Expert group joint opinion

Evaluation Procedure: Assessment of Study Field

Higher Education Institution: University of Daugavpils

Study field: Psychology

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Summary Assessment of the Study Field

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This report provides the results of the assessment of the study field "Psychology" at Daugavpils University, including the relevent study programmes (bachelor's study programme, professional master's study programme, and doctoral study programme) within the field. The report is based on the document analysis and site visit to Daugavpils University by an international experts group.

Overall, the management and the available resources of the study field and the relevent study programmes, as well as the contents of the study programmes correspond to all formal requirements and ensure an effective day-to-day implementation of the study process. The assessment process has identified a number of advantages of the study field. One can observe a strong motivation and committment of the study field management and the teaching staff to improve the study programmes. Even though the recommendations from the previous accreditation and licencing have not been fully implemented, there is observable progress along with strong motivation and dedication to continue the work of developing and improving the study field. A significant competitive advantage is the strong individual focus on student needs in the process of studies, which makes the study programmes more attractive to the existing students and potential students. An advantage for the study field development is the status of Daugavpils University as the regional academic and research center, which, on the one hand, helps the psychology study field to attract new students through DU brand, but also helps the university to cement this status through the variety of psychological education that it offers. Regarding external circumstances, a strong point is the employment opportunities of the graduates—there is a shortage of professional psychologists in the region, although the salaries for those vacancies of psychologists are often not competitive.

One primary area for improvement is strategic planning, which at present is too formal and reactive, and insufficiently contributes to the development of the study field. There is potential for a more proactive approach both at the university level, and study field management level, in facing the financial and demographic challenges characteristic to Daugavpils region and the society of Latvia as a whole. Another area, where the situation should be significantly improved, is the limitation of resources available for scientific research. This concerns primarily financial resources, but also the infrastructure, e.g. premises, facilities, and technologies, without which it is difficult to produce and sustain high-quality research. This, in turn, affects the overall quality of the study field, especially the quality of the doctoral programme. Other areas for improvement include more active collaboration with employers, active development of alumni relationships and network, and facilitating teacher and student mobility. In the short term, Daugavpils University and the study field should continue the active work on putting the relevant courses online through Moodle course development.

1. Management of the Study Field

Analysis

The aims of the study field are explicitly defined and available as an annex to the self-evaluation report. All of the aims of the study field defined in the development plan can be considered attainable. The short-term aims, defined for the nearest 1-2 years, are more specific and measurable, while the more distant aims are more abstractly formulated and their achievement may be problematic to measure.

The study field and all three study programmes comply with the main directions of the strategic development of Daugavpils University and meet the needs and the development trends of the Latgale region, the Latvian society, and national economy. The correspondence of the study field to the regional and national social and economic priorities is well justified in the self-assessment report. The correspondence of the development aims of the study field to the strategic development of Daugavpils University is formally indicated in the self-assessment report, but this analysis is relatively unconvincing, largely due to the fact that the strategic development directions of DU are very broadly and generally defined, and fail to draw a clear vision of the place of DU in the national and European space of higher education of research, and ways how this vision can be achieved. In general, strategic planning at the level of HEI, study field, and study programmes can be named as one of the areas that can, and should, be significantly improved within the next accreditation period. The analysis of information included in the accreditation documents and acquired during the site visit (in interviews with the DU management and management of the study field and the study programmes) indicates that strategic planning on all levels is carried out formally and reactively, responding to external pressures and developments. However, the challenges facing DU and the psychology study field at present and in the foreseeable future require a more proactive approach that uses strategic planning as a real development tool, rather than as a formal procedure. Achieving this goal requires more active involvement of the DU management, but the management of the study field can contribute to this by more clearly outlining its development strategy, and by more actively promoting this strategy at the level of HEI management.

The input material for the strategic planning of the study field is good. The SWOT analysis is detailed and insightful in terms of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats listed, but the analysis part is quite formal and insufficiently integrated with the development plan of the study field. The development plan can be further improved by showing how specific weaknesses will be addressed and strengths used in the development of the study field, and how the identified opportunities and threats will guide the strategic planning of the study field.

The structure of the management of the study field and the relevant study programmes is logical and efficient. Formally, the management structure ensures both the everyday implementation of the study programmes, and the overall development of the study field. Given the challenges with strategic planning outlined above, it can be suggested that the communication with the DU administration is facilitated in the management structure (at present, there are no direct subordination/ communication links indicated between the DU administration and DU Council of Studies on the one side, and the management of the study field on the other). Based on the available documents and the information acquired during the site visit, the decision-making process is efficient for everyday management of the study field. As indicated in the self-assessment report and further confirmed during the site visit, the support provided by the administrative and technical staff contributes to an efficient implementation of the study programmes, and meets all their relevant needs. One aspect of the study field management that should be addressed in the medium-to-long-term perspective is the fact that, at the time of the study field assessment, the same person is the head of the study field and the director of two of the study programmes within the study field. This practice may constrain the development of the study programmes and the study field as a whole , and should not be sustained in the long term. Diversifying the management of the study field and the study programmes would more optimally distribute the administrative load, and also provide an opportunity for formulation and implementation of diverse perspectives and opinions on the development strategy of the study field and the study programmes.

Daugavpils University has established a system and implemented procedures for the admission of students, the recognition of the study period, professional experience, and the previously acquired

formal and non-formal education. The self-assessment report details these procedures both at the University level, and at the study field level where special requirements apply in line with the Psychologists Law in force since 2018. These procedures are logical and effective and contribute to the implementation of psychology study programmes. Procedures for recognition of previous education have been applied in verious contexts--the procedures have often been applied to recognition of informal education, such as seminars and professionl updating courses, but also for imatriculation of the previous years' graduates into the study field "Psychology" programmes, and for recognition of courses taken by the DU students during their outgping mobility visits at foreign HEIs.

The procedures for the evaluation of the achievements and learning outcomes of the students are described in the self-assessment report, and these procedures are logical and efficient. The evaluation criteria for specific courses are defined in the corresponding course descriptions, and thus are always formally communicated to the students, although the level of detail and clarity in the description of evaluation criteria varies among the course descriptions.

Daugavpils University has a "Code of Ethics for employees and students" that sets the guidelines of ethical conduct for DU employees and students. Academic integrity principles and mechanisms are defined in this document, and the self-assessment report outlines additional steps taken by the HEI in promoting academic integrity. Daugavpils University uses electronic plagiarism detection tools to check all graduation papers/ theses for plagiarism from previously submitted works at DU. This system does not check for plagiarism from external sources, but this is a common situation with other HEIs in Latvia as well, where the use of global plagiarism check platforms is relatively rare (primarily because of the associated costs). In general, it can be concluded that the system for promoting academic integrity at DU and at the psychology study field is effective and contributes to the development of the internal academic integrity culture, and the academic staff and students are aware of its tools and mechanisms.

The information published on the website of Daugavpils Univerity regarding the psychology study programmes complies with the information available in the official registers. The information on the DU website provides all the relevant information for the candidates and the students. The information on the Masters and doctoral programme is available also in English. Thus the relevant information is available in all languages in which the study programmes are implemented.

Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

To summarize, the management of the study field corresponds to all formal requirements and is effective for the day-to-day implementation of the study programmes. The primary area for improvement is strategic planning, which at present is too formal and reactive, and insufficiently contributes to the development of the study field.

Strengths:
1. Good correspondence of the study field to the national and regional social and economic development needs.
2. Effective technical and administrative support in the implementation of the study programmes.

Weaknesses:
1. Insufficient strategic planning at the level of HEI administration and study field management.
2. Insufficient integration of SWOT analysis with the development plan of the study field.

2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System

Analysis

The quality policy of Daugavpils University is described in appropriate detail in the self-assessment report, which also provides a detailed description of how this policy is implemented in the psychology study field. The quality policy is publicly available. Daugavpils University has developed and maintains a quality assurance system, and the self-assessment report shows how this system contributes to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the psychology study field and the relevant study programmes, including outlining of specific steps taken to implement quality assurance system at the study field during the accreditation period. During the site visit, both the representatives of the DU administration and the management of the study field confirmed that the quality asurance system is practically applied in various aspects of the programme development and the study process (e.g., the development of the professional master's programme "Psychology", or taking into account the student feedback regarding the orgnization and content of studies). It can be concluded that the quality assurance system ensures continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study field and the relevant study programmes.

The procedures for the development and review of the relevant study programmes of the study field are described in appropriate detail in the self-assessment report and can be evaluated as contributing to the quality of the relevant study programmes. The self-assessment report describes the feedback mechanisms from students, alumni, and employers in the process of programme development and review. However, these descriptions are very general and formal, and the information acquired during the site visit only partially confirmed an active involvement of alumni and employers in the development and review of study programmes. In general, more attention is paid to collecting information and providing feedback to students (both in terms of study quality assessment and handling of student complaints), but the quality of mutual communication with alumni and employers is less clear, based on the available documents and information collected during the site visit.

Daugavpils University collects and analyses information from students regarding the quality of the study programmes. The information provided in the self-assessment report and acquired during the site visit indictes that the management of the study field analyzes the statistics regarding the number of students and the dropout rates to ensure the sustainability of the study programmes. It is also shown how the relevant information is collected from alumni, with some general description of how this information is further used by the DU administration and the management of the study field in the development of the study programmes. Employer surveys and their results are mentioned in the self-assessment report but their scope, and the application of their results, is discussed only in general terms. Formally, it can be concluded that the relevant data (statistics) on the relevant study programmes of the study field are collected on a regular basis and used to improve the study field, but the collection of the relevant information from graduates and employers could be made more systematic and better integrated into the development of the study programmes. This concerns especially communication with the employers, who should be more involved both in the strategic planning of the study field development, and the regular quality monitoring and improvement of the study programmes, especially the professional master's programme. Precise and reliable information on the employment of graduates was not provided in the self-assessmemt documents, but interviews during the site visit showed that the DU administration representatives and the study field management are aware of the general employment situation, prospects, and challenges faced by the graduates in the region (in particular, low salaries in public sector organizations where the demand for the professional programme graduates is the highest).

The self-assessment report clearly outlines the correspondence of the DU quality assurance policy and the corresponding documents to the requirements of The Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). It is also shown how the quality management process at the psychology study field corresponds to the standards set forth in Part 1 of the ESG, and it is also convincingly described how the management of the study field deals with the challenges associated with the implementation of the new legal requirements for the professional education of psychologists following from the regulations set forth in the Psychologists Law.

Specific aims and measures targeted at improving the performance of the relevant study programmes of the study field, and integrated into the joint quality assurance system are not defined, but in general, the aims of the study field and the procedures of the programme development are aligned with the overall quality assurance system at the place at Daugavpils University.

Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

The quality assurance policy and quality assurance system is properly defined and corresponds to the formal requirements. Feedback from the main stakeholders (students, graduates, and employers) is formally integrated into the development process of the study programmes, but gathering of information from graduates and employers could be wider and more systematic to ensure a full-fledged contribution of these stakeholder groups to the development of the study field.

Strengths:
1. Active measures aimed at increasing the quality of the study programmes during the accreditation period, and improving the overall quality assurance system at Daugavpils University.

Weaknesses:
1. General formulation of aims and measures for improving the quality of the study field, which lack specificity and details on implementation.
2. Insufficient integration of alumni and employer feedback in the strategic planning and programme development in the study field.

3. Resources and Provision of the Study Field

Analysis

The HEI largely relies on government funding for the implementation of the study field, with some funding coming from fee-paying students. Moreover, the HEI does have a system for calculating the price of each student's education in all of the programmes. At the same time during the meeting with the directors of the study field, they did not possess any plan in the situation where government funding would be decreased. Lastly, there is also a system for financing research, namely in the form of grants handed out post-publication in high impact journals. However, the system is currently lacking in the sense that the funding comes post research, hence any resources necessary to run any experiments would not be available pre-publishing.

The HEI has partially identified the resources it needs for the study field. In terms of the facilities, the university has good quality lecture and library space, with adequate technical equipment. However, the university currently has no psychological lab space, relying on their partners in Riga, which is over 2 hours away by any means of transport, severely limits the research of its academic staff, as well as the field's students. As far as electronic resources go, both the students and the

staff claim adequate access. At the same time there is no coherent system in place in terms of resource refreshment, rather this is done, in response, rather than in anticipation of requests. For example, the current breadth of online English language resources available for both staff and students include only a few specific journals, rather than access to any Single Sign-On service. Moreover, students do have access to lectures and materials through Moodle. However, as was displayed during the visit, only one of the guest lecturers has adequately organised their module on the platform, whilst others rely on impromptu lectures through Zoom, as attested to by Study Quality assurance manager. When the Study Quality assurance manager was asked why this is the case, she mentioned that the lecturers had declined due to a lack of incentive which was only presented when the study year had already started.

