JOINT REPORT BY THE EXPERTS ON THE INCLUSION OF A LICENSED STUDY
PROGRAMME ON THE ACCREDITATION FORM

Rezekne Academy of Technologies

STUDY FIELD

"PRODUCTION AND PROCESSING"

FIRST CYCLE PROFESSIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAMME
"DESIGN TECHNOLOGIES"

Experts:

1. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Simona Grigaliūnienė

2. Designer, Mag. Art. Andra Irbite

01.08.2024.

DOCUMENT IS SIGNED WITH A SECURE ELECTRONIC SIGNATURE
AND CONTAINS A TIME STAMP

Table of contents

I. Summary of the Assessment

Concise summary of the assessment of the study programme to be included on the accreditation form and its compliance with the requirements set forth, as carried out by the experts. Specify the positive and negative aspects identified.

The study programme "Design Technologies" is run under the study field "Production and Processing" in Rēzekne Academy of Technologies (RTA). The objectives of the study field are focused on the strategic documents of the EU and Latvia, Latgale region and RTA. The goals of the study field were prepared according to the goals and objectives of the Faculty of Engineering and the strategic goals of RTA to offer the research-based interdisciplinary study programmes focused on the acquisition, application and development of innovative technologies. Study programme "Design Technologies" does correspond to the obtained degree of the professional bachelor in design and technologies and sixth level professional qualification of the product designer or interior designer. Overall experts conclude that this first cycle professional higher education study programme "Design Technologies" is relevant to the study field "Production and Processing".

Although, there is no clear feedback methodics from gathering the feedback from the employers, since during the visit all employer representatives have given different perspectives of how the feedback is gathered from them and there was no clear information provided about the feedback given to them after the surveys or the update of the study content. Also, the students gave a perspective that they can provide their opinion about the problems or their suggestions that could be implemented in the study programme, it seems that there are no student representatives from this study field that would be more included in the feedback provision to the highest level (Faculty, Academic Board).

Study programme "Design technologies" in the study field "Production and processing" is justified and corresponds to current trends in the design sectors, the demand of the industry, the specialisation of RTA, as well as to the goals and objectives formulated in Latvian and European economic, scientific, environmental sustainability and social development strategies. Although, in general, the content of study programme is balanced, the need for a separate study course "Textiles and Leather Products in Interior Design" is not clear, as well as the scope of the study course "Interior Sketching" (6 CP) in the study module "Interior design and product technologies".

It can be seen that there is a lack of data analysis on dynamics of development of the relevant design sectors in Latvia, as well as employment indicators, but there is the greatest competition among designers in these areas and that shows a potential of the increased student amount in the study programme. Study base, including the library's collections, offered databases, teaching staff, staff of the participating structural units: specialists of the study process and personnel department, lifelong learning centre and library staff, personnel of the Information and Communication Technology Research Center, is appropriate for the implementation of the study programme. RTA provides the licences for computer design programmes for students, but not all the licences can be used for students at home. Also, a concerning aspect is that there is no

unique system (methodics provided for the teachers) to prepare the study content for students, and some of the staff members do not use Moodle, which is really useful for students to have a possibility to review the study course material at home.

However, to promote the competitiveness of the study programme - it would be necessary to attract designers and design project managers, marketing specialists with international experience, especially in the study module "Product design and technologies". RTA has shown the implementation of the short-term recommendation from the licensing of the study programme, but there are of course left the long-term recommendations that should be implemented in the near future.

II. Description of the study programme

1. Indicators describing the Study Programme

1.	Name of the higher education institution/college	Rezekne Academy of Technologies
2.	Name of the study field corresponding to the study programme	Production and processing
3.	Name of the study programme	First cycle professional higher education study programme "Design Technologies"
4.	Code of the study programme in accordance with the Latvian Education Classification	42214, 42548
5.	Language of study programme implementation	Latvian
6.	Amount, duration, form and type of the study programme (also distance-learning)	240 ECTS (160 CP), 4 years, full-time studies
7.	Admission requirements	Secondary education
8.	Address of the study programme implementation, indicating whether the study programme is implemented in the branches of the higher education institution / college	Atbrivosanas aleja 115, Rezekne, LV-4601
9.	Degree, professional qualification or degree and professional qualification to be awarded	Professional bachelor's degree in design and technologies and sixth level professional qualification of a product designer or interior designer
10.	Date of study programme licensing	29.06.2023.
11.	Date of starting the implementation of the study programme	01.09.2023.
12.	Accreditation term of the study field	05.10.2028.

Analysis

1. Compliance of the study programme with the study field.

As it is presented in the Self Assessment Report (SAR, page nr. 2) the study programme "Design Technologies" (hereinafter - the Study Programme) is run under the study field "Production and Processing" in Rezekne Academy of Technologies (Rēzeknes Tehnoloģiju akadēmija) (hereinafter - RTA). The objectives of the study field are focused on the strategic documents of the EU and Latvia, Latgale region and RTA: "Europe 2030", "Strategy of Latgale 2030" etc., also by consulting with the students, employers, and professional organisations.

The goals of the study field were prepared according to the goals and objectives of the Faculty of Engineering and the strategic goals of RTA to offer the research-based interdisciplinary study

programmes focused on the acquisition, application and development of innovative technologies. This corresponds to the aim of the study field: to offer high-quality study programmes that provide studies in production and processing-related industries and inter-sectors, trainings of competent, qualified professional specialists who meet the requirements of the labour market and the national economy for the regional, national and international labour market, activity and competitiveness in a changing socio-economic context, creating motivation for further education, first cycle professional higher education and fifth level professional qualification.

