

APPLICATION

Study field "Information Technology, Computer Hardware, Electronics, Telecommunications, Computer Management, and Computer Science" for assessment

Study field	<i>Information Technology, Computer Hardware, Electronics, Telecommunications, Computer Management, and Computer Science</i>
Title of the higher education institution	<i>Sabiedrība ar ierobežotu atbildību "ALBERTA KOLEDŽA"</i>
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Self-evaluation report

Study field "Information Technology, Computer Hardware,
Electronics, Telecommunications, Computer Management,
and Computer Science"

Alberta College

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1. Information on the Higher Education Institution/College

1.1. Basic information on the higher education institution/ college and its strategic development fields,.

Alberta College (hereinafter – the College) is a state-accredited institution of higher education, founded in 2001, executing short-cycle professional higher education programs in various study fields, based on the Law on Professional Education and Law on Higher Education Institutions.

At the moment of developing the self-assessment report, the College has four accredited study fields, with seven study programs (hereinafter – the SP) conducted therein:

1. The study field “Management, administration and real estate administration” (accredited until 26.08.2027) contains the following short-cycle professional higher education study programs:
 - “Entrepreneurship”, with two specialisations, “Business management” and “Accounting”;
 - “Human resource management”;
 - “Event production”;
 - “Digital marketing”.
2. The study field “Information and communication sciences” (accredited until 20.05.2027) contains the short-cycle professional higher education study program “Public relations”.
3. The study field “Law” (accredited until 22.04.2027) contains the short-cycle professional higher education study program “Legal Regulation of Business”.
4. The study field “Information technology, computer engineering, electronics, telecommunication, computer management and computer science” (hereinafter – the SF) (in accordance with paragraph 48 of the Transitional Provisions of the Law on Higher Education Institutions accredited until 12.2023) contains the short-cycle professional higher education study program “Information technologies” with two sub-programs, “Programming” and “Administration of computer networks”.

The study field “Hotel and Restaurant Service, Tourism and Recreation Organisation” is being prepared for closing, study programs are no longer implemented, students are not admitted.

The College has developed the “Alberta College Development Strategy 2019-2023” (hereinafter – AKAS2023) (<https://www.alberta-koledza.lv/?parent=26&lng=eng>, accessible after authorisation on the website of Alberta College), which defines the mission, vision and motto of the College:

- Vision: in 2023, we are the most recommended Latvian college according to Latvian employers, we have more than 150 graduates per year who find well-paid jobs in their fields, as well as dare to found their own companies and strive for continuous development;
- Mission: the College provides the preparation of socially active and responsible professionals by involving existing professionals in the field and using modern teaching methods and digital solutions;
- Motto: We do everything we do in such a way, and because we care about what Alberta College graduates can do.

AKAS2023 defines the image of the graduate of Alberta College.

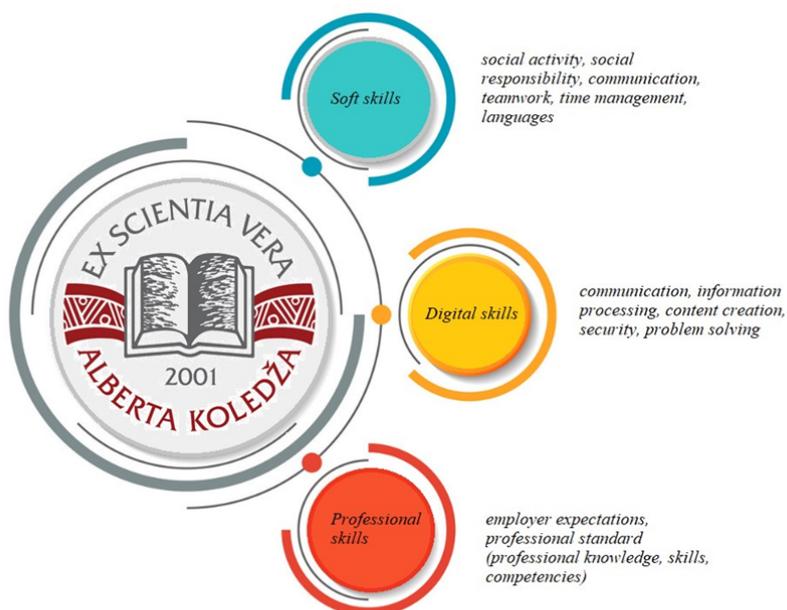


Fig. 1. The image of the graduate of Alberta College.