In terms of the recruitment of lecturers, whilst there is a procedure in evaluating applicants, however, the study field has no specific plan in locating talent, rather their focus is on hoping for guest lecturers from notable alumni. The field's directors argue that a lack of financial resources prohibits them from attracting any permanent talent, at the same time they did not present any options on how to solve the issue beyond these parameters. As far as the workload, the situation remains unclear due to a lack of response from the staff, however, with only 5 full-time staff dedicated solely to Psychology, and some of them teaching up to 15 modules, it can be argued that the workloads are not managed properly, and in turn the quality of the programmes is likely impacted. Moreover, as was mentioned in the previous point, none of the full-time DU teaching staff have adequately updated their module pages on Moodle, which could also mean that they did not have time to do so. As far as mobility is concerned, only 2 of the 7 staff interviewed had any experience with it, whilst the others did not respond, which could indicate a lack of motivation on their part to partake. Moreover, the staff do have opportunities for improve their research, through conferences and collaboration projects, however, the only avenue for teaching improvement comes as a response to student surveys, which although important does not fully ensure that staff grow as lectures and teachers.

The HEI benefits in the aspect of having smaller class sizes, meaning that each student does receive extensive individual assistance from staff. Moreover, the students, as well as the graduates themselves responded positively when asked about their experience with staff, as well as the support they receive. Staff is accessible by email and phone, which, students mentioned as particularly helpful currently in the pandemic. As far as accessibility for students with disabilities, there is currently no system in place and the support is given in an impromptu manner. In the SAR it is stated that for the students with special needs the DU infrastructure was modernised and adopted, thus improving the accessibility of the environment for persons with functional disorders (movement, visual, hearing impairments). During the site visit, it was visible that work is being done to ensure accessibility with lifts; however the ramps are not usable unassisted.

DU provides good psychological support to its students and staff. Students and graduates often talk about an individual approach, which manifests itself not only in the field of study, but also in communication, support in difficult life circumstances.

Support is also offered to students with children. A special playroom for children has been created in the building, while students can study in classrooms or a library at this time.

Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

Overall the resources of the study field allow for the implementation of the course, in the sense that it is possible to complete the course with the tools at hand. Moreover, currently, there is enough

staff to teach and supervise the 3 programmes. At the same time, there are multiple areas for improvement which are currently either only partially thought of or not explored enough by the course administrators.

Strengths.
1. Availability and use of information networks (Internet, DU net, Moodle), databases (library network, DU research, Centre databases), publications in Web of Science and Scopus.
2. The possibility of using licensed software and online tools and software to implement an educational process in the online format.
3. Availability of infrastructure adapted to the needs of student with special needs.
4. There is a willingness to learn and work shown by the administration.
5. The smaller classrooms allow for a closer connection with students, which means that they receive both well-being and academic support.

Weaknesses:
1. Not all users are adequately prepared to use the available equipment and online tools in the best possible way.
2. Updating, improving and expanding the information base does not always take place in a timely manner.
3. The e-resources are currently fairly limited, which will become an even larger issue going forwards and especially now, with sufficient access to non-physical knowledge.
4. Moreover, there is much work to be done in creating a Moodle environment that will meet the needs of students in the digital environment.
5. There is no physical lab for experiments which severely hinders any research, especially for students.
6. The overarching issue is the fact that much of the study field's organization is done reactively, and not proactively. This is exemplified by the fact that the research is funded post-publication, creating Moodle pages was only initiated after the start of the current semester.
7. There is no system in place in recruiting staff. Although the argument was made that a lack of a competitive salary makes recruiting futile, there are no alternative plans in place, like for example, recruiting from abroad or engaging mature students into the teaching process.

4. Scientific Research and Artistic Creation

Analysis

Daugavpils university is a relevant regional institution, and as such plays an important educational role in the Eastern region of Latvia, as well as it could have an important impact on creating new knowledge. As an educational institution, DU does contribute to the regional development and it is one of the central institutions for a regional knowledge.

As it is stated in institutional documents, DU has a mission to contribute to the development of sustainable future society by implementing scientific research on an international level and ensuring high quality education. According to the provided summary of institutional Strategy, it is emphasized that DU possesses high quality research equipment for scientific work and implementation of studies. The scientific infrastructure corresponds to the conduction of high-level research in the research fields.

Unfortunately, reading the institutional Strategy document it is not quite transparent which parts of the Strategy content and statements are referred to the actual situation, and what is the strategic planning, considering the fact that the Strategy covers the period till 2020. At the same time,

Strategy which is written for the period 2015 to 2020, has a whole section on a vision for the period till 2030. Undoubtedly, this is confusing, and the fact that there is no elaborated Action plan, it makes the document less transparent.

Taking the University perspective it is not quite clear what is the position of the study field of psychology, moreover because psychology was not once explicitly mentioned in the Strategy (many other fields were) and it has been observed a huge discrepancy between what is stated and described in the Strategy and what has been observed in the study field. Certainly, the field of study cannot reflect its one situation into the description of the University quality of research infrastructure and the capacity to perform high-level research in the research field of psychology.

If the academic leadership of the University is aware of this discrepancy, the review panel did not obtain information what kind of actions will take place in order to overcome weaknesses and to further develop this particular area of research.

The study field is extremely modest in research capacity, bearing in mind that research capacity covers human resources, adequate facilities (including infrastructure) and funding.

In terms of human resources, on first sight it is a large academic community counting almost fifty members of academic staff. However, a significant majority of the academic staff is not in the field of psychology (or education/pedagogy), and a significant portion of academic staff is from philology, literature and some other fields or even more professionally distant from the field in focus (such as for example, cartography or geology). Participants in interviews reported on a few occasions that they are promoting interdisciplinarity.

Interdisciplinarity as such is certainly welcome, but then it would need to be also differently reflected in study programmes, and what is even more important, in research. Interdisciplinary research would need clearly established research groups with defined researchers, and their work should be reflected in common papers, creating new interdisciplinary research and results. This has not been observed either in interviews or evidenced in the provided documents.

One of the main indicators of a performed research is research productivity, or in other words published papers. The panel obtained a list of publications as well as a list of publications of each member of academic staff provided in their CVs. The first observation is regarding the format/style which certainly does not follow the international way of writing references. This fact makes it very hard to follow and to identify relevant information, but it is also not a good example to students, and in particular, to doctoral students. There are only a few staff members who publish regularly, also in good journals, and whose productivity is noticeable. Unfortunately, the significant majority has very modest publishing, in terms of quantity, regularity and relevant papers. The range goes from no papers-publishing at all (this is a minority) to publishing mostly in local and national papers. A significant number of staff members reported on abstracts predominantly, and more than a few members have periods of three, four years of not having papers at all or reporting on posters presented on conferences. The most alarming information obtained during the visit and while reading the provided documentation is the fact that a significant number of staff members do publish papers but in the fields, and even more importantly, with the topics that are not related and that are not relevant for the evaluated study field at all, but it seems that the SAR referred to them as well. This approach definitely will not help the study field to develop research and to further improve their research as well as to translate their research into teaching.

Research facilities and modern infrastructure actually does not exist. The truth is that the study field

covers disciplines that are less demanding for advanced infrastructure (e.g. social psychology vs. experimental) and that some aspects of research could be managed in less sophisticated environments. Still, it is hard to expect to perform more research and to be more productive if there are no dedicated facilities. Modern social psychology has been already using very sophisticated methods and research equipment, as well as doing a lot of experimental studies for quite a number of years. The panel understands that there are many objective constraints and that over the period of time, some things might change. Still, some changes could happen, even in small steps. It is important to stress that DU has the Strategy that claims the institutional care for research, and panel believes that it is the University interest to support further development of research facilities in order to meet some of the strategic objectives.

In order to perform research, researchers need to be engaged in research projects. There is an extremely limited number of research projects that are active and with extremely limited experience of staff members being PI. The study field in the SAR reported on participation in three HORIZON 2020 projects, and number of some other European schemes, but it is not provided with precise data on those projects and it is not transparent what was the result of those research activities (e.g. the COST scheme is not a research project, but network, and the main assumption is that the participants have their national projects; the COST funding does not cover any research itself; some other mentioned schemes are also not research projects but schemes for different types of financial support such as ESF)

Also, the panel did not obtain information on sufficient sources of funding, the fact that definitely does not contribute to more and better-quality research performance.

The positive evidence is that research and teaching have been intertwined in study programmes and individual courses, while students have opportunities to participate in research. Students participate in research at all study levels and they are also supported to publish their papers together with their teachers. As much as possible, students also receive financial support.

Research that is taking place in the study field is also reflected in bachelor, master and doctoral thesis. Teaching staff reports on using the research results in their teaching and, importantly, teaching staff is implementing not only their own results, but the results of their colleagues, and this way contributing in a positive way to the overall teaching process.

Teaching staff is also supported and stimulated to participate at conferences, both local and international, reporting in the SAR on high numbers of their participation. Unfortunately, their participation is not synchronised with published papers, many of them staying on a level of abstracts. Still, teaching staff presence at conferences could definitely help in building networks that might lead to further research cooperation. The Study Field introduced financial support for teaching staff to publish, to be present at conferences and to organise themselves professional activities.

The Study Field is also successfully managing cooperation with some other institutions and programmes outside Latvia, which certainly helps improving visibility. The cooperation is established with few other universities in Europe and outside Europe, and according to the SAR it boosts their research productivity. A significant opportunity is to have access to better research facilities. Although it is very positive that those collaborations had been established, it does not seem that the full potential of such type of collaborations has been reached.

The area of psychology is probably not the optimal one for being very proactive in various forms of innovation, in particular bearing in mind that this is the third pillar of university activities, and

usually is the last one to be more strongly supported. Research is a prerequisite for innovation. Nevertheless, the area of social psychology can translate its competencies in the society that is facing many challenges. The Study Field is aware of that and sees its role in meeting number of social challenges. One example of such attempt is a creation of new master programme sub-branches that will prepare new forms of professionals. In addition, it is also reported on activities that contribute to social recognition of the field and quality education of the DU, something that was also publicly recognised by receiving the awards.

The Study Field is also successfully managing cooperation with some other institutions and programmes outside Latvia, which certainly helps improving visibility.

Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

The Study Field did not provide sufficient evidence for well developed research activities. Although they perform research in a very unfavourable research environment, it is important to recognise that there are individuals who manage very well their research and their research productivity could be comparable with their international colleagues. By saying this, the panel believes that the Study Filed needs to develop their own action plan how to improve research activities, to define their research focus and to rearrange their resources (human, financial, spatial etc.) in order to become more research productive. The Study Field needs to solve the ballast of research production that does not contribute to the Study Field.

Strengths:
1. Motivation for further development of the field.
2. Successful individuals who can support further development.
3. Students participation in conferences.
4. Performed research is translated into teaching.
5. The area of research that is less demanding in terms of infrastructure and funding.
6. Awareness of social needs and efforts to respond to them.
7. Institutional strategy that claims relevance of research as a trigger for the institutional support.

Weaknesses:
1. Absence of research facilities.
2. Lack of sufficient funding.
3. No research projects (grants).
4. Poor research productivity/publishing (quantity, regularity, international papers).
5. Overflow of papers that are not related to the Study Field.
6. No clear research focus in the Study Field or among researchers.
7. No clear institutional action plan how to overcome weaknesses.

5. Cooperation and Internationalisation

Analysis

Internationalisation is a very important aspect of university life and it brings a number of benefits and positive experience to all stakeholders - students, academic and administrative staff. However, to introduce and implement internationalisation, an institution needs to develop different mechanisms and tools in order to be successful. DU has established International Relation Office (IRO) and this is certainly an important structural requirement. DU is supporting institutional networking, so the University is a member of the European University Association – EUA, and European Science Events Association – EUSEA, which definitely contributes to institutional visibility.

Being a member of the EUA could also help university management and leadership to be better connected to other European universities and to exchange experiences. On the other side, DU also is emphasising the relevance of local and national cooperation, as well as regional, both in teaching and research.

Such institutional approach could definitely help the study field to establish particular cooperation and to be international in various types of activities. The study field has a number of successful cooperation on the local, regional, and national level with other academic-educational institutions as well as outside academia. They are also putting efforts to have good cooperation with some international institutions, primarily in their field of psychology. Good example of such cooperation is, for example, Vilnius University, Aalborg University or Queensland University.

They report that international cooperation, in particular, helps them to exchange experience and to be more successful in research productivity. However, it is not evident how much those types of cooperation with other international institutions contribute to mobility and/or performing research together with colleagues for other institutions. Bearing in mind very modest research facilities the study field has, international collaboration could have an impact on improving research capacity. Having an overview of the performed research, published papers, doctoral research etc., these advantages are not enough evidenced.

