Internal procedures and mechanisms for assuring the qualifications of the academic staff and the work quality have been developed.  
**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant  
**Justification:** Internal procedures and mechanisms for assuring the qualifications of the academic staff and the work quality have been developed Governed by the „Development plan of the Study Direction “Management, Administration, and Real Estate Administration” 2016-2022“, Annex 1.
- 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  
**Justification:** Despite that BIA organizes a number of surveys of stakeholders (students, employers) the key performance indicators are not set.
- 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  
**Justification:** Meetings with representatives did not identify the practical elements of the QA system implementation while the continuous improvement is possible only if the system is grounded to the points of its performance and it is seen in activities of internal stakeholders. So far, experts panel left with the impression that the QA system works more like checkpoint required from external stakeholders.
- 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  
**Justification:** Well established net of cooperation agreements throughout the world and clear directions for the further development of international cooperation. Yet, during the visit the expert panel was not convinced that teaching staff and students of the Study Direction take advantage of such cooperation. No or very little evidence on cooperation with local and international business entities (apart from internships). Low incoming and outgoing mobility of the teachers and outgoing mobility of students.
- 9 R3 - Compliance of scientific research and artistic creation with the development level thereof (if applicable).  
**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant  
**Justification:** Clear priorities/directions of scientific work yet information and procedures on organisation of scientific work are unclear and unevenly understood by different stakeholder groups. There are no clear and measurable plans for scientific activities as well as the system of accountability and performance measurement of scientific activities. The relationship between scientific work and study direction development was not clearly explained. Scientific activities are mainly concentrated in BIA Riga Branch with much lower involvement of branches. Low involvement in applied research in all locations.
- 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:** Fully compliant  
**Justification:** BIA has fully implemented the recommendations from the previous evaluation of the Study Direction.

## 8. Recommendations for the Study Field

## Short-term recommendations

1. To improve communication about possibilities and benefits of scientific activities with students in Daugavpils and Liepaja branches.
2. To increase the level of use of IT instruments, modern teaching methods and English language by academic staff. To invest in further academic staff development and/or attraction of young academic professionals.
3. To involve more business representatives and industry professionals in the study process (with lectures, local cases and field trips) to provide students with up-to-date local market-oriented knowledge.
4. To improve interconnection between the main unit in Riga and the branches in Liepaja and Daugavpils by not only bringing Riga's specialists to the branches, but also regional specialists to Riga.
5. To ensure wider representation of international students in the student union and in the life of the students of the academy.
6. To update the BIA's website with all the necessary and relevant information and to improve its design, making it more modern and more user-friendly.
7. To motivate students and teachers to participate in mobility programs by providing them more information about the benefits and organizational issues.
8. To develop quality standards for the of on-line materials and activities; carefully monitor copyrights of the resources used on-line.

## Long-term recommendations

1. Using the scientific and research potential accumulated at the BIA, to pay more attention to interdisciplinary and interregional research, involving not only the lecturer, but also students and graduates of the academy.
2. Considering the experience accumulated in the BIA regional branches and the regional reforms taking place in Latvia, to include regional policy and economy as one of the priority directions of scientific and academic activities of the Study Direction.
3. To develop BIA branches as regional education and science centres, which actively participate in regional planning, development and applied research to local businesses and public organisation. To give regional branches more academic freedom by fostering the growth of their potential and increasing their relevance in the eyes of the local community.
4. To reinforce systematic formal implementation of QA procedures in practice and to decrease reliance on personalities in quality assurance.
5. To improve management of scientific activities involving not only areas of development, but actual plans for scientific activities, their implementation guidelines and adequate resources dedicated towards such activities. To make rules and procedures for scientific work more understandable and visible for stakeholders, especially for academic staff.

6. To further concentrate on publications in internationally recognized journals indexed in WoS/Scopus (striving for higher impact factor). To put emphasis on publication in scientific journals rather than conference proceedings.

7. To replenish library stocks with the newest English books and periodicals.

8. In the field of international cooperation to formulate more precisely the goals and conclude agreements with international partners who actually ensure cooperation in certain specific areas and activities related to the studies and scientific activities in the Study Direction.

9. To consider entering into the niches of the lifelong learning and/or focused short-term learning programmes for adults.

## II. "Entrepreneurship" ASSESSMENT

### II. "Entrepreneurship" ASSESSMENT

#### 1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

##### Analysis

The professional bachelor Study Programme "Entrepreneurship" is implemented by BIA since 1999. The Study Programme provides a professional bachelor degree in business with a professional qualification - business manager. The professional bachelor Study Programme "Entrepreneurship" is provided by BIA in two forms: full-time studies in Latvian and English (duration of 4 years, 0 months), and part-time extramural studies - distance education Latvian and English (duration of 4 years, 6 months). The volume of the Study Programme is 160 CP (240 ECTS). Prerequisite knowledge of English is set in the admission requirements. The language proficiency skills shall correspond to at least to the level EKP B2.

The self-evaluation report (SER) indicates that during the reporting period from 2013/2014 till 2019/2020 the number of students in the Study Programme decreased by 57%. Two hundred eight students are studying in this Programme in 2019/2020. Half of this decrease in number are located in Daugavpils branch, another half - in Riga and Liepaja branch. In SER the negative dynamics of the numbers is analysed, emphasising the following issues: negative demographic situation, uninterrupted emigration of Latvians, fierce competition between universities with similar Study Programmes, a decrease of demand for private higher education. All reasons are related to the surrounding environment only. SER does not mention any internal reasons also those, related to changes of legislation not allowing to provide studies in Russian, are not discussed. The number of students studying in Russian shrank from 169 in 2014/2015 to 54 in 2019/2020. Students studying in English increased from 26 to 42 for the same period.

The SER indicates that the professional bachelor Study Programme Entrepreneurship is implemented in accordance to the Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 512 "Regulations on the National Standard for the Second Level Professional Higher Education" (26.08.2014). After graduating from the Study Programme students obtain the 2nd level higher professional education and the professional qualification of a business manager (6th level of the Latvian Qualifications Framework). The SER provides a range of qualification names (manager of an enterprise, business manager, company manager), although the name of qualification should follow the documentation of the registration of the Study Programme. The title of the Study Programme and level of the studies assume that this should be a broad profile Study Programme, with an emphasis on knowledge required to start and manage business, analyse its environment; on development of entrepreneurial leadership skills and innovations. Yet it is not happening.

The aim of the Study Programme, as it is indicated in SER, is to provide the students with up-to-date

knowledge in the fields of entrepreneurship and management keeping the quality of studies in line with European education standards, to ensure their readiness for the further professional activities and capability of strategically and analytically solving the business management problems, to develop their personalities and provide the opportunities to acquire professional qualifications with the right to pursue the postgraduate studies. Besides the aim of the Programme, the SER also indicates 7 tasks and 11 LOs of this Study Programme. The expert panel concluded that the aim, tasks, learning outcomes (Los) and the content of the Study Programme are coherent, relevant and in line with regulations and professional standards. They are also in line with goal of the BIA to train high level managers of the companies (which is mentioned in multiple places of SER). However, the aim, tasks and LOs are not coherent with the title of the Study Programme, which is Entrepreneurship. Actually, entrepreneurship is merely touched in the tasks, LOs and content of the Study Programme.

The SER analyses and compares the Study Programme under the assessment only to a few other Study Programmes, which experts believe are not the most relevant examples and is not sufficient to capture the up to date view to entrepreneurial Programmes in Europe and worldwide. The Study Programme "Business Management" from the High School of Business, Arts and Technology RISEBA and Study Programme "Entrepreneurship and business management" from the Latvian University of Agriculture LLU were chosen by BIA for comparative analysis. On the one hand, the experts would like to point what the only comparison with the best in class could push the institution towards continuous improvement. On the other hand, the bachelor level Study Programme under the assessment may be viewed as at a typical level and scope general management Study Programmes. The expert panel believes that the title of the Study Programme is misleading and has to be changed to be coherent with its aim, tasks and LOs. Analysis of the admission requirements revealed that to enter the Study Programme the applicants must have completed secondary education (which shall be recognised by Latvian regulations for international students) and follow the admission procedure as determined by the BIA regulations for admission. The expert panel concluded that the admission requirements are in line with level of studies and are the sufficient prerequisite to reach the aim of the Programme.