The goal of the study programme is to provide interdisciplinary, design and engineering theory-based studies that are competitive in the labour market, relevant to economic, cultural and social needs and applicable in practice in order to obtain 6th level professional qualification and bachelor's professional higher education, specialising in clothing or industrial, or interior and product design and technologies (SAR, page nr. 9). This corresponds to the study field's aim which does focus on offering high-quality study programmes in production and processing-related industries, and training of competent, qualified professional specialists who meet the requirements of the labour market, creating motivation for further education, first cycle professional higher education (SAR, page nr. 4). It can be seen that the study programme does comply with the study field.

Design education study programmes globally and in Latvia are initially created in art schools, resulting in the continued perception that design is a branch of art, as verified by European and Latvian education classifications (ISCED-F 2013, Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 322 "Regulations on Latvian Classification of Education"LR Ministru kabinets, 2017) and curriculum content, so elements of art developmentally important for creativity, imagination and critical thinking are basic to design education in many countries. Latvia has strong art and artisan traditions that are the foundation for design education, however, the connection between design and various branches of the economy, production and science create the need for incorporation of subjects that are required for future designers, as well for cooperation and networking development, and this study programme fulfils that need.

2. Compliance between the title of the study programme, the degree to be awarded and the qualification (if applicable).

The profession standard "Product Designer" has been approved at the meeting of the Tripartite Cooperation Sub-Council on Professional Education and Employment on June 8th, 2022, Protocol No.3. The profession standard "Interior Designer" has been approved at the meeting of the Tripartite Cooperation Sub-Council on Professional Education and Employment on August 20th, 2008 Protocol No. 6 (SAR, page nr.7).

The title of The Study Programme reflects its aim of providing degree and qualification according to the professional standard the Product designer (6 PQL) comply to the specialisation modules Industrial design and technologies and Fashion Design and Technology and Interior designer (6 PQL) comply to the specialisation module Interior design and product technologies. In the way that corresponds to the development, acquisition and application of innovative technologies in the Latgale region, preparing the specialists necessary for the growth of the

Latgalian, Latvian, European economy. As it is presented in SAR the title of the study programme is "Design Technologies" does correspond to the obtained degree of the Professional bachelor in design and technologies and sixth level professional qualification of the product designer or interior designer (SAR, page 8). The study programme provides opportunity to its graduates ro acquire the professional knowledge for the profession of a designer taking into account various concepts and trends in today's industry.

3. Compliance of the study programme indicators (study programme code, amount, implementation duration) with the learning outcomes defined for it.

As it is presented in SAR (page nr. 8) the study programme "Design Technologies" has two codes according to the Latvian Classification of Education - 42214 and 42548. The type of the study programme is - professional bachelor's study programme with the obtained qualification of 6th level to be obtained. The scope of the study programme is 240 CP (ECTS) with a possibility to study full-time (4 years) in Latvian language. The learning outcomes for each of the specialisation modules of the study programme – Industrial Design and Technologies, Interior Design and Product Technologies, Fashion Design and Technology – are defined, in which the specific requirements of each design field (in accordance with the standards of the relevant professions) are more precisely expressed.

The focus achieved by the module "Industrial Design and Technologies" is concerning the skills leading to developing conceptual product solutions in accordance with the technical task and market requirements, using CAD, CNC and CAE systems, also analysing ergonomic properties of the products, and etc. "Interior Design and Product Technologies" module focuses on understanding the value criteria of art, architecture, interior design and related industrie, creation of the conceptual model of the interior project and full-scale interior project. "Fashion Design and Technology" module focuses on finding creative, innovative solutions to the problems of the design project, carry out design research activities.

Conclusions, strengths and weaknesses

The study programme "Design Technologies" is run under the study field "Production and Processing" in RTA. The objectives of the study field are focused on the strategic documents of the EU and Latvia, Latgale region and RTA. The title of The Study Programme reflects its aim of providing degree and qualifications in the way that corresponds to the development, acquisition and application of innovative technologies in the Latgale region, preparing the specialists necessary for the growth of the Latgalian, Latvian, European economy. The goals of the study field were prepared according to the goals and objectives of the Faculty of Engineering and the strategic goals of RTA to offer the research-based interdisciplinary study programmes focused on the acquisition, application and development of innovative technologies. The learning outcomes for each of the specialisation modules of the study programme – Industrial Design and Technologies, Interior Design and Product Technologies, Fashion Design and Technology – are defined, in which the specific requirements of each design field (in accordance with the standards of the relevant professions) are more precisely expressed.

Strengths:

1. The study programme fulfils the needs to improve the needs of the Latgale Region to prepare prospective specialists.
2. The study programme provides connection between design and various branches of the economy, production and science creating incorporation of subjects that are required for future designers.

Weaknesses: not identified

2. Topicality of the study programme

Analysis

1. The topicality of the study programme and the compliance of the content with the tendencies of the industry (area), the changes made since the licensing of the study programme.

The topicality of the study programme.

As stated in the SAR submitted by the RTA, the aim of the study programme is to "provide studies in production and processing related industries and inter-sectors, training of competent, qualified professional specialists who meet the requirements of the labour market and the national economy for the regional, national and international labour market, activity and competitiveness in a changing socio-economic context…" (SAR p.4). The study programme has been developed in accordance with strategic planning documents of the EU and Latvia, Latgale region and RTA: „Europa2030", Program for the modernisation of Europe's higher education systems", „Latvija 2030", „Strategy of Latgale 2030" "Guidelines for the Development of Education for 2021-2027", "RTA actions and development strategy 2016-2025", as well as in consultation with students, employers, professional organisations and discussing in the Council of Faculty of Engineering and Senate of RTA (SAR p.4).

The field of design technologies is directly related to the priorities of the Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030 (Latvia 2030), the Research and Innovation strategy for smart specialisation of Latvia, the National Development Plan of Latvia for 2021-2027 (NAP2027): the creation and commercialization of new ideas, knowledge transfer and user-driven research, the creation and introduction into production of innovative and internationally competitive products with high added value, amount and quality of knowledge and skills, which is an important resource for individual and national growth.