The study field is employing some mechanisms in order to attract more foreign students, such as service that institutional Erasmus+ office and the coordinator can provide. By sending an informative letter to the partners, the goal is to have more incoming students, and/or teaching staff. Unfortunately, up to now, the responsiveness of incoming students/staff is very low, which indicates that more or different mechanisms need to be defined. As also reported in the SAR, language barrier has been one of the reasons for a few incoming mobilities so far. Introducing more teaching in English might overcome this problem. However, having established cooperation with other international institutions, it enabled a visit of a few foreign researchers and practitioners, but numbers are still very modest. At the same time, students welcome to have an opportunity to receive graduate practice abroad.

Within the SAR and data provided, the study filed reported on mobility, but unfortunately, the data do not clearly define incoming vs. outgoing mobility. During the interviews, the panel received some info showing that actually incoming mobility is very limited, both of students and academic staff. This seems like an area for further improvement.

The panel learned from the SAR, but also obtained information from the participants/students, that the study field organises and helps students in finding placements for their practice and training, and this is organised in a wide range of institutions, either public or private.

Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

The study field has been establishing a wide range of cooperation nationally and internationally, and it is very supportive to students in order to enable them to do their professional work/training. They are putting additional efforts to collaborate with institutions from abroad with an aim to support their research and publishing, but also to exchange teaching experience. However, the impact is still not visible enough, as much as additional actions are needed in order to attract more international students and academic staff either just for short visits or study visits.

Strengths:

1. Well-established cooperation with academic and non-academic institutions in the country.
2. Awareness of importance of international cooperation.
3. Recognising a need to master foreign (English) language.
4. Support students receive.
5. Institutional infrastructure (e.g. ERASMUS office/coordinator).

Weaknesses:
1. Very low incoming mobility.
2. Infrequent visits of international scholars.
3. Low clear action plan how to improve attractiveness.
4. Missing well-defined aims, and follow up of results, of international cooperation.

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

Analysis

Information indicated in the self-assessment report and the accompanying documents, as well as information acquired during the site visit shows that appropriate progress has been achieved in the implementation of the recommendations provided during the previous procedures for the assessment of the study field (during previous accreditation and during licensing of the professional master's study programme).

For some of the recommendations, the implementation has been described very specifically, showing that the recommendation has been implemented. In particular, for the study field, recommendations to assess the existing forms of examination and introduce new, more diversified forms of examining the outcomes of studies, to produce a unified template for study course description that could be used by the academic staff in all programmes in the study field, and to centralize library resources for psychology in Latvia, have been implemented with measurable results, which can be seen, for example, in the updated course descriptions. For other recommendations, appropriate progress indicators are included, such as the recommendations to enhance the activity of outbound student mobility, to enlarge the number of publications in internationally recognized reviewed scientific journals, or to stay politically active to consolidate the position of psychology in the society in Latvia.

For some recommendations, the indication of implementation is formal and general, with some activities outlined that show that some effort has been made in implementation, but with unclear results or unclear progress towards the desired outcome. For example, the recommendations to find an opportunity to offer academic leaves for the academic staff involved in the study field, to develop a sustainable post-study programme, or to attract financing for the implementation of psychology education have some implementation activities/ opportunity assessments indicated, but they fail to demonstrate the extent, to which the recommendations have been implemented, or what are the prospects of their implementation in the future (and the factors preventing them from being implemented).

Finally, one recommendation has not been properly addressed (to develop a plan of bringing science to the region, with clear aims and activities), where the implementation activities described refer to the involvement of professional psychologists in state social programmes in the region, but do not refer to the planning of activities for promoting science. Insofar clear aims and activities are concerned, this recommendation is also insufficiently addressed in the development plan of the study field. It must be noted, though, that the formulation of this recommendation leaves space for

interpretation, which might have contributed to it not being addressed properly.

Most of the short term recommendations made in expert joint opinion on licensing of the professional Master's study programme "Psychology" have been either implemented or properly addressed where full implementation has not been achieved at the time of preparing the self-assessment report. Most of the long term recommendations made in expert joint opinion on licensing of the professional Master's study programme "Psychology" show good progress in implementation. One area where some more attention could be paid to the implementation of the recommendations concerns the organization of professional qualification placement, where the frequency of the supervision sessions has been increased in line with the recommendations, but it is not clear whether the calculated workload of the supervisor (2 hours per student) is sufficient for an effective implementation of the supervision. In general, the recommendations for this programme have been addressed much more thoroughly than the recommendations made in the previous accreditation of the study field.

During the site visit, the HEI management representatives expressed support for and indicated the administration's commitment to, the development of psychology study field. However, there is very limited evidence that the administration of Daugavpils University has contributed to the analysis of the recommendations and their implementation in view of the specific features of the study field and the relevant study programmes.

Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

The recommendations made during the previous procedures for the assessment of the study field (during previous accreditation and during licensing of the professional master's study programme) have been implemented to a varying extent. Overall, the recommendatons for professional study programme "Psychology" show a better progress of implementation than recommendations for the study field, although there are some positive examples for the latter as well. It can be concluded that the recommendations made during the previous procedures for the assessment of the study field have been partially implemented, but the study field has eliminated several weaknesses and demonstrated systematic effort at addressing other weaknesses and implementing the recommendations.

Strengths
1. Most of the recommendations for the professional master's study programme "Psychology" have been implemented or show good progress of implementation.
2. Efforts have been made to implement or address most of the recommendations made for the improvement of the study field and the professional master's study programme "Psychology".

Weaknesses
1. Several of the recommendations made for the study field have only been formally addressed without a clear indication of implementation.
2. One recommendation has not been properly implemented or addressed.

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: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the self-assessment report. Detailed analysis can be found in Sections 1.1.-1.6. of this report. Formally, the management of the study field is implemented in accordance with the normative regulations, and all the necessary systems and elements are in place. However, the implementation of the management of the study field in some aspects is rather formal and lacks strategic planning and proactive approach in addressing the challenges facing the study field.

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: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the self-assessment report. Detailed analysis can be found in Section 1.2. of this report. The quality assurance policy and quality assurance system is properly defined and corresponds to the formal requirements.

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: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the self-assessment report. Detailed analysis can be found in Section 1.2. of this report. The procedures for the development and review of the relevant study programmes of the study field are described in appropriate detail in the self-assessment report and can be evaluated as contributing to the quality of the relevant study programmes.

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: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the self-assessment report. Detailed analysis can be found in Section 1.1. of this report. The procedures for the evaluation of the achievements and learning outcomes of the students are described in the self-assessment report, and these procedures are logical and efficient. The evaluation criteria for specific courses are defined in the corresponding course descriptions.

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

   Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

   Justification: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the self-assessment report. Detailed analysis can be found in Section 1.3. of this report. Although formally there is a system for evaluation of job applicants in the recruitment process and for evaluation of the quality of teaching of the academic staff, there is a lack of systematic and proactive approach in the recruitment and development of the academic staff. There are also indications that the teaching load of the academic staff is very high, which can adversely impact their work quality in the long term.

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: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the self-assessment report and information acquired during the site visit. Detailed analysis can be found in Sections 1.2. and 1.3. of this report. The HEI has a system for collection and anaysis of the above-mentioned information, but in some aspects (e.g., gathering feedback from employers) the system is quite formal. There is insufficient integration of alumni and employer feedback in the strategic planning and programme development in the study field.

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: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the self-assessment report. Detailed analysis can be found in Sections 1.1. and 1.2. of this report.Formally, all the necessary elements for continuous development of the study direction are in place and corespond to the normative regulations. However, there is a lack of strategic planning in regard the development of the study field, both at the level of HEI administration and study field management.

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: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the self-assessment report. Detailed analysis can be found in Section 1.5. of this report. The study field has been establishing a wide range of cooperation nationally and internationally and is putting additional efforts to collaborate with institutions from abroad with an aim to support research and publishing, and to exchange teaching experience. However, the impact is still not visible enough, with very low incoming mobility, lack of clear action plan how to improve attractiveness to students and potential staff regionally and internationally, and missing well-defined aims, and follow up of results, of international cooperation.

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

   Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

   Justification: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the self-assessment report and the supporting documents. The level of research and publication activity, especially for the doctoral programme, does not follow the common standards for research universities, either in terms of the quantity of the research output, or the level of contribution of the research to the state-of-the-art in psychology. A more detiled analysis can be found in Section 4.4. of this report.

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

   Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

   Justification: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the self-assessment report and the supporting documents. Detailed analysis can be found in Section 1.6. of this report. Overall, there is a good progress in implementing recommendations, but some of the recommendations have been only formally addressed, without a proper, definite outcome of their implementation. One of the recommendations has not been effectively implemented, although it can be considered a minor one.

8. Recommendations for the Study Field

Short-term recommendations

1) Integrate SWOT analysis with the development plan of the study field.
2) Formulate a clear, concrete plan with specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound aims for improving the quality of the study field.
3) Complete the work on creating a Moodle environment that will meet the needs of students.
4) Create a plan with specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound aims for promoting the science of psychology at Daugavpils University, and in Latgale region as a whole.

Long-term recommendations

1) Implement more proactive strategic planning at the level of HEI administration and the study field management.
2) More systematically integrate alumni and employer feedback in the strategic planning and programme development at the study field.
3) Increase the availability of e-resources for the study and research process.
4) Develop infrastructure and assign dedicated facilities for research (e.g., lab premises).
5) Develop a system and strategy for staff recruitment and personnel planning that is integrated into the development plan of the study field.
6) Enlarge the number of publications in internationally recognized reviewed scientific journals.
7) Attract financing for the implementation of psychology research and education.
8) Continue facilitating in-bound and out-bound student and teacher mobility

II. "Psychology" ASSESSMENT

II. "Psychology" ASSESSMENT

1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

Name: Psychology
Degree: Academic Bachelor's degree
Professional Qualification: none
Goal of the study programme:
The aim of the bachelor study programme"Psychology" is to develop students' knowledge and critical thinking based understanding of major notions, theories, and regularities of psychology, prepare them for motivated self-led research activity taking initiative in their individual and team work.

Tasks of the study programme:
Preparing specialists who have a command of the theoretical regularities of the psychology science and are able to discuss them by providing argumentation in the world and European context;
Facilitating students' acquisition of basic skills of research activity by examining problem situations topical in the branch of psychology and daily life in order to deal with them responsibly and with deeper attention.

Results of the study programme:
Knowledge
1. Demonstrate basic knowledge in the branch of psychology science, critical understanding of notions, theories, and regularities;
2. Understand major psychological ideas in an inter-branch context;
3. Have a command of the basic principles of scientific research in psychology.
Skills
4. Can independently select, critically assess and analyze the obtained information;
5. Can discuss current issues of the branch of psychology science with other specialists and

representatives of related professions;

6. Can independently conduct scientific research in the branch of psychology science.

Competences

7. Can take initiative and responsibility working individually or in a team;

8. Can integrate knowledge in spheres related to psychology in the process of self-development and self-improvement in the perspective of further professional career;

9. Can assess the interaction of their psychological competence and the social environment.

Admissions Requirements: Secondary School exam results for Mathematics, Latvian and the student's first foreign language. Exam results for Biology is a bonus.

The indicators of the study programme are logically interrelated and consistent. The study programme provides a solid basis for further studies, opening to its graduates opportunities for further professional education in master's study programme or proceed with research career in psychology science. The aim, objectives, and structure of the programme comply with the relevant normative regulations. It should be noted that the formulation of goals and tasks of the study programme could involve more reference to preparing the students for continuing their studies in the professional master's programme (either at DU or some other university), because the bachelor's programme is an integral part of the professional psychologists education

As a critical remark, one may note that through questions to the bachelor level students during the site visit it remained unclear if they understood what were the aims and objectives of their study programme, which, although not entirely unusual for students at this level, does indicate that these ideas are not incorporated in their teaching and the structure of their modules.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

Overall the course is comparable to other psychology bachelor's programmes in the country in terms of the learning aims, objectives and outcomes. At the same time, it would be beneficial to better and more explicitly establish the link between this and the professional master's programme, since only this way can a student qualify to be a psychologist.

Strengths:

1. The indicators describing the study programme are logically aligned and properly interrelated.

2. The programme is logically integrated in the study field, providing a first stage in the professional education of psychologists at DU and has good prospects for sustainability.

Weaknesses:

1. The programme description does not sufficiently explain how this programme will contribute to preparing the students for either DU's professional master's programme, or a professional master's programme at any other university.

2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

The academic bachelor study programme "Psychology" (implemened in full-time and part-time) represents the initial stage of the acquisition of the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and competencies stated in Professional Standard of Psychologist that are needed for successfully initiating master level studies in accordance with the Psychologist Law and Professional Standard of Psychologist.