## **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

### Conclusions

The aim, tasks, LOs and the content of the Study Programme are coherent, relevant and in line with regulations and professional standards. They are also in line with the goal to train high level managers of the companies and represent general management approach to the developed skills and competences. However, the aim, tasks and LOs are not coherent with the title of the Study Programme, which is Entrepreneurship. On-site visits, especially meetings with employers and graduates, emphasised the study programme's focus on the local market's small-medium business and needs. But a significant decrease of students in Liepaja and Daugavpils branches contradicts such view. The Study Programme is not in line with leading European and worldwide Programmes in entrepreneurship. If general management focus of the Programme is retained, its title has to be changed. Admission requirements are in line with the level of studies.

### Strengths

1. The aim, tasks and LOs of the Study Programme are in line with similar general management Programmes and are sufficient to develop professionals to work in business organisations.

### Weaknesses

- 1.The Study Programme are not sufficiently relevant to the development of entrepreneurs for local as well as international labour market.
- 2.Title of the Programme is not in line with its aim, tasks and LOs.

## 2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

### Analysis

Information provide in SAR emphasizes that the BIA professional bachelor study programme "Entrepreneurship" provides the opportunity to acquire the basic education in business and management. The content of the programme is compliant with professional (educational) standard, which was approved in October, 2019. It is shown as Achievable results (Knowledge, Skills, Competencies) of the "Entrepreneurship" Study programme in the amendment Course Mapping ("Studiju kursu kārtējums"). The Study Programme is well known in the Latvian local educational market in the regions it is provided - i.e., in Daugavpils, and Liepaja. As it was previously discussed, the content of the Study Programme is not in line with the title of the Programme. As the expert panel had made recommendations to change the title of the programme, the following analysis in this part is conducted taking into consideration the aim, tasks and LOs (but not the title of the programme) - i.e the experts present their opinion on the broad level general management programme (not entrepreneurship).

The Study Programme is constructed in 6 parts: general education courses, basic theoretical courses of the branch and IT courses, professional specialisation courses in the field, optional course, practice, diploma thesis, which seems logical and in line with the level of studies.. The curriculum of the Study Programme is the same in all branches as well as in part-time extramural studies and fulltime studies. Yet, content of some parts is under the consideration. I.e. the part "Basic theoretical courses of the branch and IT courses" has two IT related courses. However, majority of the graduates from the high schools already possess relevant skills, therefore the experts suggest that such courses are not necessary. Yet, they are also the only IT related courses in the Study Programme (except for IT in Marketing). The expert panel suggests that the Study Programme shall rather place greater emphasis on specialised software and applied IT skills relevant to managers (i.e. PowerBI, SAP, etc.). The Study Programme has only one study course for English language, while the level of English among Latvian students is low (just a few students were able to speak in English during the visit). It remained unclear, why study courses, Project management, Logistics, Standardisation and quality management are within this part rather than professional specialisation part. The experts also believe that introductory level courses on the main functions of the company shall also be included in this part of the programme (i.e principles of marketing, introduction to finance, etc.). It was also not clear to the expert panel how students choose their courses in the part "Professional specialisation courses in the field" and what is the purposes of allowing students to choose. In general, composition of this part of the Study Programme demonstrates emphasis towards issues related to mid to large size internationally operating companies (i.e. International business, International financial reporting standards, Management of Corporations, etc.) Some of the study courses in this part (namely Company's commercial production activity strategy and Management of Corporations) are not much relevant to the LOs of the Study Programme, are not up to the level of studies and definitely not relevant to entrepreneurship. Study course Currency Operations is very specialised and, again, not clear how relevant to the LOs of the Study Programme. The expert panel did not find logics behind the composition of the Optional course part of the Programme. Also, the experts concluded that, although the curriculum represents a broad general management perspective, it is outdated and does not have any differentiation from other Latvian and international entry level study programmes. The curriculum misses personal skills development courses, such as Leadership, Career management, and courses developing soft skills. In the field of management skills and abilities, the curriculum could include such courses and Performance measurement, Big data analysis, etc. The curriculum could also be facilitated with courses on sustainable development, social responsibility, etc. During the meeting the experts learned that students and graduates in general are happy with the content of their studies, yet they did not seem to be aware about the newest developments in higher education market.

Information provided in SER proves that the descriptions of the study courses include all the required information, e.g. course aims, learning outcomes, course content and planned hours, recommended literature and additional sources of information, organisation of the independent studies, course learning outcomes and assessment criteria, also the grading system. Provided course descriptions are comparable in their format.

Quality of the material presented in the descriptions is inconsistent and needs improvement as discussed below.

After reviewing the descriptions of the study courses the expert panel notices that mostly in all courses required literature is very outdated. In some of the courses the first in the list source of literature was about 20 years old (i.e. Logistics, 1996; Investment Management, 2002). In study courses such as International Business, Innovation and novelty, Information Technologies in Management, etc., which are very dynamic and rapidly changing, 10 and more years old literature is unacceptable. Also, some courses have literature in Russian among the required literature (i.e. High Mathematics, Risk Management and Insurance), while some other (also taught in English) only present required literature in Latvian (i.e. Strategic Management).

After reviewing the course descriptions, the expert panel concluded that the study implementation and evaluation methods in general contribute to the achievement of the aims and LOs of the study courses and the Study Programme. Yet the Study Programme looks more centred on academic staff employment than Student-centred learning. The expert got an impression that study courses are included in the curriculum of the Study Programme based on the available teaching staff and their competencies rather than based on the market needs. Many of the study courses evaluate students based on their active participation in lectures and seminars, written and oral presentation of independent (homework) tasks and exams. Yet, the expert panel was not convinced if the grading system is coordinated and properly planned (from students' workload perspective). There is no single approach towards the weights of the final exam (it varies from 60% to as little as 30 % in Social Management) and interim tests (which might be even higher than the final exam in Social Management - 50 % and 30% accordingly). Also, in the courses with the same study scope (expressed in study credits) independent tasks and homework vary from 1 to 4 tasks and from 20 % to 40% of the final grade. The part Organisation and tasks of students' independent work has similar formulation almost in all the study courses with some exceptions in the study courses Information technologies in Marketing, Business, the Creation and Management of a New Company. Independent tasks in some course are not relevant to the content of those courses (i.e. Audit and Internal Control). Diversity of the teaching and learning methods is needed. For example, project-based learning, which can result in a video or a competition; Business games; Podcasts; use of modern software (e.g. CRM; Power BI) etc.

The expert panel concluded that the process and content of the internships and Diploma thesis is appropriate for the level of studies and is sufficient for the achievement of the study program aim and tasks. The first internships of the Study Programme (or Practice-1 in the course description) is concentrated on management, the second Internship (Practice-2)- on business activities, which requires much and relatively advances level business analysis. But during the on-site visit the expert panel learned that the theoretical knowledge of business analysis needs to be strengthened before the students start their internships.

The outcomes of the surveys regularly conducted among the students, employers, and graduates are used to improve the quality of studies. The last review protocol is dated by 10.09.2020

Students of the Study Programme show little interest in the mobility opportunities. That was especially evident in Liepaja and Daugavpils branches. Incoming and outgoing mobility opportunities are more appreciated by the full-time international students than locals. The SER does not provide explanation on how learning outcomes achieved during mobility are recognised; during the meeting with students, none of them participated in outgoing mobility, therefore the expert panel was not able to assess this criterion.

## **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

### Conclusions:

The content of the Study Programme is not sufficiently relevant to entrepreneurship. But it well represents general management knowledge and skills focused on mid and large size companies with international operations. The curriculum of the Study Programme is the same in all locations as well as in part time and part-time extramural studies. The Study Programme is constructed in 6 parts which seems logical and in line with the level of studies. Yet content of the parts (i.e. study courses) need to be reviewed and updates to reflect the newest achievements in the market and/or moved to other part of the Study Programme. The descriptions of the study courses/ modules, the internship, and the Diploma thesis comply with the provisions set forth in the regulatory enactments. The descriptions include all the required information, yet they need to be updated. Literature sources of many courses are outdated, some courses have required literature in Russian, others (taught in English) do not list any required information in English. Study implementation and evaluation methods in general contribute to the achievement of the aims and LOs of the study courses and the Study Programme. Yet there is no single approach towards the weight of the final exam and/or scope of independent work among courses with the same credits. The outcomes of the surveys regularly conducted among the students, employers, and graduates are used to improve the quality of studies. The incoming and outgoing mobility opportunities of students need further improvement, and the learning outcomes achieved during such mobility should be recognised.

### Strengths:

1. The Study Programme is well known in the Latvian local educational market in the regions it is taught (Daugavpils, Liepaja).
2. Well-developed general management bachelor Study Programme with a focus on mid and large size companies with international operations.