From the experts' point of view strategies and action plans formulated in the documents mentioned above, fully conform with current trends in the design industry. Justification of the topicality of the study programme is based on general directions of design development strategies: BEDA Guidelines for Design Policy Development, Sustainable Development Goals etc. but, above all, to the priorities included in the Latvian design strategy. In particular, the

priorities of the New European Bauhaus: to create a more sustainable and inclusive future through design, are relevant both for the European and national design industries.

The tendencies of the industry (area).

The content of the study programme modules and the scope of study subjects correspond to the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competencies defined in the professional standards of the 6th professional qualification level "Product designer" (approved on June 8, 2022) and "Interior designer" (approved on August 20, 2008).

The importance of the study programme in the growth of the national economy and the development of the design industry in Latvia is also confirmed by independent experts from the Latvian Designers Society, representatives from Municipalities of the state city of Rezekne, Daugavpils technical and industrial design centre "Inženieru arsenāls", T NEP (SAR, Annex 18); cooperation agreements have been concluded with such organisations and companies as Daugavpils Mark Rothko Art Centre, "Rezekne Culture and Tourism Center", Latgale Culture and History Museum, AS Rezekne bus park SIA Furniture factory "Stils" and others (SAR, Annex 19).

During the site visit in interview with the employers, some of them confirmed that the RTA is contacting them at least once per year by providing a questionnaire or by phone call, to receive the feedback about the students. They have discussions with the director of the RTA and study programme director and by participating and giving the feedback during the event like social partners days. Also, during the meeting with the students representatives it was stated that students do know about the possibility of being a part of the student council. So it can be confirmed that the study programme objectives are also reviewed and updated according to the given feedback from the students and employers, the same as the study field objectives are reviewed taking into account consultation from students, employers, and etc. (SAR, page nr. Although, there is no clear feedback methodics from gathering the feedback from the employers, since during the visit all employer representatives have given different perspectives of how the feedback is gathered from them and there was no clear information provided about the feedback given to them after the surveys or the update of the study content. Also, the students gave a perspective that they can provide their opinion about the problems or their suggestions that could be implemented in the study programme, it seems that there are no student representatives from this study field that would be more included in the feedback provision to the highest level (Faculty, Academic Board).

In general, the content of the study programme and the study modules provides a sufficient range of knowledge about interconnected complexity, human cognitive processes and emotions, technology and business, the aesthetic values of design today and in historical discourse, as well as knowledge about research methods and experimental design for proving assumptions. In order to improve the quality of the study programme, the descriptions of 8 study courses have been improved since the licensing (Additional_information document - Precizetie_studiju_kursu_apraksti_DT_25.03.2025 (available only in Latvian)).

It should be noted that the inclusion of such study subjects as "Basics of Artificial Intelligence" and "Virtual and Augmented Reality" is a new approach to the creation of study content in the design education in Latvia. Both the knowledge and skills to use artificial intelligence in research and design processes, as well as the possibilities of virtual and augmented reality when testing prototypes and spatial solutions, are increasingly becoming and will become an integral part of the design process.

Although the content of the study programme and the study modules is balanced, corresponds to the trends in the design industry and in individual design areas, the need for a separate study course "Textiles and Leather Products in Interior Design" (information that would justify the need for such a study course is not included in SAR) raises questions, as well as the scope of the study course "Interior Sketching" (6 CP) in the study module "Interior Design and Product Technologies". It is not clear whether such a strategy is related to the consolidation of RTA and RTU[1], as well as to long-term plans to create unique content for the study module (study course "Interior Sketching") whereas freehand techniques have become relevant in design.

The changes made since the licensing of the study programme.

After licensing, changes have been made in the credit point system of the study programme in accordance with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) (SAR Annex 1) by multiplying the number of Latvian credit points by 1.5 (AIC). Accordingly, the volume of the study programme, study modules and courses corresponds to the new model of credit points - ECTS = KP^2.

In general, short-term changes since the licensing of the study programme have been made in accordance with the recommendations (see section 4 of this report).

2. Dynamics of the student number and prospects of employment for graduates.

As indicated in the SAR (p.31), in the study year 2023/2024 all students were admitted to the professional bachelor's study programme "Interior Design" (licence valid until December 31, 2023) with a note in the admission rules that on January 1, 2024, students will transfer to the new first-cycle professional (bachelor) study programme "Interior Design and Product Technologies". As a result, the number of students in 2024, compared to 2023, has increased almost 3 times - 15 students are studying in 2024 - and budget places allocated by the state are filled.

---

[1] RTU implements a professional interdisciplinary "umbrella" type bachelor's study programme "Materials Technology and Design" with areas of specialisation:
• clothing design and technology;
• wood design and craft technologies;
• design and technology of leather goods;
• textile design and technologies. https://stud.rtu.lv/rtu/spr_export/prog_pdf_lv.101

[2] 1 ECTS KP – 25-30 hours of student workload
https://www.aic.lv/bolona/Bologna/London_conf/prezent/Mara_Jure.pdf

As mentioned in SAR (p. 31) - in the next enrollment period, students are scheduled to be enrolled in two modules of the study programme. That indicates the possibilities of further growth of the study programme therefore, a larger number of students and graduates are possible in the future. It is mentioned in the Annex No.16 of the SAR that "It is planned to enrol a student in one of the most requested modules for a period of at least two years". In the conversation with student representatives, it became clear that they highly value the opportunity to study at the RTA and in this study programme.

It is not clear how the implementers of the Study Programme plan to respond to the situation in the labour market: the demand for specialists or the lack of jobs. As mentioned on page 31 of SAR "...the professional bachelor's (first cycle) study programme is improved in accordance with the development trends in science and practice, thus expanding the employment and competitiveness of graduates in the labour market." It is also mentioned that external experts and organisations of industry employers were involved in the development of the study programme. However, these activities do not guarantee the employment of graduates, as the situation on the labour market is changing.