The content of bachelor study programme "Psychology" is well-balanced, relevant and complementary. The programme consists of three main groups of study courses:
1. Methodological aspects of psychology as a science;
2. Students' competences in psychology-related spheres;
3. Psychology and its branches nowadays.

Study courses of the group "Methodological aspects of psychology as science" provide the base of knowledge necessary for Bachelor level students to elaborate research relating theoretical ideas to the practical research results (in the form of a bachelor thesis). This study course group includes courses: Logic, Philosophy, Statistical methods in psychology (I and II), Practical English, Methodology of scientific research, Fundamentals of psychometrics, Methods of psychological research.

Study course group "Students' competences in psychology-related spheres" provides general knowledge on an individual as a complex being that reaches beyond the knowledge of psychology. The group includes courses: Biological foundations of the psyche, Genetics of human behaviour, Sociology. In the content of these courses, the peculiarities of the functioning of individual and society are analyzed, as well as opportunities of their improvement by joining the biological and social that are interconnected and demonstrate the interdisciplinary character of psychology and other spheres.

Study course group "Psychology and its branches nowadays" provides a notion of the branches of psychology science and leads students to reflect the future speciality selection in the master's study programme. These study courses include Legal psychology, Differential psychology, Cognitive psychology, Organizational psychology, Family psychology, General psychology, Clinical psychology, Social psychology, Neuropsychology, Experimental psychology, Personality psychology, Developmental psychology, Fundamentals of psychological counselling etc.

As stated in SAR, at the end of each academic year, at the meeting of the Study field council and at meetings of the Department of Psychology, the compliance of the content of the study programme to current trends of the science development and labour market demands are analyzed and respective changes made. For example, essential changes in the study programme were introduced after 12 June 2019 when the new Professional Standard of Psychologist had been approved.

Based on the analysis of the bachelor study programme "Psychology" it could be concluded that structure of the programme is logical and tended towards independent research activity and focused on the development of practical skills that comply with the principles of the branch of psychology science.

Study programme courses are tended towards the implementation of the outcomes for studies set for the programme. The theoretical courses provided in the programme facilitate students' understanding of the major notions and regularities of the branch of psychology science. The content of study courses complies with the contemporary topical trends of the development of psychology science, facilitates the expansion of students' scope of vision. The descriptions of the study courses and the final thesis are of good quality and comply with the provisions set forth in the regulatory enactments.

The aims defined in the study courses comply with the study programme results and are harmonized with higher-level study programmes. The analysis of the content of study courses shows that each course corresponds with at least 3 defined outcomes – knowledge, skills and

competences.

In the period from 2013 to 2019, in the bachelor study programme "Psychology" 86 bachelor theses have been defended. Students most commonly chose topics on personality psychology (24 theses), social psychology (22 theses), educational psychology (16 theses) and developmental psychology (11 theses).

In accordance with the Regulations on the state academic education standard (https://m.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=266187), no practical placement is envisaged for the academic study programme.

The academic staff use the following methods of studies: lectures, seminars, practical assignments, training, and group work (for example, group discussions). The descriptions of the study courses contain independent work hours. The results of students' survey reveal that requirements concerning the amount of the students' independent work were characterized as logical and justified by 68% of respondents, as partially clear, partially logical, and partially justified – by 26% of respondents.

Students of the study programme are offered corresponding and easily accessible learning materials, scientific and popular scientific literature in several languages (Latvian, English and Russian), including electronically (e.g. Scopus database is accessible free of charge in DU internal network). Students have free access to the study course descriptions in the DU e-environment. Constant support for students is provided by the academic staff members: consultations throughout the semester, before mid-term examinations, final examinations, and before state examination. Both students, alumni and teaching staff confirmed that regular contacts are maintained in the e-study environment (by e-mail, in Moodle, Zoom or Skype) or face-to-face.

Depending on the form of learning, the academic staff members select the forms and criteria of assessment. A large part of the learning outcomes requires not only to demonstrate knowledge but also put the acquired material to practical analysis relating it to the existing experience and daily life. Therefore, a significant role is attributed to seminars and practical assignment classes. In practical assignment classes, during individual or group work presentations, students, expressing their opinion, improve their analytical skills. In the study courses dedicated to practical skills and competencies acquisition, special attention is paid to the development of integrative reflection. Reflection facilitates the stabilization of students' professional skill acquisition as well as self-cognition and self-actualization. Along with formative assessment, academic staff members use summing assessment. The forms of assessment are tests, examination in the form of reflection and written examination.

In order to incessantly improve the content of the bachelor study programme and follow current trends in science, education, and market demand, at the end of each academic year surveys of students, alumni, and employers are organized. However, the results of the survey of employers are mostly taken into consideration in the process of the improvement of the professional master's study programme.

The analysis of the results of the bachelor study programme student surveys for the reporting period reveals that 85% surveyed students consider the quality of teaching in the study programme as high and 15% as a medium. The content of study courses and their deliverance were assessed as clear, logical, and comprehensible by 74% of students, as partially clear, logical, and comprehensible – by 21%.

In order to assess the efficiency of the study programme as objectively as possible, DU organizes alumni surveys as well. These surveys are aimed at clarifying whether the content of the study programme complies with the labour market demands, whether the programme graduates are demanded on the labour market, whether they continue studies in higher-level study programmes. The latest survey results showed that the majority of the graduates continue studies in academic and professional higher-level study programmes.

Analysis of the dynamics of the bachelor study programme "Psychology" student incoming and outgoing mobility shows that since the previous accreditation period, outgoing mobility within the study programme has slightly increased (in the time period from 2013 to 2019 six bachelor study programme students participated in ERASMUS+ exchange program to Vytautas Magnus University (Lithuania) and St. Cyril and Methodius University (Bulgaria). Incoming mobility opportunities in the bachelor study programme in the time period from 2013 to 2019 have been used only by one foreign student from Sweden. Clearly, there is a big room for improvement both for incoming and outgoing mobility.

During the meeting with students and alumni, they confirmed being regularly informed about the opportunities of mobility. However, many of the students in the study programme are employed, though mobility periods in foreign countries are perceived as a threat of losing a job and/or aggravate the opportunity of finding employment, thus diminishing students' motivation of using the offered mobility opportunities.

DU has elaborated a clear procedure for the recognition of learning outcomes achieved during international mobility. Students, in accordance with DU regulations, provide documents that approve having reached the study outcomes and assessment. Study programme director together with the academic staff members of the respective study courses considers the submitted documents and, according to the requirements set for the study course, either agrees with the assessment of the foreign HEI or offers a student to complete assignments in order to acquire the necessary knowledge, competences, skills, and attitudes. The final assessment and recognition of the study outcomes are approved by DU Council of Studies.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The Bachelor study programme in psychology complies with the Cabinet of Ministers Regulations on the State Academic Education Standard. The programme has been created in accordance with the basic educational principles of psychology.

Strengths:
1. The descriptions of the study courses/ modules, and the final thesis are of high quality and comply with the provisions set forth in the regulatory enactments.
2. The content of study courses is relevant and complementary, and complies with the aims of the study programme, ensures the achievement of the learning outcomes, and meets the needs of the relevant industry and the scientific trends.
3. 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 taken into account.
4. The outcomes of the surveys conducted among the students, employers, and graduates are used to improve the quality of studies.
5. The programme provides sufficient academic knowledge for further education and professional activity.

6. Knowledge acquired in the course of the study programme helps to deal with professional issues and facilitates self-growth.

Weaknesses:
1. Study programme provision with visiting lecturers is insufficient. The opportunity of inviting social partners and alumni to teach is not fully utilized.
2. The number of incoming and outgoing mobility is low.

3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

The study provisions comply with the implementation of the programme, in the sense that it is possible to achieve the learning outcomes with the tools at hand. This means that there is access to supervision, e-resources as well as a physical place to study, however, no psychology lab. That being said there is much to do to ensure high-quality study for the future. This topic is more explored in Chapter 3 (Resources and Provision of the Study Field).

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

Overall the resources of the study direction allow for the implementation of the course, in the sense that it is possible to complete the course with the tools at hand. Moreover, currently, there is enough staff to teach and supervise the programme. At the same time, there are multiple areas for improvement which are currently either only partially thought of or not explored enough by the course administrators.

Strengths:
1. There is a willingness to learn and work shown the administration.
2. The smaller classrooms allow for a closer connection with students, which means that they receive both wellbeing and academic support.

Weaknesses:
1. The e-resources are currently fairly limited, which will become an even larger issue going forwards and especially now, with sufficient access to non-physical knowledge.
2. Moreover, there is much work to be done in creating a Moodle environment that will meet the needs of students in the digital environment.
3. There is no physical lab for experiments which severely hinders any research, especially for students.
4. The overarching issue is the fact that much of the direction's organisation is done reactively, and not proactively. This is exemplified by the fact that the research is funded post-publication, creating Moodle pages was only initiated after the start of the current semester.

4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

The teaching staff of the programme meet the requirements of the third paragraph of the first part of Section 55 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions that "at least five professors and associate professors shall participate in the implementation of the required part of the academic curriculum and the restricted part of the programme, and shall be elected to the academic positions of the respective higher education institution". In 2019/2020 academic year 34 academic staff members are involved in the Bachelor study programme, five of them are professors and five are associate

professors. Nine members of the academic staff hold the doctoral degree in psychology science (Dr. psych.), two hold the doctoral degree in pedagogy science (Dr. paed.), one holds the habilitated doctoral degree in pedagogy and habilitated doctoral degree in psychology (Dr. habil. paed, Dr. habil. psych).

As was stated during the meeting with SAR team and with academic staff, in order to ensure the academic staff's mutual co-operation in developing course content, academic staff from all sections participate in regular staff meetings, where they discuss and agree on course content, solve current problems, agree on common principles of operation, as well exchange examples of best practices. If changes are needed, the programme director submits this information to the respective faculty members and keeps track of the relevant changes and the improvement of the course.

Five members of academic staff are Latvian Council of Science (hereafter - LCS) experts in the branch of psychology, four are LCS experts in pedagogy, and four are LCS in other branches of science. The qualification of the academic staff involved in the study programme implementation complies with reaching the outcomes of the study programme as well as implementing DU aims and objectives. Study programmes of the study direction conform to conferring the respective degree in accordance with the regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia No. 49 (23.01.2018) "Regulations on Latvian branches and sub-branches of science" and No. 240 "Regulation on state academic education standard".

As stated in SAR, at the end of each study year the workloads of the academic staff members for the next study year are planned at the departments taking into consideration the results of the assessment of respective study courses by students and self-analysis of the academic activity produced by the academic staff members estimating the compliance of the academic staff members with the improvement and teaching of the particular study courses. The academic workloads are approved in accordance with the procedure of the accounting of the workload of the academic staff at DU. However, it should be noted that the workload for some of the academic staff members is very high: for example, one associate professor teaches 16 courses (4 for Bachelor level students, 8 for Master level students and 4 for PhD students), another associate professor teaches 20 courses (15 courses for Bachelor level students, and 5 for Master level students), and another associate professor teaches 21 courses (11 for Bachelor level students, 4 for Master level students and 6 for PhD students). One more example would be a professor, who teaches 15 courses (3 for Bachelor level students, 4 for Master level students and 8 for PhD students). This fact raises some doubts about the teaching quality, the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme, and time devoted to scientific work.

Based on the information provided in SAR and gained during meetings with management, currently DU undertakes adequate measures in a target-oriented manner to avoid negative effects on the quality of study as a result of the changes in the composition of the teaching staff. However, having in mind the information in previous paragraph, DU administration should have a clear plan for replacing the academic staff members in case they leave university for another job or other reasons.

The academic staff involved in the study programme participates in scientific research both on a national and international level. The academic staff members publish papers in scientific journals and paper collections recognized both in Latvia and in the world. However, there are only a few staff members who publish regularly, also in good journals, and whose productivity is noticeable. Unfortunately, the significant majority has very modest publishing, in terms of quantity, regularity and relevant papers. A significant number of staff members reported on abstracts predominantly, and more than a few members have periods of three, four years of not having papers at all or

reporting on posters presented on conferences. During meetings, both students and alumni confirmed that academic staff members introduce and discuss the results of their scientific work during classes, and they also include their publications in the list of literature in study course descriptions for students to use them for their independent work.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The qualification of the academic staff involved in the study programme implementation complies with reaching the outcomes of the study programme as well as implementing DU aims and objectives. The academic staff involved in the study programme within the reporting period is oriented towards professional growth and constant improving and developing the quality of the study courses delivered.

Strenghts:
1. Academic staff members are actively participating in scientific research both on a national and international level and include the results of their projects into the teaching process.
2. The qualification and cooperation of the teaching staff ensures the achievement of the aims/results of the study programme.