### Weaknesses:

1. Entrepreneurship related knowledge and skill are not sufficiently taught in the Study Programme.
2. Division of the Study Programme in 6 parts is logical, however composition of the parts lack logics and are not coherent with LOS; some courses outdated and/or need to be replaced.
3. The content of the Study Programme does not reflect latest needs and developments in the market.
4. Required literature sources are mostly very old, some required literature is not in the language of teaching.
5. Study programme lacks a system of specialised subjects taught in English while the level of the students English language skills is low.
6. Diversity of teaching and assessment methods are not well thought of and not according to the latest trends in the higher education.
7. Low outgoing mobility of the students (especially in Daugavpils and Liepaja Branches).

## **3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme**

### **Analysis**

Financial resources for the Study Programme "Entrepreneurship" are mainly obtained from tuition fees. Teachers of all Study Programmes have created Moodle Study Courses, in which students can access study materials related to the Study Course. These include Study Course descriptions, requirements and materials for the Study Course.

BIA has also provided an information system NEXUS, where students and lecturers can get acquainted with the planning of classes and premises, work and internship opportunities. NEXUS is currently creating a section where students can get acquainted with internal regulations, Study Programmes, internship programs, academic news, etc.

The library consists of a subscription section and a reading room. The library is provided with the necessary literature for the Study Programme "Entrepreneurship". The reading room of the student hotel is available with 11 computers with internet access, printing and copying facilities that can be used by both students and academic staff.

In order to ensure academic integrity and avoid plagiarism, the beginning of the planning of students' final theses should be checked with a unified computerized inter-university plagiarism control system.

The study process for students takes place in the premises of two buildings in Riga, as well as in the buildings belonging to the academy in Daugavpils and Liepāja. These buildings have auditoriums that are built with modern technology. Many auditoriums are equipped with a stationary multimedia projector, screen, computer or Internet connection and other technical means.

BIA uses modern information technologies for research, such as computers, NEXUS internal information system, Internet, audio / video tools, office equipment, projectors.

Taking into account that the Study Programme is provided for distance learning, HEI has provided the necessary information technologies to successfully take care of students' education. Teachers use the BBB (BigBlueButton) site created by Moodle to provide video lectures for students who study in distance. It was possible to find out from students and lecturers about the fact that most of the teachers are acquainted with this system and are able to work with it successfully, however, there was a lack of knowledge for some lecturers in the field of information technologies.

Students can also do an internship outside Latvia by participating in ERASMUS + projects but they rather stay home because of different reasons: work, family, homesick.

## **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

### Conclusions

The study provision, informative provision, material and technical provision is well prepared to ensure high-quality study process also in the future.

### Strengths

1. BIA is using NEXUS internal information system.
2. BIA is using Inter-university plagiarism control system.
3. Students can complete an internship abroad in ERASMUS+ projects.

### Weaknesses

1. Extremely low number of books in English.
2. Lack of knowledge for some lecturers in the field of information technologies.

## **4. Teaching Staff**

### **Analysis**

BIA teaching staff of the Study Programme "Entrepreneurship" is professional and knows well the conducted subject. Academy has developed and implements the procedures for attracting highly skilled teaching staff. The needs of the teaching staff for professional improvement - like use of different kinds of IT programmes for delivering lectures, materials and consultation online - are identified and supported by in-house training. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that their knowledge needs to be constantly improved, especially in the field of IT, and that the latest teaching trends need to be put into practice. During the visit, the group of experts found that in the descriptions of the Study Courses, methodological materials, bibliographies and resources of the Academy Library, as well as in the study process in general, there is a certain lag from modern

requirements. Most of the literature used in the study process is outdated. Sources in Latvian and Russian are mainly used. Modern scientific literature in English is very rare.

Analysis of dynamics of the teaching staff of the Study Programme "Entrepreneurship" for the period from 2013/2014 academic year till autumn of 2018/2019 academic year shows that the teaching staff has increased from 43 to 56 persons.

There are 56 lecturers involved in the implementation of the Professional bachelor Study Programme "Entrepreneurship", among them there are 35 docents (63%) with a doctoral degree (32 elected in the BIA and 3 non-elected), 21 docents (37%) have a Master's degree (15 elected in the BIA and 6 non-elected) and two of them study in the doctoral programme.

Out of 28 lecturers who teach in English in the Study Programme "Entrepreneurship" in Riga, 23 are elected by BIA. 17 (74%) of them have a doctor's degree. Of all 28 lecturers of the Study Programme, 19 (68%) have a doctoral degree. This study programme is implemented both in Riga and in 2 regional branches in Daugavpils and Liepaja. Thanks to the IT system, classes in the branches are led by both local lecturers and lecturers from Riga.

The teaching staff is recruited by the BIA branch on the basis of the common requirements for the academic staff of the BIA. The study process in the branches is planned to be centrally coordinated with the Study Programme managers by jointly forming the teaching staff for the study process. Academic staff from both Riga and the regions is attracted to the study process to provide higher education, professional skills and competences closer to the student's place of residence. Lecturers at the time of lectures in the branches are compensated for the travel and accommodation expenses. They also have at their disposal the service flats at Teatra str.24-1, Teatra str.24-3, Teatra str.24-6, Daugavpils and at Liela str 12-50, Liepaja.

As one of the oldest private universities, BIA has established and developed a system and procedures to attract highly qualified teachers who are knowledgeable in their field and ensure the education of successful students. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that of the 28 teachers in Riga, only 8 are English at C level, the remaining 20 at B2 level. As studies are conducted in Latvian and English, teachers need English language skills, but they could be further improved to make the exchange of information even better and faster. According to the information included in the self-assessment report (Annex English.pdf), everything is in accordance with the requirements. At the same time, during a meeting with the Academy's lecturers, it was found that a large number of them have poor command of English, which calls into question the veracity of the information. There are only 3 foreign guest lecturers among the teachers of the Study Programme.

The scientific activity of the teaching staff also influences the development of students' scientific activity skills. The lecturers of the Professional Bachelor Study Programme "Entrepreneurship" have a high scientific potential, which is confirmed by the existing scientific publications, which can be found in international databases. Lecturers act as mentors who teach students to independently receive, select, analyze and critically evaluate scientific information from various sources, use it; to carry out research, process the obtained data, interpret and present them. At the same time, the time connection between the scientific work and the development of the Study Programme is not clearly defined.

The academic activity of BIA teaching staff is greater than research activity. Low incoming and outgoing mobility of teachers, which does not create added value for the implementation of the study process and high quality of studies. The scientific activity of the lecturers takes place mainly at the Latvian level. Scientific research work is organized in Riga with very weak involvement of lecturers and students in the branches. At the same time, meetings of experts with employers in the branches allowed to conclude that both Daugavpils and Liepaja have good opportunities to get involved in regional development and research projects. The professional bachelor's Study Programme "Entrepreneurship", which was implemented in all BIA branches some time ago, has remained only in Riga, Daugavpils and Liepaja. According to experts, this is due to the too centralized management of branches and the insufficient attention of the Academy's management

to the needs of the regions.

Also, the qualification of lecturers stems from their ability to create and use various computer technologies in the teaching process; to develop study -methodological materials that provide students with independent acquisition of knowledge, such as electronic books. This, in turn, will provide an opportunity to expand the distance learning environment, access to European national and international integrated education systems in the near future.

The Methodological Council was established by the BIA Senate decision "On the establishment of the Methodological Council», with one of its functions being to plan and implement events, i.e. public seminars for teaching staff and other interested people.

To develop the competences of the academic staff in creating and implementing inter-branch/ interdisciplinary studies and Study Courses, the following seminars with the best lecturers of the academy as well as sectoral experts and representatives of governmental and non-governmental institutions have been organised. The following forms of faculty cooperation are applied to determine the quality of academic and scientific activities in the implementation of the Study Programme:

1. Mutual attendance of lectures / classes, master classes / examinations of the lecturers of the Academy, which allows to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the class-work;
2. Preparation of annual reports of the Academy's lecturers on academic and scientific activities, publications, participation in scientific research and scientific conferences;
3. Promoting the international exchange of the Academy's lecturers by attracting funding from international funds and creating an opportunity for the Academy's lecturers to gain experience in foreign universities;
4. Inviting highly qualified guest lecturers and lecturers to teach Study Courses, conduct masterclasses, including from foreign universities;
5. Analysing and evaluating of the content of the Study Programme, preparing self-evaluation reports for the past academic year. The obtained data and conclusions then considered at the meetings of the Faculty Council and the Senate;
6. Implementing quality control and analysis of the study process and teaching, which is regularly performed by the responsible person from Programmes and the Faculty Council;
7. Surveys and analysis of graduate's work skills and their suitability for the labour market;
8. Student surveys, obtaining an opinion on the implementation of specific Courses of Study Programmes, the compliance of the content and form of teaching with the requirements of study quality;
9. Use of external experts to evaluate the study process and students' knowledge;
10. Strategic planning of the study process, analysing the weak points of the Study Programmes, their elimination and the possibilities of the Programme development.