There is a lack of data analysis on dynamics of development of the relevant design sectors in Latvia, as well as employment indicators. The results of the survey conducted by the design office H2E (SAR p. 13) on the most demanded design fields in Latvia are mentioned as a justification for the choice of study modules as Interior design, Fashion design and Product design are among these fields. However, it also means that there is the greatest competition among designers in these areas.

Although employers' representatives emphasised the need for qualified designers, there is a lack of confidence that all graduates of the study programme will have opportunities to find jobs in their specialties in the Latgale region.

In order to solve possible graduate employment issues, it would be necessary to pay more attention to the creation of students' portfolios and the acquisition of business/project management competencies. As mentioned in the BEDA's (The Bureau of European Design Associations) websites section *In Focus: UpSkilling* (https://beda.org/topic/upskilling/), the design industry falls within the Cultural and Creative Industries which are made up of 99% SMEs or micro-enterprises. It also represents a high proportion of self-employed workers, part-time workers or workers on non-permanent contracts. Since the content of the study programme includes the study course "Commencement of Entrepreneurship" (6 CP) and as it was clarified in a conversation with the head of the Rezekne Business Incubator - graduates of the RTA are welcome to develop and commercialise their ideas and to receive support for starting their business. Interdisciplinarity, research, opportunities to cooperate with representatives from other modules of the study programme, as well as with representatives of other study programmes of the study field "Production and processing", would open up opportunities to find cooperation partners, to develop joint projects during and after studies, as well as to become self-employed or entrepreneurs.

Conclusions, strengths and weaknesses

The study programme "Design technologies" is topical both strategically - due to the change of the thematic area (from "Art" to "Production and processing"), as well as, in general, in terms of content and corresponds to current trends in the design industry and design education in Europe and elsewhere in the world.

Although, in general, the content of study programme is balanced, the need for a separate study course "Textiles and Leather Products in Interior Design" is not clear, as well as the scope of the study course "Interior Sketching" (6 CP) in the study module "Interior design and product technologies".

The report prepared by RTA and the on-site visit allow to conclude that the inclusion of the study programme "Design technologies" in the study field "Production and processing" is justified and corresponds to current trends in the design sectors, the demand of the industry, the specialisation of RTA, as well as to the goals and objectives formulated in Latvian and European economic, scientific, environmental sustainability and social development strategies.

Strengths:

1. Interdisciplinarity of the study programme.

2. In general, the content of the study programme and study modules is balanced, ensuring the acquisition of the necessary competencies for work in the chosen speciality.

3. Potential of the increased student amount in the study programme.

4. Many employers have confirmed that there are many students who are taking internships at their companies and that interns are enrolled in various work activities and would see potential for new vacancies.

Weaknesses:

1. A lack of data analysis on dynamics of development of the relevant design sectors in Latvia, as well as employment indicators.

2. A lack of justification why exactly textiles and leather products (not other natural or artificial materials) are so essential in interior design that a separate study course is needed in this area.

3. There is no clear feedback methodics from gathering the feedback from the employers.

4. There are no student representatives from this study field for the feedback provision at the highest level (Faculty, Academic Board).

3.   Resources and provision

Requirement [R1]: Compliance of the study base, science base (if applicable), information base (including library), material and technical base and financial base with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and for ensuring the achievement of learning outcomes.

Analysis

Study base:

Study base, including teaching staff, the staff of the participating structural units: specialists of the study process and personnel department, lifelong learning centre and library staff, personnel of the Information and Communication Technology Research Center, is appropriate for the implementation of the study programme. However, it should be noted - for the successful implementation of the study programme and the need for competitive designers in the future, specialists - mentors - with international experience in product design, development and management of interdisciplinary projects would be needed.

The library's collections, containing 54,214 copies in total (SAR, p. 37), correspond to the subjects of RTA study programmes and field. As mentioned in SAR (p. 37), the library collection is being updated, therefore, as seen in the course descriptions, includes the latest editions in the fields of design, architecture, engineering and other areas. Library users have access to interlibrary loan services. Databases offered by the library in 2023/2024. study year (iFinance, iTiesības, iBizness, Balance PLZ, Jurista Vārds, Skolas Vārds, Latvian Standards Library, EBSCO, ScienceDirect, Scopus, Web of Science, LNB Digital Collections) are useful for finding literature for the implementation of the study process, design and interdisciplinary research, project development and management. The e-resources section has been created on the library's website (https://www.rta.lv/biblioteka) where various hyperlinks with access to databases, scientific articles and open access resources are collected.

Financial base:

The financial base and costs are corresponding with the stated needs of the study programme, RTA uses both the state budget funding and private funds, revenues also include tuition fees in higher education, funding from EU structural funds, participation fees in seminars, conferences, courses, student hotel services, other operating income. As stated in SAR (p. 41-42), in 2023, the financial security of the study field "Production and processing" amounted to EUR 119299, including funding from the state budget. In 2023 the funding of the science base and the funding of scientific activity (performance) was almost EUR 1518954 (the science base funding - EUR 224880). The funding is not divided by study areas, so it is not specified how much % of science base and scientific activity fundings will be directed to the growth of the study programme "Design Technologies".

The main items of expenses are staff remuneration, expenses for the maintenance of premises and utility bills, material expenses of the study process, purchase of new equipment, redevelopment and repair of premises. In total, the cost of studies per student per year, including

the direct costs of the study programme (remuneration of academic and general staff) - 1890 EUR and indirect costs - 630 EUR - per conditional student per year, is estimated at 2520 EUR.