Weaknesses:
1. The number of incoming teachers and guest lecturers could be higher, DU could use Erasmus+ opportunities more, as well as invite Latvian practitioners from the field, or organise on-site visits with students.
2. Big workload for some of the academic staff.

5. Assessment of the Compliance of the Study Programme "Psychology"

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: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the supporting documents of the self-assessment report. 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.

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: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the supporting documents of the self-assessment report. The relevant agreement with University of Latvia is provided.

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: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the supporting documents of the self-assessment report. The relevant document -- a confirmation from the rector -- is provided.

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: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the supporting documents of the self-assessment report. The relevant document -- a confirmation from the rector -- is provided.

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: Not relevant
Justification: Not applicable

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: Not applicable

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: Fully compliant

Justification: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the supporting documents of the self-assessment report. The relevant document -- a confirmation from the rector -- is provided.

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: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the supporting documents of the self-assessment report. The sample of the study agreement complies with the mandatory provisions to be included in the study agreement.

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: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the supporting documents of the self-assessment report. The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared, 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.

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: Not applicable

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: Fully compliant

Justification: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the supporting documents of the self-assessment report. The relevant document -- a confirmation from the rector -- is provided.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the supporting documents of the self-assessment report. The study programme complies with the requirements set fourth in the Rules of the Cabinet of Ministers of 13 May 2014 No. 240 "Regulations on state academic education standard".

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: Not applicable

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: Analysis of the CVs of the academic staff shows that the members of the academic staff have either publications published in reviewed editions within the last six years, or a relevant five-year practical work experience in accordance with the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.

15 P5 - Overall rating

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the supporting documents of the self-assessment report. Formally, all the elements assessed above correspond to the requirements of the relevant normative regulations.

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: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the the self-assessment report, its supporting documents, and information acquired during the site visit. The resources available for implementation of the programme are sufficient for achievement of the learning outcomes.

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: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the supporting documents of the self-assessment report. Formally, the qualification of the academic staff corresponds to the respective regulatory enactments.

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: Not relevant

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

Overall, the study programme complies with the requirements set out in the Law on Institutions of Higher Education and other regulatory enactments.

Strengths:
The study programme complies with the requirements and regulations.

Evaluation of the study programme "Psychology"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Psychology"

Short-term recommendations

To ensure that Moodle environment of each study course meets the needs of students in the digital environment.
To encrease the number of incoming teachers and guest lecturers.

Long-term recommendations

To arrange a physical lab for scientific experiments.
To take active measures to increase the number of incoming and outgoing students and academic personnel.
More actively involve social partners, employers in the development and implementation of the study programme.

II. " Psychology" ASSESSMENT

II. " Psychology" ASSESSMENT

1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

Name: Professional Master study programme "Psychology"
Degree: Professional Master's degree in Psychology
Professional Qualification: Psychologist
Aims:

Deepening students' theoretical knowledge integrating it on the practical acquisition level, developing professional skills and competences, preparing specialists for professional activity in education and school and counselling psychology.

Objectives

The objectives of the study programme are represented in the following tasks outlined in the self-assessment report:

• providing professional psychologist studies based on theoretical base of the branch of science and corresponding with the profession standard, practice and the contemporary context of Latvia;

• providing an opportunity of forming new or improving the existing skills and competences of psychologist's work and preparing students for creative, research, and practical work in the branch of psychology based on observing the principles of professional ethics and obligations;

• facilitating the understanding of psychologist's professional ethical code and forming the competences of organizing the professional activity of psychologist;

• facilitating independent self-expression and self- development motivation and execution;

• offering an opportunity for students to acquire the qualification of psychologist that would enhance their competitiveness in changing socio-economic conditions.

Outcomes

The graduates of the study programme should demonstrate the following knowledge, skills, and competences:

Knowledge

1. Demonstrate in-depth knowledge and understanding of recent theoretical ideas in psychology and opportunities of their creative use in professional practice as well as act in related spheres;

2. Understand, describe, and define principles of psychological activity, short-term and long-term goals, limitations, objectives, psychological problems, opportunities of applying methods and techniques of psychological counselling in counselling individuals and groups;

3. Have a command and understand legal regulation of psychologist's activity, ethical norms and principles, freely orientate in the ethic code of psychologist.

Skills

4. Independently use psychology theories and methods in problem solving in psychologist's research and professional activity;

5. Discuss complex and systemic aspects of the branch of psychology science and professional sphere with other specialists and representatives of related professions;

6. Independently lead their competence improvement and specialization, take responsibility for the results of the staff group work and its analysis.

Competences

7. Can independently formulate and critically analyze complex scientific and professional problems, justify decisions, and in case of necessity produce additional analysis.

8. Can integrate knowledge of spheres related to psychology in their professional activity, can contribute to the formation of new knowledge and methods of professional activity.

Admissions Requirements:

Bachelor's degree in Psychology or professional achelor's degree in Psychology, or 2nd level higher professional education in Psychology; applicant competition based on the average mark of the final / national examinations. if the study programme is envisaged for acquisition in English, certificate

approving of the proficiency of English in internationally recognized examinations or other document approving of the proficiency of English must be submitted. If prior education was acquired in English, a document approving of the proficiency of English is not required.

The professional master study program offers an opportunity for the graduates of Daugavpils University bachelors study programme in psychology to continue their studies and acquire the professional education necessary for achieving certification to be practicing psychologists. Those who have obtained a three-year academic bachelor degree have a possibility to choose from one of the PMSP "Psychology" two-year study form sub-directions ("Educational and school psychology" or "Counselling psychology"). Those who have obtained professional bachelor degree in Psychology can choose between the same sub-directions in the one-and-a-half-year study form of the professional master study program. This study programme represents a logical and well-integrated step in the professional education of psychologists at Daugavpils University. It should also be noted that the programme corresponds to the needs of the labour market, especially, the needs of the labour market in Latgale region. During the site visit, employer representatives repeatedly stressed the need for qualified psychologists in the region.

The overall design of the programme corresponds to the requirements of the Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia, "Regulations on the state standard of second level professional higher education" and Psychologists Professional Standard.

The name of the study programme, the degree, the professional qualification or the degree and the professional qualification to be acquired, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and admission requirements are logically aligned and interrelated. The admission requirements correspond to the requirements of the Psychologists Law and other relevant normative regulations.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

All the relevant indicators of the study programme are logically aligned and interrelated, and properly reflect the purpose of the programme and admission requirements.

Strengths
1. The indicators describing the study programme are clearly formulated, logically aligned, and properly interrelated.
2. The programme is well integrated in the study field, providing a logical stage in the professional education of psychologists at DU and has good prospects for sustainability.
3. The programme corresponds to the needs of the labour market, especially, the needs of the labour market in Latgale region.

2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

The study programme is implemented in two study forms. Those applicants who have obtained a three-year academic bachelor degree in Psychology have a possibility to choose from one of the PMSP "Psychology" two-year study form sub-directions ("Educational and school psychology" or "Counselling psychology"). Those applicants who have obtained a professional bachelor degree in Psychology, or comparable 2nd level higher professional education in Psychology, can choose between the same sub-directions in the one-and-a-half-year study form of the professional master study program.

The difference between the two study forms amounts to additional 20 credit points devoted to professional qualification placement in the two-year study form. The programme contents for the two forms are identical in regard to the content of other study courses. There is a block of mandatory courses aimed at the acquisition of the latest achievements in theory and practice of Psychology (12 CP), which includes Psychologist's ethics and professional practice, Social cognition, Inter-personal and group relation processes, Crisis psychology, Health psychology, and Conflict resolution and mediation; a block of courses related to research work, creative work, design activities and management consulting (12 CP), including courses in Social adaptation of diaspora families, Methodology of research in psychology, Management theory and project elaboration, and Elaboration of research work; and professional specialisation sub-program courses in Counselling psychology (10 CP, including Psychological assessment, Counselling in education institutions, Psychological support to learners with behavioral disorders, and Education psychology), or in Educational and School psychology (10 CP, including Group therapy methods, Psychological counselling, and Theory and practice of psychotherapy). Elaboration of the Master's Thesis amounts to 20 CP in the programme. The rest of the credit points are assigned to professional practice placement (6 CP in the one-and-a-half-year study form, and 26 CP in the two-year study form). In addition, a course of Latvian language for foreign students is offered to those taking the programme in English.

In general, the content of the study programme corresponds to the requirements of the normative regulations and the standards of professional education in Psychology. In terms of structure, the programme strikes a good balance between providing up-to-date theoretical knowledge relevant for professional psychology and providing the necessary practical skills to the students. Regarding the combination of courses in the various parts of the programme, it can be questioned whether enough attention is paid to the teaching of psychological assessment methods in the programme. There is a dedicated Psychological assessment course in the professional specialisation in Education and school psychology, but no comparable course for those specialising in Counselling psychology. Even though counselling psychologists are not supposed to conduct psychological assessment as part of their professional duties, psychological assessment is a part of basic tasks of a professional psychologist defined in the professional standard, so providing at least the basic set of assessment skills should be essential for the professional training within any specialisation. It is evident from the course descriptions that assessment methods are taught also as part of the professional qualification placement course, but including a dedicated course, or a course section, focused on methods of psychological assessment would ensure that all graduates receive a sufficient skillset for choice and application of psychological assessment tools in line with the professional standard, especially those graduates without a pre-master professional training who are enrolled in the two-year study form of the programme. Lack of proper minimal assessment skills training may limit the opportunities of the programme graduates in the future to apply for certification in any specialisation other than counselling psychology. The relevance of focussing on assessment is further underlined by the feedback from the employers, who, according to the self-assessment report, have expressed the need for specialists capable to conduct psychological testing autonomously.

The overall quality of the course descriptions is good. The course descriptions contain all the information relevant for understanding the contents of the course, as well as for evaluating the general quality of these contents. Course descriptions comply with the provisions set forth in the regulatory enactments. The quality of writing and the level of detail regarding specific aspects of the course vary across the descriptions, but in general, the quality is appropriate for providing a good overview of the programme contents. The analysis of the course content shows that the content is relevant and complimentary, it complies with the aims of the study programme and, at least

formally, ensures the achievement of the learning outcomes. The course content also complies with the psychologists professional standard and the standard for higher education, as well as with the special regulations pertaining to the field of psychology. Formally, the content of the programme meets the needs of professional training in psychology.

One weakness relevant to the contents and implementation of the study programme concerns the implementation of professional qualification placement. It is not sufficiently clear how the placement objectives for acquiring professional experience in counselling clients of various age, education, level, culture and social status under the guidance of a certified psychologist are achieved, as students mostly observe the counselling process and practice it through role-playing, but have limited opportunities to conduct counselling with real clients on their own (5 sessions with a single client).

Some of the goals and assignments of the professional qualification placement are formal and not sufficiently clear. The number of hours for supervision with an internal supervisor is very small, and it is not clear if it is planned to improve the situation in this regard. Increasing the number of supervision hours was one of the long-term recommendations provided during the licencing of the study programme. According to the information provided in the self-assessment documents, this recommendation has not yet been implemented. At the same time, it should be noted that increasing the internal supervision hours makes sense only if students work with real clients. According to the current organization of the professional placement practice, the methodology for conducting the practice supervision can indeed be considered appropriate. However, as indicated above, the general approach for implementation of practice is by no means optimal and requires further improvements.

Neither the course descriptions, nor information acquired during the site visit gives ground to the confidence that practice that students receive within the professional qualification placement provides sufficient opportunities to get acquainted with real practical work, to develop practical skills in the independent application of assessment tools and conducting of counselling work, or skills of making independent decisions. Implementation of the professional qualification placement should be further developed to increase the opportunities of the students to build up real-world experience in working with clients, so that they are fully prepared for the supervised work, as they prepare for professional certification, after the graduation.

The agreement on professional qualification placement between employers, students and DU is very formal, with an insufficient indication of the goals and tasks of the placement, the placement planning, the procedure for the evaluation of the placement achievements, as well as the duties and responsibilities of the parties, which are indicated only very formally. These details are outlined in the "Regulation on professional qualification placement for Professional master's study programme "Psychology".

One way to widen the cooperation with graduates and employers in the process of programme implementation is to invite more practising psychologists for workshops, lectures and seminars integrated into the study courses. During the site visit, student representatives expressed their positive evaluation of such activities, and willingness for the incorporation of more events like these in the study process, whereas representatives of graduates indicated their readiness to contribute to the development and implementation of the programmes within the study field.

The self-assessment report provides a detailed overview of the study implementation methods and evaluation methods, which mostly corresponds to the information provided in the course

descriptions, and information gathered during the site visit from the teachers and students of the programme. In general, this information gives ground to conclude that 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 taken into account, and student-focused instruction and responsiveness to student needs were recurring elements mentioned by students and graduates of all programmes included in the psychology study field at Daugavpils University.