## **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

### Conclusions

In general, when assessing the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the Study Programme "Entrepreneurship", it must be acknowledged that they are highly qualified and have the necessary professional experience in their fields of activity. At the same time, it must be recognised that there is a need to continuously improve their knowledge and put into practice the latest trends in teaching. The knowledge and skills of the teachers involved in the program in the field of English language and IT need to be significantly improved.

### Strengths

1. Teaching staff representatives are good professionals in their teaching field.
2. The Study Programme "Entrepreneurship" is very popular in the regions of Latvia. Its lecturers and graduates take an active part in shaping regional policy and the business environment.

3. The academic staff is involved in scientific research at national and less at international level.

#### Weaknesses

1. Staff trainings for foreign languages are not sufficient.
2. Scientific activities of teachers are mainly concentrated in BIA Riga with much lower involvement of branches.
3. Too centralized management of branches and the insufficient attention of the Academy's management to the needs of the regions.
4. The relationship between scientific work and Study Programme development was not clearly explained.
5. Lack of international scientific conferences, publications.
6. Number of incoming teachers is not significant.

## 5. Assessment of the Compliance of the Study Programme "Entrepreneurship"

### 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

**Justification:** Diploma complies with the procedure by which state-recognised documents of higher education are issued. Diploma provided in the SER Annex UD\_diplom\_EN.docx

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

**Justification:** Agreement about possibilities to continue the education signed with Transport and Telecommunication Institute and EKA University of Applied Sciences SER Annex COOPERATION AGREEMENT\_Work translate\_EN.docx

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

**Justification:** Attestation provided in the document SER Annex BIA\_Performance of Obligations Bc.2020.pdf

14.02.2020 Nr. 31/3572 SER Annex Bak\_Agreement.doc

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

**Justification:** According to the document SER Annex Latvian.pdf, "Education field "Management field" Management, Administration and Real Estate Administration " Academic staff knowledge of official language ( 01.12.2019) The knowledge of the national language corresponds to the regulation on state language proficiency test for professional and positional duties (no.733) At the same time, during the visit, the experts encountered problems

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:** Partially compliant

**Justification:** According to the document "English language skills of the academic staff of the professional Bachelor Study Program "Entrepreneurship" all teachers related foreign language have at least B-2 level knowledge SER Annex English.pdf Yet, during the visit expert panel identified that the proficiency level of English language is very poor.

- 6 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

**Justification:**

- 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

**Justification:**

- 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

**Justification:** The study agreement complies with the mandatory provisions to be included. Attestation provided in the document SER Annex Bak\_Agreement.doc

- 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

**Justification:** The descriptions of the Study Courses include the requirements for the commencement of the acquisition of the study course, the aims for the implementation of the Study Course and the planned learning outcomes, the content of the study, the Study Course calendar, literature, other sources of information, etc.

All these materials are prepared in all languages in which the Study Programme is implemented

- 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:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** Study Programme "Entrepreneurship" fully complies with a valid professional standard

Annex. Compliance of the obtained qualification of the educational program with the professional standard .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

**Justification:**

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** The Study Programme complies with the State Professional Higher Education Standard  
SER Annex Compliance of the study program “Entrepreneurship” with the state education standard.docx

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

**Justification:**

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:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** Among 56 staff members 32 has publications (Annex List of scientific publications of the teaching staff.pdf), other 24 has practical work experience from 5 to 35 years (Annex CV)

15 P5 - Overall rating

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

**Justification:** In general, the Study Program “Entrepreneurship” meets the necessary requirements, but during the visit expert panel identified that the proficiency level of English language of the teachers is very poor.

## 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:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** The Programme has good resource base, the students and the teaching staff have access to the necessary resources to ensure the quality of teaching and learning process

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:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** There are 56 lecturers involved in the implementation of the Professional bachelor Study Programme “Entrepreneurship”, among them there are 35 docents (63%) with a doctoral degree (32 elected in the BIA and 3 non-elected), 21 docents (37%) have a Master’s degree (15 elected in the BIA and 6 non-elected) and two of them study in the doctoral programme.

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

**Justification:**

## Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

Conclusions

The aim, tasks, learning outcomes (LOs) and the content of the Study Programme are coherent, relevant and in line with regulations and professional standards. They are also in line with the goal

to train high level managers of the companies and represent general management approach to the developed skills and competences. However, the aim, tasks and LOs are not coherent with the title of the Study Programme, which is Entrepreneurship. The Study Programme is not in line with the leading European and worldwide Programmes in entrepreneurship. If general management focus of the Programme is retained, its title has to be changed. Admission requirements are in line with the level of studies.

The content of the Study Programme is not sufficiently relevant to entrepreneurship. But it represents general management knowledge and skills focused on mid and large size companies with international operations. The curriculum of the Study Programme is the same in all branches as well as in part time and part-time extramural studies. The Study Programme is constructed in 6 parts which seems logical and in line with the level of studies. Yet content of the parts (i.e. Study Courses) need to be reviewed and updates to reflect the newest achievements in the market and/or moved to other part of the Study Programme. The descriptions of the Study Courses/ modules, the internship, and the Diploma thesis comply with the provisions set forth in the regulatory enactments. The descriptions include all the required information, yet they need to be updated. Literature sources of many courses are outdated, some courses have required literature in Russian, others (taught in English) do not list any required information in English. Study implementation and evaluation methods in general contribute to the achievement of the aims and LOs of the study courses and the Study Programme. Yet there is no single approach towards the weight of the final exam and/or scope of independent work among courses with the same credits. The outcomes of the surveys regularly conducted among the students, employers, and graduates are used to improve the quality of studies. The incoming and outgoing mobility opportunities of students need further improvement, and the learning outcomes achieved during such mobility should be recognised.

Despite the fact that the Study Programme "Entrepreneurship " is taught in many Latvian universities, it is still popular at BIA. According to the expert panel, its popularity is ensured by the orientation of the Programme in the direction of regional policy and economy, which is ensured by the network of branches (together with Riga 3 training centres) and the opportunity to cooperate directly with regional politicians and entrepreneurs. The study provision, informative provision, material and technical provision is well prepared to ensure high-quality study process also in the future.

#### Strengths

1. Programme is well known in the Latvian local education market in the regions (Daugavpils and Liepaja) and has competitive advantages.
2. Both graduates and entrepreneurs are highly evaluating the good level of professional knowledge and its implementation, knowledge of regional aspects and needs by BIA students.
3. Development of the Study Programme "Entrepreneurship" is based on the creation and maintenance of a strict resource base, constant analysis of labour market requirements and is implemented in accordance with the Strategy of the Study Direction.
4. E-resources are developed, a unified Moodle system is applied and widely used by teaching staff and students.
5. BIA undertakes measures to guarantee the quality of the implementation of the Study Programme and the compliance of the Study Programme with the aims and requirements.
6. Specialists with extensive professional experience involved in the management of the Study Programme.
7. Teaching staff representatives are good professionals in their teaching field.

#### Weakness

1. The aim, tasks, LOs and the content of the Study Programme are not sufficiently relevant to the development of entrepreneurs.
2. Title of the Programme is not in line with its aim, tasks and LOs. Entrepreneurship related knowledge and skill are not sufficiently taught in the Study Programme.

3. Some Study Courses outdated and/or need to be replaced; the content of the Study Programme needs to be updated to better reflect latest needs of the market and strengthen IT related, personal and English language skills of students.
4. Required literature sources are mostly very old, some required literature is not in the language of teaching.
5. Diversity of teaching and assessment methods are not well thought of and not according to the latest trends in the higher education.
6. Study Programme development plans are not pretty concrete and do not include measurable goals. The relationship between scientific work and Study Programme development was not clearly explained;
7. Decision-making process on the top management level and responsibility-taking from the academic staff side is not efficient.
8. Communication with stakeholders is insufficient and/or incomplete.
9. Low level of students' English language knowledge, skills and their application, lack of specialized subjects in English.
10. High drop-out rate is in the first study year.
11. Great attention to the local labour market, yet poor preparation of students for global competition.
12. Mechanisms for the involvement of the teaching staff in scientific research is not clear. Scientific activities of teachers are mainly concentrated in BIA Riga with much lower involvement of branches.