Information base:

As indicated on page 43 of the SAR, the information system consists of the RTA homepage, where information about study field and study programmes is available; RTA's internal document management system, where regulatory documents, information about the study process, requirements for the development and design of the thesis, etc. are available. RTA's information system is a part of the information system of Latvian higher education institutions (LAIS) where management of student study data, personnel data, matriculations, exmatriculations are prepared, as well as information about registration instructions, study plans, records of student achievements etc. is being published. The methodological basis of the study process is created in the e-environment https://ekursi.rta.lv/, where the catalogue of study courses is available.

Material base:

As indicated in the SAR (p. 35-36) and it was possible to verify during the site visit, students have access to clothing design, art and design, and fine arts workshops, engineering laboratories, layout, prototyping laboratories, materials testing, research laboratories, industrial production equipment laboratories. RTA has established a new Laser Technology Center equipped with a 3D measurement laser microscope, a magnetron sputtering system, and eight different laser devices. RTA also has specialised facilities and equipment for digital technology courses, such as digital technologies in design and 3D modelling - CAD/CAM, image editing and vector graphics programmes with the number of workstations corresponding to the predicted number of students in the study modules or the possibility to install both in classrooms and on student computers. The IZ Institute's structural units, such as the Physical Processes and Laser Technologies Research Center and the Metalworking and Mechatronics Research Center, support other lecturers and student research and diploma projects, providing interdisciplinary cooperation.

The buildings are accessible to people with mobility impairments, ramps and elevators are provided.

During the site visit the Product Design Technology laboratory was presented. The laboratory was made in one of the projects with other Latvian Universities, on how to use VR and various technologies, and the students now can have practical knowledge in this laboratory. During the meeting with the study programme director it was stated that first year students had a possibility to participate in a grant project using this laboratory, they use digital programmes which were already mentioned before by the lecturer. They work with prototypes using 3D printers. Also, the important aspect is that RTA has two different 3D printers, where students can learn how to make a 3D model. This practice at the laboratory covers study subjects: Equipment, Product ergonomics and Model making Technologies, Rapid Product prototyping and Digital manufacturing: 3D, Digital Technologies in Product Design: 3DMax. Various programmes are

used in the study content to create 3D models for example, but during the visit it was notified that Riga Technical university provides the licences for the students, but not all the licences can be used for students at home. Also, a concerning aspect is that there is no unique system (methodics provided for the teachers) to prepare the study content for students, and some of the staff members do not use Moodle, which is really useful for students to have a possibility to review the study course material at home.

Science base:

The previous evaluation has given a long-term recommendation for the RTA to increase the number of the scientific publications and/or artistic creative achievements of teaching staff. As it is indicated in additional information's annex (Annex 16), the institution has prepared a plan for increasing the number of scientific publications and/or artistic creative achievements of the teaching staff, which includes preparation of Interdisciplinary publications, Joint publications of teaching staff and students, development of publications involving professional lecturers of the industry, faculty and student group exhibitions. Also, it should be noted that the teaching staff's qualification is appropriate to the specifics of the study programme and the conditions for implementation, as well as the requirements of regulatory enactments in the fields of design and engineering: elected academic staff are professionals in their field of science who have demonstrated competence in field research (SAR, page 47). Also, during the reporting period one staff member has obtained a scientific degree and even three members were enrolled in doctoral studies. The potential to increase the scientific publications can be seen through the perspective of the amount within the scientific position: 8 leading researchers and 8 researchers (SAR, Annex 14).

Conclusions, strengths and weaknesses

Study base, including the library's collections, offered databases, teaching staff, staff of the participating structural units: specialists of the study process and personnel department, lifelong learning centre and library staff, personnel of the Information and Communication Technology Research Center, is appropriate for the implementation of the study programme. However, to promote the competitiveness of the study programme - it would be necessary to attract designers and design project managers, marketing specialists with international experience, especially in the study module "Product design and technologies".

RTA has provided an informational and methodical base for information storage and availability (including library stock and databases) necessary for the implementation of the study programme.

Students have access to clothing design, art and design, and fine arts workshops, engineering laboratories, layout, prototyping laboratories, materials testing, research laboratories, industrial production equipment laboratories; Laser Technology Center equipped with a 3D measurement laser microscope, a magnetron sputtering system, and eight different laser devices. RTA also has specialised facilities and equipment for digital 3D modelling - CAD/CAM, image editing and vector graphics programs with sufficient number of workstations.

The institution has prepared a plan for increasing the number of scientific publications and/or artistic creative achievements of the teaching staff, which includes preparation of Interdisciplinary publications, Joint publications of teaching staff and students, development of publications involving professional lecturers of the industry, faculty and student group exhibitions and the potential to increase the scientific publications can be seen through the perspective of the amount within the scientific position: 8 leading researchers and 8 researchers.

RTA provides the licences for students, but not all the licences can be used for students at home. Also, a concerning aspect is that there is no unique system (methodics provided for the teachers) to prepare the study content for students, and some of the staff members do not use Moodle, which is really useful for students to have a possibility to review the study course material at home.

Strengths:

1. Students have access to various laboratories and if there is a need after the working hours.

2. RTA has established a new Laser Technology Center equipped with a 3D measurement laser microscope, a magnetron sputtering system, and eight different laser devices. RTA also has specialised facilities and equipment for digital technology courses, such as digital technologies in design and 3D modelling, which do correspond to the need of the study programme.

3. The buildings are accessible to people with mobility impairments, ramps and elevators are provided.

Weaknesses:

1. There is no system provided to prepare the study content for the students, including the aspect that not all the courses have a prepared Moodle course for the important information necessary to understand the study content.

2. There is no possibility to use the majority of the design programmes licences for students at home.

3. Lack of information about the involvement of specialists with international experience in the evaluation of study results.