The outcomes of the surveys conducted among the students are used to improve the quality of studies. There is detailed information provided in the self-assessment report on how the feedback from stakeholder groups was incorporated in the development of the professional Master's programme. On the other hand, interviews with the employer representatives offered only limited evidence for their involvement in the ongoing development of the study field and the relevant study programmes. In regard to the professional master's programme, it is too early to evaluate the involvement of graduates in the programme development, as the first graduation is due in 2021.

Students are informed about the outgoing mobility opportunities, and the learning outcomes achieved during such mobility are recognised. Five students have participated in the outgoing mobility actions in the review period, whereas two master students from Kazakhstan (Al-Farabi Kazakh National University) participated in the incoming mobility program in 2018. The student mobility for the program can be considered appropriate.

The programme is offered in two languages: Latvian and English. Several members of the academic staff who are involved in the implementation of the study programme have not indicated a sufficient level of knowledge of English necessary for teaching the courses in English (B2-level or higher). Although each course in the programme involves teaching staff with the required level of knowledge of English, it is not clear to what extent the content and quality of some of the courses (i.e. those courses where separate teaching staff members do not have the required knowledge of English) is identical in Latvian and English. Also, information obtained during the site visit suggests that some members of the academic staff may not be fully prepared to deliver the programme in English. Although formally the programme is offered in two languages, there is evidence that at the moment it can be full-fledgedly implemented only in Latvian.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The PMSP "Psychology" offers a well-integrated and logical continuation of Psychology studies for the graduates of the Psychology Bachelors programme at Daugavpils University. The programme content corresponds to the legal requirements and regulations, as well as to psychologists professional standard. The stronger emphasis in the programme development should be put on teaching psychological assessment methods, as well as on providing the students with more opportunities to test and develop practical skills in working with clients under the regular internal supervision provided by Daugavpils University.

Strengths:
1. The content of the study programme corresponds to the formal requirements and regulations.
2. Course descriptions provide a good overview of the content of studies.

Weaknesses:
1. The implementation of professional qualification practice within the programme is not optimized for development of students skills for independent work in psychological assessment and

counselling.

2. More attention in the programme content could be devoted to courses specifically dedicated to psychological assessment.

3. Employers could be more involved in the development and implementation of the study programme.

4. There is not sufficient evidence that the study programme can be fully implemented in English.

3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

The program has at its disposal the resources for the development of certain educational activities and allows to apply the planned methods and technologies of teaching. DU provides access to the equipment, technology and materials that are needed to achieve learning outcomes and to prepare students for the next level of learning. The necessary technical equipment, including computers with licensed software, projectors, interactive boards etc. is provided. DU provides students and staff with access to modern library services and funds, including periodicals and electronic resources to achieve learning outcomes.

In the reading room of the library appropriate conditions are provided for the implementation of the educational process and independent learning, including for students with special needs. Information is made accessible to visually impaired and hearing impaired people by installing projection equipment and sound amplifiers.

For the students with special needs the DU infrastructure was modernized and adopted, thus improving the accessibility of the environment for persons with functional disorders (movement, visual, hearing impairments).

The study provisions comply with the implementation of the course, in the sense that it is possible to complete the course with the tools at hand. At the same time, there are multiple areas for improvement which are currently not explored enough by the course administrators. The e-resources are currently fairly limited, which will become an even larger issue going forwards and especially now, with sufficient access to non-physical knowledge. Moreover, there is much work to be done in creating a Moodle environment that will meet the needs of students in the digital environment.

This information is more closely discussed in chapter 3 of study field.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The study programme is provided with resources, including software, methodological, technical and personnel.

Strengths:

1. Availability and use of information networks (Internet, DU net, Moodle), databases (library network, DU research, Centre databases), publications in Web of Science and Scopus.

2. The possibility of using licensed software and online tools and software to implement an educational process in the online format.

3. Availability of infrastructure adapted to the needs of student with special needs.

Weaknesses:

1. Not all users are adequately prepared to use the available equipment and online tools in the best possible way.
2. Updating, improving and expanding the information base does not always take place in a timely manner.

4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

The qualification of the academic staff involved in the implementation of the professional master programme corresponds to the requirements of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education regarding the implementation of study programs at a university-type institution. In 2019/2020 academic year 16 academic staff members are involved in the professional master study programme: five professors, two associate professors, six senior lecturers, two lecturers and one researcher. Eight academic staff members have a doctoral degree in psychology (Dr. psych.), two lecturers have a doctoral degree in pedagogy (Dr. paed.), one lecturer has a habilitated doctoral degree in pedagogy and habilitated doctoral degree in psychology (Dr. habil. paed, Dr. habil. psych), one lecturer has a doctoral degree in philology (Dr. philol.), one lecturer has an academic master's degree of education sciences in pedagogy (Mag. paed.), one lecturer has a master's degree of social sciences in psychology (Mag. psych.). The level of English language of academic staff formally corresponds to the requirements for implementing the programme in English. For each course in the programme, there are some members of the assigned teaching staff who have indicated the required level of English profficiency. But it should be noted that 4 members of the teaching staff involved in implementation of the programme have not indicated the required level of knowledge of English, making it difficult to assess whether the quality of teaching and the content of courses in Latvian and English would be identical if the programme were to be fully implemented in English. Also, discussions with the teaching staff during the site visit indicated that implementation of the study programme in English would be challenging without additional training of English skills of the teaching staff, or involvement of some other staff members in teaching of the programme courses.

Five members of academic staff are LCS experts in psychology, four members are LCS experts in pedagogy, and two are LCS experts in other fields of science. Certified psychologists in the field of education and school psychology and counselling psychology are involved in the implementation of the professional Master study program. Teaching staff is selected based on the following criteria: at least 5 years of academic experience, publications in the relevant field, research carried out in the field of psychology, participation in scientific projects. As this programme is a professional Master program, specialists and employers of the field are selected based on these criteria: at least 3 years experience in the speciality, in private or public institutions related to the provision of psychological support services.

Several academic staff members are involved in the elaboration and implementation of each study course. Their cooperation enhances the quality of the study courses both at the stage of elaboration and implementation. Based on the analysis of SAR, as well as meetings with teaching staff and SAR team, it could be concluded that academic staff members and the representatives of the employers involved in the implementation of the programme are highly qualified and are able to provide master level students with the necessary knowledge, skills and competences to successfully complete the programme and obtain professional master's degree in psychology and professional qualification in psychology ensuring relevant knowledge in the field of education and school or counselling psychology.

As could be seen in SAR, academic staff members involved in the study programme participate in

scientific work both at national and international level. The academic staff members involved in the programme publish their works both in nationally and internationally recognised scientific journals and collections. However, there are only few staff members who publish regularly, also in good journals, and whose productivity is noticeable. Unfortunately, the significant majority has very modest publishing, in terms of quantity, regularity and relevant papers. A significant number of staff members reported on abstracts predominantly, and more than a few members have periods of three, four years of not having papers at all or reporting on posters presented on conferences. Both students and teachers confirmed that the results of academic staff's scientific research are available to the students of the master study programme and are used in the teaching process and included in the reading lists of the study course descriptions for students to use for their independent work.

At the end of each study year the workloads of the academic staff members for the next study year are planned at the departments taking into consideration the results of the assessment of respective study courses by students and self-analysis of the academic activity produced by the academic staff members estimating the compliance of the academic staff members with the improvement and teaching of the particular study courses. However, it should be noted that the workload for some of the academic staff members is very high: for example, one associate professor teaches 16 courses (4 for Bachelor level students, 8 for Master level students and 4 for PhD students), another associate professor teaches 20 courses (15 courses for Bachelor level students, and 5 for Master level students), and another associate professor teaches 21 courses (11 for Bachelor level students, 4 for Master level students and 6 for PhD students). One more example would be a professor, who teaches 15 courses (3 for Bachelor level students, 4 for Master level students and 8 for PhD students).

Based on the information provided in SAR and gained during meetings with management, currently DU undertakes adequate measures in a target-oriented manner to avoid negative effects on the quality of study as a result of the changes in the composition of the teaching staff. However, having in mind the information in previous paragraph DU administration should have a plan for replacing the academic staff members in case they leave university for another job or other reasons.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The qualification of the academic staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme is relevant to the obtaining of the study program outcomes, as well as reaching DU goals and tasks.

Strenghts:
1. The teaching staff is chosen according to the specific features of the professional master study programme.
2. Academic staff members are participating in scientific research both on the national and international level and include the results of their projects into the teaching process.
3. The qualification and cooperation of the teaching staff ensure the achievement of the aims/results of the study programme.

Weaknesses:
1. The number of incoming teachers and guest lecturers could be higher, DU could use Erasmus+ opportunities more, as well as invite Latvian practitioners from the field, or organise on-site visits with students.
2. Big workload for some of the academic staff.

5. Assessment of the Compliance of the Study Programme " Psychology"

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: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the supporting documents of the self-assessment report. 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.

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: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the supporting documents of the self-assessment report. The relevant agreement with University of Latvia is provided.

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: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the supporting documents of the self-assessment report. The relevant document--a confirmation from the rector--is provided.

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: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the supporting documents of the self-assessment report. The relevant document--a confirmation from the rector--is provided.

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: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the supporting documents of the self-assessment report. For each course in the programme, there are some members of the assigned teaching staff who have indicated the required level of English profficiency. Formally, the programme complies with the requirements. But it should be noted that 4 members of the teaching staff involved in implementation of the programme have not indicated the required level of knowledge of English, making it difficult to assess whether the quality of teaching and the content of courses in Latvian and English would be identical if the programme were to be fully implemented in English.

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: Not applicable

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: Not applicable

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: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the supporting documents of the self-assessment report. The sample of the study agreement complies with the mandatory provisions to be included in the study agreement.

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: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the supporting documents of the self-assessment report. The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in Latvian and English--the two 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.

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: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the supporting documents of the self-assessment report. A detailed mapping of how the courses of the study programme correspond to the skills, knowledge, and competences of the psychologist's professional standard is provided.

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: Not applicable

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the supporting documents of the self-assessment report. The study programme complies with the requirements set fourth in the Rules of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 512 from Aug 26, 2014 "Rules on the Second Level Professional Higher Education Standard".

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: Not applicable

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: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the supporting documents of the self-assessment report. Analysis of the CVs of the academic staff shows that the members of the academic staff have either publications published in reviewed editions within the last six years, or a relevant five-year practical work experience in accordance with the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.

15 P5 - Overall rating

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the supporting documents of the self-assessment report. Formally, all the elements assessed above correspond to the requirements of the relevant normative regulations.

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: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the the self-assessment report, its supporting documents, and information acquired during the site visit. The resources available for implementation of the programme are sufficient for achievement of the learning outcomes.

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Justification: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the supporting documents of the self-assessment report. Formally, the qualification of the academic staff corresponds to the respective regulatory enactments. But, as mentioned above in assessment 5.5 and indicated in the Section 2.4 of this report, there is no convincing evidence that the teaching staff are fully qualified to implement the whole programme in its current form in English.

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: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the the self-assessment report and its supporting documents. The publication activities of the academic staff members are limited; there are only few staff members who publish at indexed inernational journals that limits the possibilities to base the contents of the programme on the latest advances and findings in research and practice of psychology. More analysis of this assessment is provided in Section 2.4. of this report.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

Overall, the study programme complies with the requirements set out in the Law on Institutions of

Higher Education and other regulatory enactments. Potential for improvement of compliance can be identified in regard to the knowledge of English of the teaching staff.

Strengths:
The programme complies with most regulations and requirements.

Weaknesses:
Several members of the academic staff do not have the necessary level of English knowledge to fully implement the programme in English.

Evaluation of the study programme " Psychology"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Average

6. Recommendations for the Study Programme " Psychology"

Short-term recommendations

1) Ensure that the academic staff has sufficient knowledge of English (B2-level or higher), with corresponding English speaking skills to fully implement the programme in English.

Long-term recommendations

1) Ensure that during the professional qualification placement students are given a chance to practice their psychological assessment and counselling skills under supervision provided by Daugavpils University, with regular supervision sessions at least once every two weeks for at least 2 hours.

2) Include a psychological assessment course in the study programme also for the Counselling Psychology specialization.

3) More actively involve the employers in the development and implementation of the study programme.

II. "Psychology" ASSESSMENT

II. "Psychology" ASSESSMENT

1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

Doctoral study programme Psychology, can be studied full time (3 years) or part time (4 years). As it is defined by the provider, it is aimed at preparing highly qualified professionals for self-led scientific research and academic activity in the sub-branch of social psychology and pedagogical psychology.