### **Evaluation of the study programme "Entrepreneurship"**

Evaluation of the study programme:

Average

### **6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Entrepreneurship"**

#### **Short-term recommendations**

- |  |
|--|
| 1. To ensure the coherence between the title and the aim, tasks and LOs of the Study Programme. To review the content of the Programme either strengthening entrepreneurship or concentrating on the general management. In both cases the content of the Study Programme has to include the latest achievement in science and business practices. |
| 2. To increase the level of use of IT instruments, modern teaching methods and English language by academic staff. To invest in further academic staff development and/or attraction of young academic professionals.  |
| 3. To involve more business representatives and industry professionals in the development of the Study Programme and learning process.   |
| 4. To increase involvement of stakeholders in the study process (with lectures, local cases and field trips), to provide students with up-to-date local market-oriented knowledge  |
| 5. To update (at least required) literature sources of study courses to provide students with the up to date and relevant literature (up to 5 years old) in all teaching languages.  |
| 6. To improve communication about students' scientific activities with students in Daugavpils and Liepaja Branches   |

## Long-term recommendations

1. To review, restructure and update the curriculum of the Study Programme to better comply with needs of regional business development, to include the latest scientific and practical achievements and to place more focus on personal and social skills development of the students (including languages).
2. To develop a mechanism on how to give more freedom to the Branches in the implementation of the Study Programme, based on local needs. Use of elective courses, adjustments of internship requirements and stronger cooperation with social partners could be used among the tools to strengthen the regional visibility of the BIA.
3. To create a mechanism which would ensure that library stocks are constantly replenished with up to date (up to 5 years old) books and periodicals in all teaching languages
4. To shift learning and assessment of students' achievements towards more active practice-oriented methods.
5. To pay higher attention to the lifelong learning and development of the focused short-term learning programmes on the base of Study Programme "Entrepreneurship" for adults.
6. To develop e-learning resources and related quality assurance procedures of the Study Programme.

## II. "Business Management and Administration" ASSESSMENT

### II. "Business Management and Administration" ASSESSMENT

#### 1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

##### Analysis

Self-evaluation report (SER) indicate that the Study Programme "Business Management and Administration" has been implemented for 14 years. The Study Programme provides graduates with a Professional Master's degree in company management and administration and no qualification. The question of the Study Programme that does not provide qualification was pointed out during the on-site meetings but experts were assured by BIA management that it's legal. Despite the received explanation, the experts see it as a shortcoming of the Study Programme, pointing the low value-added to students in choosing this Programme. SER specifies that the Master Study Programme is implemented in two lengths: full-time studies, in Latvian and English (1 year, 6 months) with 60 credit points (hereafter - CP) and full-time studies in Latvian and English (2 years, 0 months) with 80 CP.

To be admitted to 1.5-year Programme a person shall have obtained professional bachelor's degree in business, management, marketing, finance and/or economics and/or 2nd level higher professional education and professional 5 levels of qualification in business, management, marketing, finance and/or economics. A person is qualified for the admission to the 80 CP (120 ECTS) credit Study Programme if he had completed a relevant First Level Professional Higher Education or if the applicant has Bachelor's degree or its equivalent in other fields of studies. In this case the entrant to the 80 CP (120 ECTS) credit Study Programme has to complete the Preparatory Semester courses and/or pass the written examinations in the Preparatory Semester course subjects.

Along with the other application documents, students must submit the motivation letter. Prerequisite knowledge of English is set for international students. The language proficiency skills shall correspond at least to the level EKP B2. The expert panel concluded that the admission

requirements are in line with level of studies and are the sufficient prerequisite to reach the aim of the Study Programme.

Till 2019 the Study Programme has been provided in Riga campus and two branches (Daugavpils and Liepaja). However, during the assessment period, the number of students' in Liepaja branch was tiny (7 students in 2018/2019 academic year). In 2018/2019 academic year Riga campus had 70 students and Daugavpils branch - 35 students. Since 2019 Master Study Programme is offered in the main unit in Riga and Daugavpils branch.

Before 2019 the Programme has been implemented in Latvian, English, Russian and bilingual. According to SER bilingual means Latvian - above 80% of the credits and English - up to 20% of the credits. Due to the change of regulations since 2019 - in Latvian, English and bilingual. The provided data revealed that most students study in English (in Riga campus) and bilingually (Latvian and English) in Daugavpils branch.

SER also identifies that the aim, objectives and learning outcomes of the Study Programme had been updated since previous evaluation, while the title and amount of credits remained unchanged. Besides the aim of the Programme, the SER also indicates 6 tasks and 15 LOs of this Study Programme. The expert panel concluded that the aim, tasks, learning outcomes (Los) and the content of the Study Programme are coherent, relevant and in line with regulations and the level of studies. Yet the expert panel was not convinced if (in what Study courses) to raise students' awareness of social, economic and environmental sustainability and their challenges, also in the global context, by developing skills to assess such challenges and to make appropriate management decisions may be fulfilled with the current curriculum.

During the 2014-2019 period, the total number of enrolled students varied from 90 to 110. The majority of students studied in a Riga campus varying from 50 to 73 (with 68 students in 2019). In comparison, students of the Study Programme in Daugavpils branch had from 14 to 35 (with 20 students in 2019). Taking into consideration high competition in the local higher education market and relatively low number of students, Daugavpils branch is experiencing sustainability and profitability issues.

Numbers of international students slightly increased to 50 in 2019. The majority of international students came from Russia and post-soviet countries (Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Belarus and Georgia) also Pakistan and other countries. International students mainly were located in Riga campus.

Drop-out rates had also slightly increased, respectfully 20 in 2018/2019 and 34 in 2019/2020. SER provides an analysis of drop-out reasons. Main reasons are the following: own free will, due to academic failure, due to financial debts and because of termination of the study contract. BIA identified one more reason for drop-out that persons after an academic leave didn't resume studies to write a Master's thesis, despite having completed the study program. To reduce the relevant drop-out issues, BIA introduced the number of procedures.

SER states that the Study Programme is devoted to "prepare qualified entrepreneurs and managers with up-to-date knowledge, leadership competencies and critical thinking skills enabling them to establish, manage and develop new businesses, as well as manage and develop private sector companies, public bodies, municipalities, non-governmental organisations, ensuring their growth and modification". During the on-site meetings with stakeholders (students, employers, graduates), the focus of the Study Programme on small-medium enterprises has emerged clearly. It is seen as a strong point helping to distinguish this Programme among others. The need for such specialists (graduates) was confirmed by the employers in Riga also Daugavpils. Therefore, the question of the appropriateness of the title of the Study Programme emerged not only from the small-medium business perspective but also due to insufficient coverage of business administration topics in the content of the Study Programme.

## **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

## Conclusions

The analysis of the indicators that describe the Study Programme revealed that the degree to be obtained, the aims, the tasks, the study results and the admission requirements are mutually compatible. Yet the title of the Study Programme does not reflect the focus of the Study Programme towards small-medium companies; and in contrary, focus on business administration is overstated in the title. Depending on the background students can be admitted to the Programme for 1,5 or 2 years. The studies are provided in Latvian, English or bilingually. The expert panel concluded that the admission requirements are in line with level of studies and are the sufficient prerequisite to reach the aim of the Study Programme.

## Strengths

1. The Study Programme is positioned towards small-medium enterprise's needs, which are in demand in the market.
2. Employers and graduates provided strong commitment and support to the Study Programme.

## Weaknesses

1. Low attractiveness of the Study Programme to local students.
2. Daugavpils branch has sustainability and profitability issues, due to very competitive higher education market in the region.
3. The Study Programme does not provide qualification for the graduates.

## **2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof**

### **Analysis**

The Study Programme is constructed in 4 parts: Compulsory study courses, Compulsory elective study courses, practical placements and final examination, which seems logical and in line with the level of studies. The curriculum of the Study Programme is the same in the main unit in Riga and Daugavpils branch. The difference between 90 ECTS and 120 ECTS programmes mostly lays in introductory level courses for those students who do not have relevant prior experience. The expert panel didn't find the composition of the compulsory study courses part logical - there are a few courses dedicated to the finance, yet no courses related to human resource management. In general, this is a very basic and traditional Business Administration programme. Plans to add Social entrepreneurship into the Study Programme in the nearest future. The expert panel found that it lacks up to date scientific and practical achievements, such as performance management, digitisation, sustainable development, contemporary (small-medium) business financing models and instruments, etc. The expert panel also drew attention that study course Global Macroeconomics and International Finance does not have required international finance topics; its placement within the compulsory part of the Programme is not clear.