Evaluation of the requirement [R1]:

Requirement	Compliance			Justification
Compliance of the study provision, science provision (if applicable), information provision (including library), material and technical	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Non-compliant	The resources stated in the SAR; the study base, the science base
	X			

				material, technical and financial base are sufficient for implementation of the study programme and ensuring the achievement of learning outcomes. RTA has established a new laser laboratory, has accessible buildings and gives full access for the students to work in the laboratories.
provision and financial provision with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and for ensuring the achievement of learning outcomes.				

Requirement [R2]: Compliance of the qualification of the academic staff and visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting docents, visiting lecturers and visiting assistants with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements of the laws and regulations.

Analysis

The qualitative composition of the teaching staff working in the study programme in general complies with the requirements of the Law on Higher Education Institutions: the teaching staff, who are highly qualified specialists in the relevant fields of science, including design and engineering. As it is presented in the Self-Assessment Report the additional Annex No. 14 "Design Technology Teaching" staff can be seen that the implementation of the study programme is assured by the professors, guest professors, associated professors, assistant professors lectures, guest lectures, who are the experts in the evaluated field of engineering, art, architecture, design, and etc. It should be noted that some of the staff members do have the scientific position, which is 8 leading researcher and 8 researchers, this complies with the strategic goals of the Faculty of Engineering in RTA: to offer research-based interdisciplinary study programmes, to introduce the principle of unity of pedagogical and research work (SAR, page 4). The total number of the teathers is 46, and 15 teaching staff is with a doctoral degree (33%), and there is a variety of guest professors, guest assistant professors, guest lecturer positions with a practical base. During the visit the employers have confirmed that some of them are visiting lectures at RTA for the subject "Textile and Leather Products in Interior Design", also some of site visit participants mentioned they are also guest lectures, but only in other study programmes of RTA.

From the expert point of view one of the concerning aspects is that some of the staff members are responsible for 14-15 subjects from the total study programme content. During the visit it

was explained that some of the subjects are interconnected. Start from technical aspects, computer techniques and since it is one main job, this is how they are able to have fourteen subjects. Also, at the same time it was notified that their staff members do work with students and integrate the scientific research in bachelor thesis, study works and they provide help, even publish articles together. Also, it should be noted that during the visit with the administration it was stated that administration sees the lack of the professional designers that would teach and share their experience. Professional designers have experience in interior design and maybe they could find the synergy. But RTA plans to have a joint study programme with RTU, Liepaja and Rezekne (given that from around April 2025 RTA is planned to be merged with RTU) and they think that will increase the capacity and the qualification in the specific field. But for now there is no clear strategy about how the study process will be implemented. This is concerning since the possibility to have studies in Rezekne was noted as an additional value from the students side, during the meeting. Also, as it is stated in SAR (page 4) development of innovative technologies in the Latgale region is one of the RTA strategic goals at the Faculty of Engineering.

Conclusions, strengths and weaknesses

As it is presented in the SAR and annexes the implementation of the study programme is assured by the professors, guest professors, associated professors, assistant professors lectures, guest lectures, who are the experts in the evaluated field. Some of the staff members it should be noted do have the scientific position, which is leading researcher or researcher and this complies with the strategic goals of the Faculty of Engineering in RTA. From the expert point of view one of the concerning aspects is that some of the staff members are responsible for 14-15 subjects from the total study program content. The lack of the professional designers is hopefully planned to be covered with the Riga Technical University and Liepaja Academy after the plan to implement the joint study program, but this is concerning, since students do value the possibility to study in Rezekne.

Strengths:

1. High level academic staff, acknowledged professionals - practitioners in design or manufacture industries, including foreign lecturers through cooperation networks and providing possibilities to participate in exhibitions in country and abroad.

2. Strong cooperation with the employers and provision of a great amount of guest lectures and professionals from the field of the study programme.

Weaknesses:

1. Staff replacement created doubt about long-term performance within the Study programme due to the plan to create a joint study programme with RTU and Liepaja University.

2. Concerning large amount of subjects and the workload (including the scientific positions) for some teachers.

Evaluation of the requirement [R2]:

Requirement	Compliance			Justification
Compliance of the qualification of the academic staff and visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting docents, visiting lecturers and visiting assistants with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements of the laws and regulations.	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Non-compliant	The academic staff is compliant for implementing the Study programme, as well as compliant with legislative requirements. Revisions and improvements on a regular basis provides for keeping high quality of the Study programme.
	X			

Requirement [R3]: The study programme for obtaining a master's or doctoral degree is based on the achievements and findings of the respective field of science or artistic creation (if applicable).

Analysis

N/A

Conclusions, strengths and weaknesses

N/A

Evaluation of the requirement [R3]:

Requirement	Compliance			Justification
The study programme for obtaining a master's or doctoral degree is based on the achievements and findings of the respective field of science or artistic creation (if applicable).	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Non-compliant	N/A

Requirement [R4]: Compliance of the study programme with the requirements of the Law on Higher Education Institutions and other laws and regulations.