The objectives of the Study Programme are represented in the following tasks provided in the SAR: Ensuring the theoretical aptitude level of doctoral students in compliance with the requirements of the science of psychology in the world and in Latvia; developing the system of skills and abilities of organising scientific research and analysing the results; improving skills of obtaining scientific data and developing skills of implementing outcomes in academic activity.

According to the SAR, outcomes are:

Knowledge - to have a command of contemporary topical psychology theories, priorities, and developmental perspectives; to demonstrate in-depth knowledge on major psychological ideas in an inter-branch context; to understand the opportunities of development of modern research methodology in psychology.

Skills – can independently select, critically assess and analyse the obtained scientific information from recent research in the branch; can discuss complex issues of the branch of psychology science and scientific research with other specialists and representativeness of related professions; can independently conduct research and utilise modern technologies in the branch of psychology science compatible with the requirements to scientific research set in the world.

Competences – can take initiative and responsibility in conducting scientific research in a high professional level; can integrate research knowledge skills, and abilities in the process of self-development and self-improvement for further academic and research activity; can independently conduct and improve their scientific research work and facilitate its development.

Admission requirements are a master's degree in Psychology, research paper on the theme of Doctoral Thesis and the discussion on it and examination in a foreign language (English).

Doctoral programme has between 8 to 10 doctoral students for few last years, while the maximum number of enrolled students was in 2015/2016 (14). While the official dropout rate is not significant, the number of students who defended their thesis and completed the programme is very small, in particular last couple of years. The provider reported that the main reason for a low completion is due to cut in financial support (scholarships obtained from the EU funds). In the reviewed period 8 thesis has been defended (in total, from 2006, 20), the number which indicates that the completion rate is about 20%. This percentage is far away from the level that it could be satisfying, regardless that there are some objective (financial) reasons. It is also not transparent why the Study programme kept the same number of doctoral students if the Department had known that the lack of finances would be an obstacle for students. The panel did not receive any explanation. In addition, 10 students could be perceived as relatively small number, but also as too big. The enrolment of doctoral students should be tightly linked to research capacity of the Study programme-field, including the available number of potential supervisors.

The doctoral programme has the Statement issued by the Rector that it has twelve doctors, eight of whom are experts approved by the Latvian Council of Science in the branch of psychology, but what is not clear, the statement has list of nine doctors (not 12), and out of those nine, one is from the other field (linguistics and literature). At the same time, another document, issued by the HE Council in April this year, On starting the implementation of Doctoral study programme Psychology, states that 7 professors and 3 associate professors are involved in the programme implementation. Different documents, different numbers, all referring to the same programme.

After completion of doctoral programme, a candidate is awarded with a doctoral degree in psychology and with the title Dr. psych., namely Doctor of science PhD (since 2018/19). The degree has two sub-branches, Social psychology and Pedagogical Psychology. The Aims, objectives as well as outcomes comply with EQF, level 8.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The offered doctoral study programme is structured doctoral programme, for both full-time and part-time students. While it was financially supported it had a higher completion rate, but presently it has still too many students with extremely low completion rate. This requires revisiting the admission rationale and dynamic of enrolling students, also bearing in mind the overall research capacity (including available supervisors).

The programme is in accordance with level 8 of the EQF, and on a formal level, in terms of its aims, objectives as well as outcomes is properly defined.

Strengths:
1. Interest of students
2. Need for doctors in psychology
3. Motivation of academic staff to participate in the doctoral programme
4. EQF compliance
5. Formal description of a programme.

Weaknesses:
1. Too high number of doctoral students
2. Extremely low completion rate
3. No financial support
4. Relatively high ratio supervisor / doctoral student.

2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

According to the SAR, the Doctoral study programme is structured, recognising main components – elaboration of doctoral thesis, courses divided into two groups of courses (obligatory and electives). It is finalised with two final doctoral examinations. The provider also reports on well-fitted structure of the courses, well-defined outcomes, well organised vertical education process and, in the end, implementation of doctoral research results in the teaching process. All these facts are relevant, but very little, hardly anything is said about the individual doctoral research, how and when the doctoral candidate moves from taking courses in order to define his/her research topic. One of the main outcomes need to be related to research, however, according to the information on the content of the study programme, research is not in the focus. Evidently, much more focus is given to the courses and their structure. During the interviews, when talking about the doctoral programme, for the participants it was a challenge to identify research as the main component of a doctoral programme. Obviously, this is the result with very much of the focus on courses within the programme.

The SAR reports that students can freely decide on a topic for their doctoral research and that they get support from their supervisors whom they also choose according to their needs and preferences. Indeed, doctoral students, and former doctoral students, reported positively about their experience and level of support they received. However, previously reported low level of completion has to have its roots in the programme as well. As much as it is positive to leave the free choice to doctoral students, it would be also beneficial to link their research to some already ongoing research at the Department and-or to link it to the research area of the supervisor. This would also help a doctoral student to be focused and probably it would be easier to provide more profound supervising.

National regulations define some of the criteria for publishing before doctoral thesis defence, but as it has been stated in the regulation, 'More detailed requirements regarding the number of

publications, their volume and publication are not specified in the binding regulatory enactments of the Republic of Latvia.'. It is up to the institution/Study Direction to be motivated and proactive to assure quality and to define these requirements themselves. This is not the case.

The SAR reports on a number of the thesis defended from 2006, but, of course, this review does not cover the period from 2006, so information is not very informative. The provider report on topics relevant to the field and there is no reason to doubt that. However, an inspection of one of the provided doctoral thesis (which dates back to 2016), as much as it could be relevant for the field (in particular in a small country that is lacking standardised psychological instruments), it raises a number of questions on quality and original research work – it is not really a research monography, but more professional work, the content and structure of the thesis does not reflect good quality independent research, does not have well-formulated research question, there is no hypothesis etc., which takes us back to the question of research capacity and good supervision. It is definitely a relevant contribution to professional work (a standardised instrument), but it is not research contribution to the creation of new knowledge.

Requirements for doctoral thesis evaluation and defence are defined by national bodies and regulations and this contribute to better understanding of the defence process. However, it is important to note that despite the fact that the evaluation and defence are prescribed by the regulatory documents, the process of evaluation and defence thesis is an important element of quality of doctoral education/programme and as such should be carefully treated by the Study programme. Regulation usually define the minimum criteria which should not stop an institution to raise the threshold and/or to interpolate their own steps to assure quality.

The optimal number of courses could be differently defended or explained, but the curriculum is saturated with too many hours of lecturing (either seminars, lectures), and actually doctoral student does not have enough time to concentrate on research from the very beginning. Three years of Study programme needs to be well structured, not regarding the courses (or only courses), but primarily to support research and to start research as early as possible. Such a structure of the programme might be one more reason why the completion rate is so low (or no completion at all lately). Within the curriculum, there is a so-called course for preparation of the thesis, that leads the student through different phases of the process. This might be helpful, though it is not clear what does it mean in those situations a course author, and lecturer (since there are no actual lecturers). This seems like a form, but content might diverge from the form. Maybe it would be helpful for everyone involved that the accreditation process allows more freedom formulating structure, and to leave more open space for doing research with adequate supervision. The requirement to do the final examination in the English language is a very good component of the whole process, in particular in any small country with its national language that is usually dominant in schooling as well. This kind of exercise-requirement could prepare doctoral candidates to be better equipped for international networking. On a formal level description of the study courses, the traineeship and the final thesis comply with the provisions set forth in the regulatory enactments.

The Programme offers one course for the generic skill (academic writing) and learning English; both courses are relevant and good that they are included. However, it would be important to have more courses that belong to a group in this group (generic skills or transferable skills). In particular what is missing is ethics in research and research integrity, courses that almost all doctoral programmes at European universities have included.

Both, the SAR as well as participants - former doctoral students or doctoral students - reported on their satisfaction with the programme, support and openness and readiness of their professors and

all teaching staff to help them. They emphasized the 'open door' approach, highly appreciated by the participants during the interview. There are also regular, annual, survey of students, graduates and employers on a quality and satisfaction with the programme. The SAR reports that all respondents are fully satisfied with all the aspects of the programme, the fact that it is good per se, but unavoidable questions an objectivity. It is reported that suggestions obtained from the surveys have been used to reshape the courses and used for a further development of the programme. Doctoral students did point out a wish to have more lecturers from abroad, from other international universities, and this is a goal that still needs to be achieved.

As it was reported earlier, internationalisation, in particular, mobility (outgoing mobility) is still at the beginning. Only one doctoral student was on mobility scheme. Obviously, the system needs to put more efforts in this area, and regardless of the constraints that individual students might have, more institutional support and guiding will be needed. Considering the level of research capacity, it would be helpful to consider so-called collaborative model of doctoral education, in which time spent in a laboratory and/or research facilities in international universities (as in those that the study field already has established collaboration) can be beneficial for everyone involved.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The Doctoral study programme is a structured programme, with courses that are covering relevant theories and methods, however, it is saturated with too many hours of lecturing, seminars etc. Considering 3 years scheme, the programme needs to leave more space for research, with guided supervision from the very beginning. The study programme dedicates very little space to different aspects of research, including the definition of the role of the supervisor (as presented is a very traditional one, based on one to one model), it does not sufficiently elaborate neither the process of thesis evaluation or the defence process, bearing in mind the fact that the thesis and its quality is the main outcome of the doctoral programme.

Strengths:
1. Having a clear structure of courses.
2. Paying attention to competent use of English in science.
3. Having courses like Academic writing.
4. Being open and supportive for doctoral students.
5. Leaving students an option to choose their research topic.

Weaknesses:
1. Having too many contact hours in the curriculum.
2. Being forced to follow a form and losing the focus.
3. Not having research in the focus from the very beginning.
4. Not having more courses for transferable skills.
5. Not having sufficiently elaborated doctoral thesis evaluation and defence.
6. Not having clear monitoring of the process.
7. Not having a sufficiently elaborated requirement for publishing before doctoral thesis defence.

3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

The SAR report states that the Study Programme resources and provisions fully comply with the study programme implementation conditions and with the outcomes. It refers to all the elements, as a library, databases, available IT and e platforms etc., hardware and software. However, reading this

section of the SAR, as well as bearing in mind the collected information during the interviews, it is hard not to have the impression that it is mainly focused on teaching and educational side of the process/programme. The least frequent word used is research and other words semantically related to it. Indeed, the panel was provided with the information during the on-line visit that the Department-Study programme is lacking dedicated research facilities-spaces, and it does not have on disposal any laboratories or equivalent space for doing research. Although social sciences are much less demanding in requiring expensively furnished and equipped research areas/laboratories, it does not eliminate the need to have research dedicated areas. Even more so, because the majority of the staff members within the Study Field are not professionally based in psychology, but other fields, the number of them in science or medical field. In addition, it has been repeatedly heard during the interviews that the Study programme is opting for interdisciplinarity, and if so, a need for dedicated research area and shared research work from different disciplines is even more articulated.

In particular, if the intention is to have a doctoral programme, that it needs to be research focused on the biggest allocation of study time to research. PhD degree cannot or should not be awarded if there is no original research and if a research contribution cannot be identified. Moreover, approximately ten full time doctoral students who are enrolled, it implies that they invest a significant portion of their study time into research. If the institution aims to have a good quality doctoral programme, it is also important to dedicate space where all research students will be able to communicate and share their research experience, and not to be predominantly in lecture rooms or on their own.

The Doctoral study programme has positive experience regarding cooperation with some other national institutions better equipped for research and this represents definitely a positive effort of the Study programme as well as it had positive results. Certainly, having this approach, a research capacity could be enlarged, and some weaknesses could be overcome. However, it does not seem that this has been done on a system level, more likely on the individual, with most likely special efforts of individual supervisors.

In general, as it has been reported in the SAR of the Study Field, but also the panel received this information during the interviews, the lack of finances affected a doctoral programme profoundly. It certainly lowered the completion rate, putting it actually now in some kind of clinical death (no completed study programmes at all last couple of years). However, the panel perceives the situation with no adequate funding more relevant for doing research itself. There is no research that is completely free, regardless of what field and how it is performed. Looking the same arguments from a different side, it is not easy to justify and explain the impact of money on completion rate, observing that there is also an academic staff member who was a doctoral student, 'completed' the programme in 2016, but did not defend a doctoral thesis. This leads the panel to conclude that there are some other reasons, that could be spread easily on other components of resources and study provision. The study programme has to monitor the process of doctoral education and to have mechanisms and tools to prevent such prolongation of the final completion of the Study programme.

This brings us back to the role of a supervisor which is crucial for performing doctoral research. Good supervision put very high demands on a supervisor, in terms of the familiarity of research content, adequate supervisory skills, but also in terms of time and availability.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The doctoral study programme is implemented in a limited research environment. Components that

are shared with the educational side of the programme are satisfying and do meet the most important criteria for quality. However, all the aspect of resources and provision specific for research, such as research facilities, infrastructure and funding scheme are lacking, or they are not sufficient. The good way of meeting the challenges is to establish research cooperation with other research institutions, nationally and internationally, but so far it has happened only sporadically, not on a system level.