The descriptions of the study courses, the internship, and the final thesis are pretty good quality and comply with the provisions set forth in the regulatory enactments. The content is relevant and complementary, and it complies with the aims of the study programme, ensures the achievement of the learning outcomes, and mostly meets the needs of the relevant industry trends.

Information provided in SER proves that the descriptions of the study courses include all the required information, e.g. course aims, learning outcomes, course content and planned hours, recommended literature and additional sources of information, organisation of the independent studies, course learning outcomes and assessment criteria, also the grading system. Provided course descriptions are comparable in their format. After reviewing the descriptions of the study courses the expert panel notices that in some courses the required literature is outdated (some of required literature for courses Organizational Behavior, Human Resource Marketing and Labour Market, Human Resource Economics, Cross-cultural Communication was published in 2000 or earlier, some even in 1995) Also, some courses have literature in Russian among the required literature (i.e. Organisation Management, Analysis of the Business Strategy and Risks).

After reviewing the course descriptions the expert panel concluded that the study implementation and evaluation methods in general contribute to the achievement of the aims and LOs of the study courses and the Study Programme. Many of the study courses evaluate students based on their active participation in lectures and seminars, written and oral presentation of independent tasks and exams. Yet, the expert panel was not convinced if the grading system is coordinated and properly planned (from students' workload perspective for courses of the same size). Also, in the courses with the same study scope (expressed in study credits) independent tasks and homework vary from 1 to 4 tasks and from 20 % to 60% of the final grade.

The study implementation methods, including the evaluation methods, contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study courses and the study programme. Student-centred learning and teaching principles are partly taken into account. Yet, examination using multiple choice questions and other tests is not acceptable in the master level programme where students shall demonstrate application of knowledge and transfer of knowledge abilities. The description of some modules of the study programme looks too theoretical. Too much theory without practical use of it. So experts could assume that the real content of study subjects passed to students is very much depending on lecturers' professional knowledge and practical experience.

Academy is helping with internship opportunities to international students. But the local students, if they are not working, are looking for places of practice themselves. If the local students are working, the internship is taking place in their working place, which raises concerns if students engage in an organised acquisition of new knowledge according to the LOs of the Study Programme.

The expert panel concluded that the process and content of the internships and Diploma thesis is appropriate for the level of studies and is sufficient for the achievement of the Study Programme's aim and tasks. Some two years ago BIA management made the decision about research saying that each MBA student should have at least one publication. Students are presenting their research results on the International scientifically practical conferences (the 9th and 10th conferences took place in May 2019 and 2020, May). The conferences have published materials.

The outcomes of the surveys regularly conducted among the students, employers, and graduates are used to improve the quality of studies. The last protocol of such analysis is dated by September 10th, 2020 was available to experts.

The number of mobility students provided in attachment to SER is very low during evaluation period within Master Programme (no one of the incoming and 0 to 2 outgoing mobility students per year). The experts' impression about the incoming and outgoing mobility is following: students do not avail themselves of mobility opportunities, and the reason might be - academy did not demonstrate its' interest in mobility of BIA students. Although academy has many international agreements with high schools abroad, there are no any inner documents regulating incoming and outgoing mobility and defining, how the learning outcomes achieved during such mobility are recognised. From the interviews the experts got opinion, that students both in Riga and Daugavpils branches are not very much informed about outgoing mobility opportunities.

## **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

Conclusions:

The expert panel found that the Study Programme lacks up to date scientific and practical achievements, such as performance management, digitalisation, sustainable development, etc. It is unclear what is the logics behind the composition of the compulsory study courses part. The descriptions of the study courses/ modules, the traineeship, and the final thesis are of high quality and comply with the provisions set forth in the regulatory enactments. The descriptions include all the required information. Literature sources in some study courses are outdated. Tests are not an appropriate mean of examination in the master level studies. The outcomes of the surveys regularly conducted among the students, employers, and graduates are used to improve the quality of

studies. The incoming and outgoing mobility opportunities of students need further improvement, and the learning outcomes achieved during such mobility should be recognised.

Strengths:

1. Composition and content of the course descriptions are according to the formal requirements.
2. Well organised process of Programme review and improvement.
3. Internship opportunities to international students are ensured.

Weaknesses:

1. The curriculum of the Study Programme seems basic and lacks to implement up to date scientific and business achievements.
2. The logics behind the composition of the compulsory study courses part is unclear.
3. The description of some modules of the Study Programme looks too theoretical.
4. Literature sources in some study courses are well outdated.
5. Examination using multiple choice questions and other tests is not acceptable in the master level programme.
6. Low outgoing mobility of the students. Explanations were not provided if and how LOs achieve during such mobility are recognised.
7. Involvement of business professionals and experts as guest lecturers and members of examination boards is underdeveloped.

### **3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme**

#### **Analysis**

The methodological and informative resources are provided by BIA are intended for each case, as well as for a qualitative research process. Teachers of all Study Programs have created Moodle Study Courses, in which students can access study materials related to the Study Course. These include Study Course descriptions, requirements and materials for the Study Course. When learning remotely, students do their homework in this way and communicate with the teacher in the Moodle environment. Lecturers provide feedback on student achievement.

BIA has also provided an information system NEXUS, where students and lecturers can get acquainted with the planning of classes and premises, work and internship opportunities. NEXUS is currently creating a section where students can get acquainted with internal regulations, study programs, internship programs, academic news, etc. This information is currently available on the BIA website.

BIA students have the opportunity to use BIA library resources. The library consists of a subscription section and a reading room. The library is provided with the necessary literature, supplementing the knowledge and informative materials not only about business management, but also about human resource management, which is relevant today, but these materials are mostly in Russian. As the Study Programme "Business Management and Administration" will no longer be implemented in Russian, but in English, the higher education institution has to supplement the literature sources in English, which is currently 21 times less than the sources in Russian. HEI has taken care of periodicals to keep students up to date but they also should be readable in Latvian and English. Given the large number of international students, more readable resources are needed in English. The reading room of the student hotel is available with 11 computers with internet access, printing and copying facilities that can be used by both students and academic staff.

In order to ensure academic integrity and prevent plagiarism, the beginning of the planning of students' final theses should be checked with a unified computerized inter-university plagiarism control system.

The study process for students takes place in the premises of two buildings in Riga, as well as in the building belonging to the academy in Daugavpils. The mentioned buildings have auditoriums, which are created with modern studio technical aids - whiteboards, it is possible to use a television set,

video recorder, video camera, multimedia projector. Many auditoriums and equipped with a stationary multimedia projector, screen, computer or Internet connection and other technical means. BIA uses modern information technologies for research, such as computers, NEXUS internal information system, Internet, audio / video tools, office equipment, projectors.

## **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

### Conclusions

Overall the study provision, informative provision, material and technical provision is well prepared to ensure quality study process in the future.

### Strengths

1. BIA is using NEXUS internal information system works successfully.
2. BIA is using Inter-university plagiarism control system.

### Weaknesses

1. Extremely low number of books in English provided by library.
2. Low number of periodicals in Latvian and English.

## **4. Teaching Staff**

### **Analysis**

BIA teaching staff of the Study Programme "Business Management and Administration" is professional and knows well the conducted subject. Academy has developed and implements the procedures for attracting highly skilled teaching staff. In result of it teaching staff representatives are good professionals in their teaching field. The needs of the teaching staff for professional improvement - like use of different kinds of IT programmes for delivering lectures, materials and consultation online - are identified and supported by in-house training. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that their knowledge needs to be constantly improved, especially in the field of IT, and that the latest teaching trends need to be put into practice.

The analysis of the dynamics of the teaching staff during the period from the academic year 2013/2014 to the autumn semester of 2018/2019 demonstrates that the number of teaching staff has slightly increased from 24 to 27. Not only has the quantitative composition of teaching staff changed, but qualitative changes have also been made, for example in the academic year 2013/2014 there were 3 professors in the Study Programme, while in study year 2018/2019 there are 5. The positive tendency stems from the staff development and succession policy through engagement of BIA graduates with a Master's or Doctoral degree from the BIA.