No.	Requirement	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Non-compliant	Justification
1.	The study programme complies with the State Academic Education Standard or the Professional Higher Education Standard, including the minimum requirements for the content of the compulsory civil protection course and the content of civil protection training for employees specified for the implementation of the study programme. The study courses of the professional study programmes include a module for the development of professional competence of entrepreneurship in the amount of at least 6 CP, if it has not been acquired in the previous professional study programme or is not included in the theoretical basic courses of the study programme branch (field of professional activity).	X			As proved in the SAR Annex 1, the study programme complies with the Regulations on the State Standard of Professional Higher Education (Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 305 of June 13, 2023 in Riga), including requirements for the content of the compulsory civil protection course and training for employees. The module for the development of professional competence of entrepreneurship - "Commencement of Entrepreneurship" (6CP); Intellectual Property Rights and Data Security in Information Technologies (3CP) - are included in the study programme.
2.	The study programme complies with a valid professional (occupational) standard, or with the requirements of professional qualification (if it is not necessary to develop a professional standard for the profession), if a	X			According to the analysis in SAR Annex 2 of content of the study modules, the study programme complies with valid professional (occupational) standards of the 6th professional

	professional qualification is awarded after acquisition of the study programme.				qualification level "Product designer" (approved on June 8, 2022) and "Interior designer" (approved on August 20, 2008). As stated on SAR page 15 - the new project of the Interior Designer standard, which is under development, was also taken into account.
3.	The code of the study programme complies with the Cabinet regulations on the Latvian Education Classification	X			Codes of study programme - 2214 and 42548 - correspond to the Latvian Classification of Education (Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 322).
4.	The qualification of the teaching staff ³ complies with the conditions and requirements set for the implementation of the study programme, which are specified in the regulatory enactments in the field of education including the participation in the implementation of an academic study programme of at least five professors and associate professors together who have been elected to academic positions in the respective higher education institution, except in the cases provided for in Section 55, Part two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.	X			The academic staff is compliant for implementing the Study programme, as well as compliant with legislative requirements. Revisions and improvements on a regular basis provides for keeping high quality of the Study programme.

---

³ *As used in this document, the term "teaching staff" refers to the academic staff and visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting lecturers, visiting lecturers, and visiting assistants of the corresponding higher education institution / college.*

5.	Confirmation of the higher education institution/college that 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, according to the European Language Proficiency Assessment levels (the division of levels is available on the website www.europass.lv), if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language **or** proficiency of the Latvian language at least on the B2 level, if the study programme or a part thereof is intended to be implemented in the Latvian language and the lecturer has not acquired secondary or higher education in the Latvian language.	X			The proficiency of the Latvian language at least on the B2 level is approved (According to the agreement of the director of the study programme "Design Technologies", Annex 5).
6.	The study programme, which is intended to be implemented in a foreign language, complies with the requirements of Section 56, Part three of the Law on Higher Education Institutions				N/A
7.	The sample of the study agreement complies with the mandatory provisions to be included in the study agreement (if applicable).	X			The information has not changed since the licensing procedure (SAR, Annex 7).
8.	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 (if applicable).		X		The requirement (Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 202, paragraph 23) to number the pages in the Diploma supplement (SAR, Annex 8) has not been observed.
9.	The higher education institution/ college has confirmed that it will provide the students with the	X			The RTA has concluded contracts for continuation of studies with

	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 (if applicable).				**Riga Technical University** (in professional bachelor study programme "Materials Technology and Design" (Annex 16, agreement No. 01000-4.1-e_62-9, 22.12.2022); and with the **University of Latvia** (in professional bachelor study programme "Art", sub-program "Interior design" (Annex 2, agreement No. 5.5/58, 09.01.2023.).
10.	The higher education institution/ college has confirmed that it 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 omissions) and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme (if applicable).	X			Acknowledgement of compensation the - Information has not changed since the licensing procedure. (SAR, Annex 11).
11.	At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of an academic doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field of science. At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a professional doctoral study programme in arts (if applicable).				N/A
12.	The scientific and pedagogical qualification of doctors of science				N/A

	complies with the criteria specified in the regulatory enactments regarding the evaluation of the scientific and pedagogical qualification of a candidate for the position of a professor and an associate professor (if applicable).				
13.	The joint study programme complies with the requirements prescribed in Section 55^1, of the Law on the Higher Education Institutions (if applicable).				N/A

Evaluation of the requirement [R4]:

Requirement	Compliance			Justification
	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Non-compliant	
Compliance of the study programme with the requirements of the Law on Higher Education Institutions and other laws and regulations.		X		In general, the study programme complies with requirements set in laws and regulations. However, the requirement to number the pages in the Diploma supplement has not been observed.

4. Implementation of the recommendations received during the licensing of the study programme

Assessment of the implementation of the recommendations provided by the licensing experts of the study programme.

Analysis

According to the provided information to the experts, SAR, additional documents and observations from the site visit in the RTA it can be seen that there was input to implement the recommendations of the licensing expert group and the information provided in the Annex 16, shows the achievable results, including the term of the implementation.

These are the main improvements made by RTA to implement the short-term recommendation from the licensing of the study programme:

- It can be seen that there was defined the goal of the study programme, expressing the uniqueness of the study programme - to provide interdisciplinary theory-based studies in the field of design and engineering. The experts also can confirm that during the visit, students and employers have given the impression that the study programme content is unique, providing necessary skills.
- The contact of the fields of design and engineering is highlighted.
- The competence of students specialising in interior design, including in the field of product design and technology is defined.
- Minor changes were made in the structure and content of the study programme with amendments to Section 1 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions in the definition of a credit point: the scope of the study programme has been changed to the CP system, where 60 credit points correspond to full-time studies in one academic year. Result: changes were made in the amounts of credit points in 8 study courses.