Strengths:
1. Careful and thoughtful approach to educational aspects of a doctoral programme.
2. Adequate resources for the educational component of the programme.
3. Examples of good practice of cooperation with other research institutions.
4. A high level of motivation to provide doctoral education.

Weaknesses:
1. Inadequate research infrastructure.
2. Lack of research facilities.
3. Insufficient funding.
4. Lack of strategy and/or action plan how to meet this challenge.
5. Unchanged policy on a new student enrolment even after longer period of insufficient funding and being aware of a low completion rate.
6. No clear strategy and support by the university leadership.

4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

The qualification of the academic staff involved in the implementation of doctoral study programme complies with the requirements of the Law on Higher Education Institutions. The members of the academic staff involved in the implementation of the DSP "Psychology" have at least five years of relevant work experience. A total of 12 faculty members are involved in the doctoral study programme "Psychology": seven professors, three associate professors and two senior lecturers. Seven representatives of the academic staff have a doctoral degree in psychology (Dr. psych.), three have a doctoral degree in science, one has a doctoral degree in philology (Dr. philol.) and one university lecturer is a habilitated Doctor of Pedagogy and habilitated Doctor of Psychology (Dr. habil. paed, Dr. habil. psych).

There were some changes in personnel during 2013-2019 period, as two visiting professors have terminated their employment contract with DU, however, DU undertook measures in a target-oriented manner to avoid negative effects on the quality of the implementation of the study programme. The result of these measures is the fact that in the academic year 2019/2020, guest lecturers from the University of Latvia, Tallinn University, Aalborg University and Salford University became involved in the implementation of the study programme. It seems that this will allow for new international experience to be used in teaching and conducting the study courses, which, in turn, will positively influence the quality of studies and student research activities.

Currently, eight university lecturers are Latvian Council of Science experts in social sciences – psychology; three of them also have Latvian Council of Science expert rights in social sciences (educational sciences). Two lecturers are Latvian Council of Science experts in other fields of science.

The university lecturers involved in the study programme participate in scientific research both

nationally and internationally. However, the number of projects in which academic staff is currently involved is quite low and only several members of staff have provided details of their participation in scientific projects in SAR. As a result of research activity, the number of published papers in relevant international journals or other kinds of relevant publications is adequate - there are only few staff members who publish regularly, also in good journals, and whose productivity is noticeable. Unfortunately, the significant majority has very modest publishing, in terms of quantity, regularity and relevant papers. Significant number of staff members reported on abstracts predominantly, and more than a few members have periods of three, four years of not having papers at all, or reporting on posters presented on conferences.

The results of the academic personnel's research are available to the students of the doctoral study programme, where the students analyze and critically evaluate the findings of the latest research. For example, the published monographs and research articles are used in the study process. As was noted during the meeting with students, doctoral students are well aware of the publication activity of both their scientific advisor and other faculty involved in the programme, as most of the students in the programme are actively engaged in scientific cooperation with the faculty involved in the implementation of the study programme.

The academic staff involved in the doctoral study programme cooperate with each other both in research, developing and publishing joint research papers. The development and implementation of each study course involves several members of the academic staff. Their mutual cooperation contributes to the quality of the study courses, both in the design and implementation stages.

At the end of each academic year, the academic staff's workloads for the next academic year are planned, taking into account the results of the students' evaluation of the respective study courses and the self-analysis of the academic activity of the lecturers; the eligibility of the teaching staff to the development and teaching of particular study courses is evaluated. The approval of the academic workload is carried out in compliance with the procedure of accounting the workload of the academic staff at DU. However, it should be noted that the workload for some of the academic staff members is very high: for example, one associate professor teaches 16 courses (4 for Bachelor level students, 8 for Master level students and 4 for PhD students), another associate professor teaches 21 courses (11 for Bachelor level students, 4 for Master level students and 6 for PhD students). One more example would be a professor, who teaches 15 courses (3 for Bachelor level students, 4 for Master level students and 8 for PhD students).

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The qualification of the academic staff involved in the implementation of the study programme is appropriate for the achievement of the study programme results, as well as for the achievement of DU goals and objectives.

Strengths:
1. Good cooperation of academic staff members in research, developing and publishing joint research papers, developing joint study courses.
2. Academic staff are highly commited to the programme and support their PhD students.

Weaknesses:
1. Academic staff needs to increase the number of scientific papers, as well as the ratio of paper/person need to be increased and well-balanced among academic staff members.
2. The workload of academic personnel is high.

5. Assessment of the Compliance of the Study Programme "Psychology"

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: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the supporting documents of the SAR. 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 is issued.

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: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the supporting documents of the SAR which clearly stated that students will be taken care to continue their education in another study programme and at other institutions, in case the implementation of the study programme is discontinued.

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: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the supporting documents of the SAR - the relevant document - a confirmation from the rector – is provided.

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: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the supporting documents of the SAR - the relevant document - a confirmation from the rector – is provided.

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: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the supporting documents of the SAR. The indicated level of English knowledge for the academic staff involved in the implementation of the programme corresponds to the formal requirements.

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: Fully compliant
Justification: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the supporting documents of the SAR - the relevant document - a confirmation from the rector – is provided.

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: Fully compliant

Justification: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the supporting documents of the SAR.

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: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the supporting documents of the SAR - the relevant document - a confirmation from the rector – is provided.

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: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the supporting documents of the SAR. The description of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in Latvian and English, the two 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.

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: Not applicable

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: Fully compliant

Justification: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the supporting documents of the SAR - the relevant document - a confirmation from the rector – is provided.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Justification: Not applicable

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: Not applicable

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Justification: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the supporting documents of the SAR. The academic staff members have international publications listed, but for several of the staff members, the quality of these publications is not sufficient for the standards common for doctoral-level education. The analysis for this assessment can be found in Section 4.4. of this report.

15 P5 - Overall rating

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Justification: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the supporting documents of the SAR. Formally, all the components assessed above do not correspond to the requirements of the elevant normative regulations, namely one is not compliant.

Requirements (R6-R8)

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Justification: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the supporting documents of the SAR; it has been reported and observed that the scientific support including research equipment and facilities are lacking as well as very limited financial provision. The analysis for this assessment can be found in Section 4.3. of this report.

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Justification: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the supporting documents of the SAR; the overall research productivity is very low, although there are some staff members with the significant research results; to participate in doctoral education requires for the academic staff to be research active and productive.

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: Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the supporting documents of the SAR and information collected during the visit; on a descriptive level, the programme claims to be based on the advances in the relevant field, however, it is hard to implement this if the researchers themselves participating in the programme and working with doctoral students are not research active and productive, and if their work is not recognized via relevant publications. The analysis for this assessment can be found in Section 4.4. of this report.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

Doctoral study programme Psychology is a logical continuation of study programmes on bachelor and master level, and it is recognised its relevance both for the field of study and society, in particular bearing in mind specific, local and regional needs. On a formal level, the study programme meets criteria to be accepted as a third cycle, a doctoral level. The enthusiasm of academic staff and motivation of doctoral students have been identified as a positive stake for a further development of a programme. However, due to number of objective constraints and limitations, the doctoral programme is seriously lacking research capacity, and it has extremely low completion rate, with no awarded PhD degrees for too long time.

The panel's reflection on the evaluated doctoral study programme

The panel evaluated the Doctoral study programme Psychology as average. The consensus has been reached after a long discussion in which all the formal, qualitative as well as the potential outcomes of the assessment have been taken into account. Number of pros and cons have been analysed in-depth to distinguish between poor and average evaluation in order to make the final decision as objective as possible and to choose between the two options. The panel opted for the evaluation 'average', although being fully aware that many characteristics of a desirable level of doctoral education have not been met. The Study Field as well as the programme itself, and all the involved staff, will need to put a lot of energy and time in improving the existing programme and to develop a clear action plan how to achieve those positive changes. The panel has also recognised the Study Field's need and readiness to have a doctoral study programme Psychology as well as its relevance for the society and regional development. The important moment is also the fact that the study programme has doctoral students enrolled and that they have been already in the process of their doctoral education. The panel would like to emphasize that in the long-run doctoral study programme Psychology will need to significantly improve its quality, but more than anything to be much stronger in doing research, having staff research productive and, last but not least, to have adequate research facilities and funding. The evaluation panel members consider it is their responsibility to provide this additional explanation of the final evaluation as well as to share their dilemmas in the process of evaluation, with an aim to assure adequate further development of the programme, but also to raise the awareness of all the stakeholders that that every evaluation has its formal side, but what it really counts is the content behind it. The panel's final decision has been driven with the idea to support further development and remedy of the doctoral programme, (believing that it will be done!), and this was the main reason for choosing average as the final evaluation.

Strengths:
1. On a formal level, the programme complies with regulations.
2. Relevance for the Study Filed and for a local society.

Weaknesses:
1. No research capacity: human, financial, infrastructure.
2. Low completion rate.
3. Too much focused on education and professional work, too little on research.

Evaluation of the study programme "Psychology"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Psychology"

Short-term recommendations

1) The doctoral study programme should align relevant facts/indicators presented at different documents.
2) CVs and the style of writing references should follow international standards.

3) Further analysis of different KPIs (such as ration of supervisor-doctoral student; research paper/person/year, percentage of completion by the cohort of students, ect.) could contribute to further reshaping of a doctoral study programme.

Long-term recommendations

1) The doctoral study programme 'Psychology' needs to be revisited and research needs to be put in focus; at the same time educational part (courses) needs to have less allocated hours of lecturing.

2) It would be beneficial to reconsider the dynamics of enrolment of new students (e.g. annually or bi-annually) and to lower the number of new students in order to be better matched with the existing research capacity.

3) It is important to reconsider how to increase the completion rate; what kind of mechanisms and tools could be developed and implemented.

4) In communication with university leadership would be important to check possibilities to increase research capacity, in particular in regard to finances and research infrastructure.

5) In order to increase research capacity of the whole Study field, and indirectly to establish more productive research environment, research productivity needs to be significantly improved in case of the majority of academic staff.

6) The Doctoral study programme has to pay more attention to more generic courses, and in particular, ethics and research integrity (which implies much more than plagiarism only as mentioned in some documents) which is extremely relevant topic for any researcher.

7) Defence of research thesis needs to be defined in more transparent way and it should gain on its relevance.

8) In general, the Study programme needs to reanalyse objectively its research capacity and to find ways how to increase it; and, accordingly, to shape its Doctoral study programme as well as to adjust the expectations.

III. Assessment of the Requirements for the Study Field and the Relevant Study Programmes

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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			Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the self-assessment report. Detailed analysis can be found in Sections 1.1.-1.6. of this report. Formally, the management of the study field is implemented in accordance with the normative regulations, and all the necessary systems and elements are in place. However, the implementation of the management of the study field in some aspects is rather formal and lacks strategic planning and proactive approach in addressing the challenges facing the study field.
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			Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the self-assessment report. Detailed analysis can be found in Section 1.5. of this report. The study field has been establishing a wide range of cooperation nationally and internationally and is putting additional efforts to collaborate with institutions from abroad with an aim to support research and publishing, and to exchange teaching experience. However, the impact is still not visible enough, with very low incoming mobility, lack of clear action plan how to improve attractiveness to students and potential staff regionally and internationally, and missing well-defined aims, and follow up of results, of international cooperation.
R3 - Compliance of scientific research and artistic creation with the development level thereof (if applicable).	Partially compliant			Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the self-assessment report and the supporting documents. The level of research and publication activity, especially for the doctoral programme, does not follow the common standards for research universities, either in terms of the quantity of the research output, or the level of contribution of the research to the state-of-the-art in psychology. A more detiled analysis can be found in Section 4.4. of this report.

Requirements	Requirement Evaluation		Comment
R4 - Elimination of the shortcomings and deficiencies identified during the previous assessment of the study direction, if it has been conducted, or the implementation of the provided recommendations.	Partially compliant		Compliance is assessed based on the information provided in the self-assessment report and the supporting documents. Detailed analysis can be found in Section 1.6. of this report. Overall, there is a good progress in implementing recommendations, but some of the recommendations have been only formally addressed, without a proper, definite outcome of their implementation. One of the recommendations has not been effectively implemented, although it can be considered a minor one.

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	Psychology (43313)	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Not relevant	Good
2	Psychology (47313)	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Partially compliant	Average
3	Psychology (51313)	Partially compliant	Partially compliant	Partially compliant	Partially compliant	Good

The Dissenting Opinions of the Experts

This report currently does not have any dissenting expert opinions