The teaching staff is recruited by the BIA branch on the basis of the common requirements for the academic staff of the BIA. The study process in the branches is planned to be centrally coordinated with the Study Programme managers by jointly forming the teaching staff for the study process. Academic staff from both Riga and the regions is attracted to the study process to provide higher education, professional skills and competences closer to the student's place of residence. Lecturers at the time of lectures in the branches are compensated for the travel and accommodation expenses. They also have at their disposal the service flats at Teatra str.24-1, Teatra str.24-3, Teatra str.24-6, Daugavpils. The Study Programme "Business Management and Administration" is popular in the regions of Latvia, the lecturers and graduates of which actively participate in the formation of regional policy and business environment. Despite the fact that this program is available only in fulltime form in the Daugavpils branch, many students from the regions continue to study in the master's Programme in the form of distance learning.

Distribution of teaching staff by academic position - five professors (18.5%), three associate

professors (11.1%), two senior researchers (7.4%), 12 assistant professors (44.4%), four lecturers (14.8 %) and 1 assistant (3.7%). Distribution of teaching staff by scientific degree - 19 (16 BIA elected, 3 unelected) members of teaching staff hold doctoral degree (70.4%), 8 (6 BIA elected, 2 unelected) members of teaching staff hold Master's degree (29.6%), three of them are studying for doctoral degree.

Considering that the Programme to be accredited will be implemented in Latvian and English, the qualification of the teaching staff in the state and foreign languages is as follows: Latvian language skills - when it is not the mother tongue - C-level; English language skills - starting at B1 level and above, for those teaching in English fluency - B2 and above. According to the information included in the self-assessment report (Annex English language skills academic staff\_EN.jpg), everything is in accordance with the requirements. At the same time, during a meeting with the Academy's lecturers, it was found that a large number of them have poor command of English, which calls into question the veracity of the information. There is only one foreign guest lecturer among the teachers of the Study Programme, who leads Compulsory elective Study Course "Business Project Management".

The quality of the Master's Programme studies depends on many factors, including the qualification and scientific activity of the academic staff, the ability to acquire and apply new teaching methods, the link with industry research and innovation. The qualification of the teaching staff is considered appropriate, as in general the Study Programme involves both active research staff publishing the results in indexed editions, thus being able to ensure quality in the acquisition of the scientific knowledge in the field, and some recognized professionals.

The research topics of the academic staff of the Study Programme "Business Management and Administration" are closely related to the content of the Study Programme and the academic courses of each lecturer. The academic staff of the Study Programme develop their research activities, according interests of their study field. As part of these activities, they conduct research, write and publish research papers, participate in conferences, and supervise research papers of students and postgraduates. The research work done by the academic staff of the Study Programme is used for the development and actualisation of the Study Programme and in the training of the students, and it has a direct influence on the study work. At the same time, the expert group found that the academic activity of BIA teaching staff is greater than research activity, as well as the fact that the scientific activity of the lecturers of the Study Programme is mainly realized at the local level. The experts were unclear if scientific work of teaching staff is conducted in an organized manner and if all teaching staff has equal possibilities to participate in it. When visiting the BIA branch in Daugavpils, the team of experts found that the study process is well ensured here, but no activities in the field of science and research take place, although meeting with employers' representatives experts found out that Latgale region would gladly involve BIA lecturers and students, especially master's students in research projects.

The Methodological Council was established by the BIA Senate decision "On the establishment of the Methodological Council», with one of its functions being to plan and implement events, i.e. public seminars for teaching staff and other interested people.

To develop the competences of the academic staff in creating and implementing inter-branch/interdisciplinary studies and Study Courses, the following seminars with the best lecturers of the academy as well as sectoral experts and representatives of governmental and non-governmental institutions have been organised. The following forms of faculty cooperation are applied to determine the quality of academic and scientific activities in the implementation of the Study Programme:

1. Mutual attendance of lectures / classes, master classes / examinations of the lecturers of the Academy, which allows to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the class-work;
2. Preparation of annual reports of the Academy's lecturers on academic and scientific activities, publications, participation in scientific research and scientific conferences;
3. Promoting the international exchange of the Academy's lecturers by attracting funding

from international funds and creating an opportunity for the Academy's lecturers to gain experience in foreign universities;

4. Inviting highly qualified guest lecturers and lecturers to teach Study Courses, conduct masterclasses, including from foreign universities;

5. Analysing and evaluating of the content of the Study Programme, preparing self-evaluation reports for the past academic year. The obtained data and conclusions then considered at the meetings of the Faculty Council and the Senate;

6. Implementing quality control and analysis of the study process and teaching, which is regularly performed by the responsible person from Programmes and the Faculty Council;

7. Surveys and analysis of graduate's work skills and their suitability for the labour market;

8. Student surveys, obtaining an opinion on the implementation of specific Courses of Study Programmes, the compliance of the content and form of teaching with the requirements of study quality,

9. Use of external experts to evaluate the study process and students' knowledge;

10. Strategic planning of the study process, analysing the weak points of the Study Programmes, their elimination and the possibilities of the Programme development.

## **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

### Conclusions

In general, when assessing the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the Study Programme "Business Management and Administration", it must be acknowledged that they are highly qualified and have the necessary professional experience in their fields of activity. At the same time, it must be recognised that there is a need to continuously improve their knowledge and put into practice the latest trends in teaching. The knowledge and skills of the teachers involved in the program in the field of foreign languages and IT need to be significantly improved. Given that the master's program serves as a first step for many students in the field of science and research, the lecturers involved in the program need to pay more attention to this aspect.

### Strengths

1. Teaching staff representatives are good professionals in their teaching field.

2. The Study Programme "Business Management and Administration" is popular in the regions of Latvia. Its lecturers and graduates take an active part in shaping regional policy and the business environment.

3. The academic staff is involved in scientific research at national and less at international level.

### Weaknesses

1. Staff trainings for foreign languages are not sufficient.

2. Mechanisms for the involvement of the teaching staff in scientific research is not clear.

3 Scientific activities of teachers are mainly concentrated in BIA Riga with much lower involvement of branches.

4. The relationship between scientific work and Study Programme development was not clearly explained.

5. Lack of international scientific conferences, publications.

6. Number of incoming teachers is not significant.

## **5. Assessment of the Compliance of the Study Programme "Business Management and Administration"**

### **Requirements**

- 1 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  
**Justification:** Diploma complies with the procedure by which state-recognised documents of higher education are issued. Diploma provided in the SER Annex DIPLOM\_UVA\_dipl\_EN.doc
- 2 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  
**Justification:** Agreement about possibilities to continue the education signed with Transport and Telecommunication Institute SER Annex SADARBĪBAS LĪGUMS\_BSA\_TSI\_2v (3) \_EN (0000002).docx  
Attestation provided in the document SER Annex BIA\_Performance of Obligations Mg.2020. 14.02.2020 Nr. 31/3571
- 3 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  
**Justification:** Attestation provided in the documents SER Annex BIA\_Performance of Obligations Mg.2020. 14.02.2020 Nr. 31/3571 SER Annex Mag\_Agreement.docx
- 4 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  
**Justification:** According to the document SER Annex Latvian.pdf, " Education field "Management field "Management, Administration and Real Estate Administration " Academic staff knowledge of official language ( 01.12.2019) The knowledge of the national language corresponds to the regulation on state language proficiency test for professional and positional duties (no.733) At the same time, during the visit, the experts encountered problems with the ability to communicate in Latvian from teachers.
- 5 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:** Fully compliant  
**Justification:** According to the document "English language skills of the academic staff of the professional Master Study Program" Business Management and Administration" all teachers related foreign language have at least B-2 level knowledge. SER Annex List of teaching staff\_ENG.xlsx  
At the same time, during the visit, the experts encountered problems with the ability to communicate in English from both students and teachers.
- 6 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  
**Justification:**

- 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  
**Justification:**
- 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  
**Justification:** The study agreement complies with the mandatory provisions to be included. Attestation provided in the document. SER Annex Mag\_Agreement.docx
- 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  
**Justification:** The descriptions of the Study Courses include the requirements for the commencement of the acquisition of the study course, the aims for the implementation of the Study Course and the planned learning outcomes, the content of the study, the Study Course calendar, literature, other sources of information, etc.  
All these materials are prepared in all languages in which the Study Programme is implemented.
- 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:** Not relevant  
**Justification:**
- 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  
**Justification:**
- 12 12. The study programme complies with the State Academic Education Standard or the Professional Higher Education Standard.  
**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant  
**Justification:** The Study Programme complies with State Professional Higher Education Standard SER Annex Compliance the state education standard 2.docx
- 13 13. The joint study programmes comply with the requirements prescribed in Section 55, Paragraphs one, two, and seven of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (if applicable).  
**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant  
**Justification:**
- 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:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** Among 27 staff members 18 has publications (SER Annex List of scientific publications of the teaching staff.pdf), other 9 has practical work experience from 5 to 35 years. SER Annex CV

15 P5 - Overall rating

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** In general, the Study Program meets the necessary requirements.