According to the Annex No. 16 of the SAR, all other short and medium term recommendations have been or will be implemented until 31.03.2024.:

- Increase in the number of budget places, the number of students, the financing of the budget has been achieved (see chapter 2, section 3, paragraph 2 "Financial base" of this report);
- Sharing of resources - since it is planned to enrol the student in one of the most requested modules over a period of at least two years, sharing of 62 CP is ensured in the content of the modules (Annex 16);
- Development perspectives of the study programare are described - they are related to RTA integration into the ecosystem of RTU;
- The compliance of the study programme with the international trends of the industry is described (p.15, p.22);

- Descriptions, achievable results and requirements of study courses are published on the RTA website;
- Agreement that allows students to continue their studies in another study programme, in the event that the RTA study programme is closed, is concluded with RTU, including all modules (Annex 16);
- Descriptions of the modules of the study programme have been created, they comply with the requirements set forth in the section 56.2 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions and are available on the RTA website;
- Recommendation of licensing experts: to "Conclude an agreement that allows students to continue their studies in another study programme, in the event that the RTA study programme is closed, with another study programme whose thematic area and qualification would correspond to the "Interior design and product technologies" module of the study programme implemented by RTA (26.06.2023. joint opinion of experts for licensing the study programme, p. 50) – RTA has concluded contracts for continuation of studies with the University of Latvia in the sub-programme "Interior Designer" of the professional bachelor study programme "Art" (Additional information after the site visit, Annex 2 - agreement No. 5.5/58, 09.01.2023.).
- Current ESG information is reflected in RTA's quality policy and in order of self-assessment of study field and study programmes.
- According to the decision of the Senate of the Rézekne Academy of Technologies (March 26, 2024), representatives of students and employers are included in the working group for development of the study programme materials.
- The recommendation of experts of the Licensing Commission (The joint opinion of experts for the licensing of the study programme, p. 50) - to number pages of the Diploma supplement (Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 202, paragraph 23) has not been followed (SAR, Annex 8).

Long-term recommendations:

- To increase the number of scientific publications and/or artistic creation achievements of the teaching staff - for the moment it can be seen that this important recommendation was taken into account, since this keypoint is included in the Development strategy of Rezekne Academy of Technology (as amended by RTA Senate Decision No. 7 of 29.10.2019).
- Licensing experts recommended the creation and improvement of research and prototyping laboratories, attracting teaching staff in the segment of practical research and primary samples of engineered wood, minerals, polymers and composites, prototyping, in order to fully realise the goals set in the study programme "Design Technologies", as well as develop product materiality, mechanics, physical indicators, "life cycle" computing, mathematical, sustainability simulations in CAD/CAM environments to accumulate and build a database in the direction of the EU Green Deal Directive. As specified in SAR (Annex 16) these recommendations are in the process of being implemented and will be implemented until the next accreditation of the study field in 2028.

- Also, the requirement to evaluate the opportunities to develop product materiality, mechanics, physical indicators, "life cycle" calculations in the CAD/CAM environment is in progress, since in Annex nr. 16 it is indicated that this is planed to be implemented in the 2025/2026 study year - CAD/CAM environment have been evaluated in order to accumulate and create a database in the direction of the Green Deal Directive, including using solutions created in projects and incorporating topics into study courses/modules.

Although some of the recommendations are indicated as already implemented, there is no certain proof of the implementation of them, like information about cases when a sufficient number of students is not reached and the specific study module may not be implemented is not available on the RTA website. Also, the RTA should consider to not only carry out additional analyses of the profitability of the study programme, taking into account the real indicators, but also to prepare a strategic plan directly to the study programme, as for now majority if the indicators are presented in the Development strategy of RTA, as amended by RTA Senate Decision No.7 of 29.10.2019), but the strategic goals and objectives are concerned not to specific study programme, but to all RTA aspects.

Conclusions, strengths and weaknesses

According to the provided information to the experts, SAR, additional documents and observations from the site visit in the RTA it can be seen that there was input to implement the recommendations of the expert group and the information is provided in the Annex 16, shows the achievable results, including the term of the implementation.

Strengths:

1. The majority of the recommendations of the licensing expert group (short-term and mid-term) has been already taken into account and implemented in RTA.

Weaknesses:

1. There are some short-term recommendations that are not implemented, thought it was presented as already implemented, in the Annex Nr. 16:

2. Information about cases when a sufficient number of students is not reached and the specific study module may not be implemented is not available on the RTA website.

3. The short-term recommendation to carry out an additional analysis of the profitability of the study programme taking into account the real indicators in the dynamic of the number of students has not been done fully, since there is no prepared strategy for the concrete study programme.

III. Assessment of the study programme

Excellent	**Good**	Average	Poor
	X		

IV. Recommendations

After the evaluation of provided documents, SAR, annexes and the site visit impressions, the experts do think that in general, short-term recommendations have been implemented and the long term recommendations are still in the process, but some of them already have a strategic plan to be reached in the future, so **the experts recommend to include first cycle professional higher education study programme "Design Technologies" in the study field "Production and Processing"**, taking into account the potential, but also taking into consideration that there is a need to eliminate the deficiencies that are identified for a short and long-term basis.

Short-term recommendations (until the beginning of the new academic year):

1. To complete the numbering of the diploma supplement pages as it is required according to the Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers Nr. 202, paragraph 23.

2. To include the student representatives from this study field in the feedback provision to the highest level (Faculty, Academic Board).

3. To revise the large amount of subjects and the workload (including the scientific positions) for some teachers and the long-term performance within the study programme due to the plan to create a joint study programme with RTU and Liepaja University.

4. To prepare the methodics and equal system for the preparation of the study content for the students, using the Moodle system.

5. To evaluate the need for a separate study course "Textiles and Leather Products in Interior Design" and the possibility of adding these topics to the content of the study course "Material science and technologies of decorative finishes".

Short-term recommendations (within two years):

1. To increase the competitiveness of the study programme by attracting specialists (designers, marketing specialists, project managers) with international experience in the stages of analysis of student works - during midterm and final tests/exams, especially, in the study module "Product design and technologies".

2. To create methodology for gathering the feedback from the employers, including the methods, timing, amount of the feedback and presentation of the results that were reached after implementing their suggestions.

3. To provide the information about cases when a sufficient number of students is not reached and the specific study module may not be implemented on the RTA website.

Recommendations for the improvement of the study programme (on a long-term basis).

1. To evaluate the strengths and uniqueness of the study field and study programme after consolidation with RTU, outlining strategic directions for further development.

2. To collect, summarise and analyse available data on dynamics of development of the relevant design sectors in Latvia and employment indicators of designers.