## 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:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** The programme has good resource base, the students and the teaching staff have access to the necessary resources to ensure the quality of teaching and learning process.

- 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:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** Distribution of teaching staff ( 27) by academic position - five professors (18.5%), three associate professors (11.1%), two senior researchers (7.4%), 12 assistant professors (44.4%), four lecturers (14.8 %) and 1 assistant (3.7%). Distribution of teaching staff by scientific degree - 19 (16 BIA elected, 3 unelected) members of teaching staff hold doctoral degree (70.4%), 8 (6 BIA elected, 2 unelected) members of teaching staff hold Master's degree (29.6%), three of them are studying for doctoral degree. SER Annexes List of teaching staff\_ENG.xlsx, CV\_Eng\_end.7z

- 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:** Partially compliant

**Justification:** The master degree of Professional Master Study Program" Business Management and Administration" curriculum of the Study Programme seems basic and lacks to implement up to date scientific and business achievements. Descriptions of multiple courses use well outdated literature. Some courses use testing as a main examination mean, which is not acceptable in graduate studies.

## Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

### Conclusions

The Study Programme is implemented in two lengths: full-time studies, in Latvian and English (1 year, 6 months) with 60 credit points and full-time studies in Latvian and English (2 years, 0 months) with 80 credit points in two locations - main campus in Riga and Daugavpils branch. Taking into consideration high competition in the higher education market, the expert panel supports different forms of implementation, yet sustainability of Daugavpils branch is under the consideration. The title of the Study Programme, the degree to be obtained, the aims, the tasks, the study results and the admission requirements are mutually compatible. Yet the title of the Programme does not reflect the focus of the Study Programme towards small-medium companies; and in contrary, focus on business administration is overstated in the title. The Study Programme lacks up to date scientific and practical achievements, such as performance management, digitalisation, sustainable development, etc. It is unclear what is the logics behind the composition of the compulsory part of the Study

Courses. The descriptions of the Study Courses/ modules, the traineeship, and the final thesis are of high quality and comply with the provisions set forth in the regulatory enactments. Literature sources in some Study Courses are well outdated. Tests are not an appropriate mean of examination in the master level studies. The outcomes of the surveys regularly conducted among the students, employers, and graduates are used to improve the quality of studies. The incoming and outgoing mobility opportunities of students need further improvement, and the learning outcomes achieved during such mobility should be recognised.

The study provision, informative provision, material and technical provision is well prepared to ensure high-quality study process also in the future. Library resources need to be updated.

Despite the fact that the Study Programme "Business Management and Administration " is taught in many Latvian universities, it is still popular at BIA. In our opinion, its popularity is ensured by the orientation of the Programme in the direction of regional policy and economy, which is ensured by the network of branches (together with Riga 2 training centres) and the opportunity to cooperate directly with regional politicians and entrepreneurs in the 8 branches together with Riga.

#### Strengths

1. Programme is well known in the Latvian local education market in the regions (Daugavpils) and has competitive advantages.
2. Both graduates and entrepreneurs are highly evaluating the good level of professional knowledge and its implementation, knowledge of regional aspects and needs, by BIA students.
3. Development of the Study Programme is based on the creation and maintenance of a strict resource base, constant analysis of labour market requirements and is implemented in accordance with the Strategy of Study Direction.
4. Different forms of verification of LOs have been assured.
5. E-resources are developed, a unified Moodle system is applied and widely used by teachers and students.
6. BIA undertakes measures to guarantee the quality of the implementation of the Study Programme and the compliance of the Study Programme with the aims and requirements.
7. Specialists with extensive professional experience involved in the management of the Study Programme.
8. Teaching staff are good professionals in their teaching field.
9. The academic staff is involved in scientific research at national and less at international level.
10. Well organised process of Programme review and improvement.

#### Weaknesses

1. The Study Programme does not provide with qualification.
2. The curriculum of the Study Programme seems basic and lacks to implement up to date scientific and business achievements. The logics behind the composition of the compulsory Study Courses part is unclear.
3. Unclear strategic orientation, merging in practical and scientific missions. The description of some modules of the Study Programme looks too theoretical. Too much theory without practical use of it.
4. Literature sources in some study courses are well outdated.
5. Examination using multiple choice questions and other tests is not acceptable in the master level Programme.
6. Diversity of teaching and assessment methods are not well thought of and not according to the latest trends in the higher education.
7. Study Programme development plans are not pretty concrete and do not include measurable goals. The relationship between scientific work and Study Programme development was not clearly explained.
8. Decision-making process on the top management level and responsibility-taking from the academic staff side is not efficient.
9. Communication with stakeholders is insufficient and/or incomplete.

10. Low incoming and outgoing mobility of teaching staff and outgoing mobility of students (especially in branches).

## Evaluation of the study programme "Business Management and Administration"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Average

## 6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Business Management and Administration"

### Short-term recommendations

1. To review and update the content of the Study Programme so it enables students to acquire the latest and up to date knowledge, skills and abilities required in the labor market.
2. To increase the level of use of IT instruments, modern teaching methods and English language by academic staff. To invest money in further academic staff development and/or attraction of young academic professionals.
3. To increase involvement of stakeholders in the in the development of the Study Programme and the study process (with lectures, local cases and field trips), to provide students with up-to-date local market-oriented knowledge
4. To update literature sources of the study courses as well as library resources with up to date literature (up to 5 years old) in both English and Latvian languages.
5. To replace test in the examination of students with the assessment methods requiring application and transfer of knowledge.
6. To improve communication about students' scientific activities with students in Daugavpils branches.

### Long-term recommendations

1. Empower the Study Programme "Business Management and Administration" for the needs of regional business development. To develop BIA branches as regional education and science centers, which actively participate in regional planning and development.
2. To give the regional branches more academic freedom by fostering the growth of their potential and increasing their relevance in the eyes of the local community.
3. Considering the experience accumulated in the BIA regional branches and the regional reforms taking place in Latvia, to choose the direction of regional policy and economy as one of the priority directions of its activities.
4. To review and update the curriculum of the Study Programme to implement up to date scientific and business achievements; to reconsider composition of the compulsory and elective parts of the Study Programme.
5. To establish a system and procedures for continuous involvement of stakeholders in the study process by offering them to participate in the study process as guest lecturers, to motivate students to do research for their companies, later to be used in students' Diploma papers.

6. To pay higher attention to the lifelong learning and development of short-term learning programmes on the base of Study Programme "Business Management and Administration" for adults.

7. To increase diversity of the teaching, learning, and assessment methods according to the latest trends in the higher education. To strengthen students' communication skills, creativity and initiative - to increase project work done by students in teams within the Study Programme.

### 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
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	Quality Assurance system is developed, well documented but its implementation still lacks focus and systematisation. BIA's Quality Assurance system performs the function of a formal tool for the external stakeholders (AIKA, Ministry of Science) rather than guidelines or practical tool for continuous improvement of BIA. Most of the parts of the system were hardly recognisable during the on-site meetings with representatives.
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	Well established net of cooperation agreements throughout the world and clear directions for the further development of international cooperation. Yet, during the visit the expert panel was not convinced that teaching staff and students of the Study Direction take advantage of such cooperation. No or very little evidence on cooperation with local and international business entities (apart from internships). Low incoming and outgoing mobility of the teachers and outgoing mobility of students.

Requirements	Requirement Evaluation		Comment
R3 - Compliance of scientific research and artistic creation with the development level thereof (if applicable).		Partially compliant	Clear priorities/directions of scientific work yet information and procedures on organisation of scientific work are unclear and unevenly understood by different stakeholder groups. There are no clear and measurable plans for scientific activities as well as the system of accountability and performance measurement of scientific activities. The relationship between scientific work and study direction development was not clearly explained. Scientific activities are mainly concentrated in BIA Riga Branch with much lower involvement of branches. Low involvement in applied research in all locations.
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.	Fully compliant		BIA has fully implemented the recommendations from the previous evaluation of the Study Direction.

#### 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	Entrepreneurship (42345)	Partially compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Not relevant	Average

<b>No.</b>	<b>Study programme</b>	<b>R5</b>	<b>R6</b>	<b>R7</b>	<b>R8</b>	<b>Evaluation of the study programme (excellent, good, average, poor)</b>
2	Business Management and Administration (47345)	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Average

### **The Dissenting Opinions of the Experts**

Experts do not have different opinions