AKAS2023 defines five directions of strategic development for the next five years. Each goal has been assigned several directions of development:

1. The first goal is preparing high-quality specialists fitting the current job market requirements to secure support functions for businesses and institutions, who can use their acquired knowledge and practical skills to quickly fit into the job market or continue their career growth. The following directions of development have been defined for reaching this goal:
 - Study fields and the variety of programs;
 - The content of study programs and the quality of studies.
2. The second goal is to provide an efficient study process by applying a student-centered approach, using modern teaching methods, supporting applied research, creative activity and strengthening practical skills, as well as the opportunity to gain international experience while studying. The following directions of development have been defined for reaching this goal:
 - A student-centered approach;
 - Teaching methods and creative activity;
 - Material and technical basis;
3. The third goal is to provide a professional team of academic professionals to implement the study process, who base the quality of study programs and the execution of the study process on science and research, practical industry experience, as well as close cooperation with employers and strategic partner schools. The following directions of development have been defined for reaching this goal:
 - Personnel;
 - Science and research activity;
 - Cooperation with employers;
 - Collaboration with other schools.
4. The fourth goal is to ensure the efficient management and steady development of the College. The following directions of development have been defined for reaching this goal:

- Management and administration;
 - Involvement of students.
5. The fifth goal is to be an open and dynamic college, flexible towards market trends and forthcoming towards various educational needs of Latvian residents and nationals abroad. The following direction of development has been defined for reaching this goal:
- Image and public activities.

All of the strategic goals and priorities are in line with state policies and state strategic planning documents, the tasks implied by AKAS2023 have been mapped in comparison with tasks stated in state-level documents. In 2023 a work group, which will involve study program directors, members of the Convention, employers, graduates, and the Student Self-government, will be formed to create a new development strategy.

In the period between 2013 and 2022, the number of students has fluctuated, which is related to a demographic crisis in the country, the number of high-school graduates leaving the country and continuing their studies abroad, the unstable financial situation of the population (financial crisis), the higher education reforms (e.g. the changes in the levels of professions in the study field "Law", the cancellation of professional standards, etc.), fluctuations in global and local professional demand trends, as well as young people's indecisiveness regarding a specific profession.

See the dynamics in the numbers of students in the college over the reporting period in Annex 4.

1.2. Description of the management structure of the higher education institution/ college, the main institutions involved in the decision-making process, their composition (percentage depending on the position, for instance, the academic staff, administrative staff members, students), and the powers of these institutions.

Management of the College is organized based on the College's internal document "Administration Structure of Alberta College". (See *Annex 3*). The management of the College involves the Board of the College, the administrative (incl. general and support staff) and academic staff (incl. guest lecturers), students and employers' representatives (incl. graduates).

In compliance with College Statutes and Cabinet Regulations No. 537 "Alberta College Regulations" of 7 August 2007 (valid until 01.01.2024) (hereinafter – the College Regulations, see *Annex 2*). The Board is the highest administrative institution of the College and the decision-making body for strategic, financial and economic matters. Therefore, the College Board is formed of three Board Members, whose functions are divided into three areas of functional responsibility:

- 1: the study process, science and creative activities, HR;
- 2: financial administration, organizing accounting;
- 3: economic activities, communication.

According to the College Regulations and Regulations on Alberta College Council (see *Annex 2*), the general meeting of the Alberta College (hereinafter – General Meeting), i.e., the meeting of the academic and administrative personnel, and the delegated members of Student Self-government, elects the Council, participates in the negotiations regarding strategic documents, and hear the

College director's annual report on achievements and plans. The General Meeting in its extended composition (i.e., the Board, guest lecturers, and stakeholders) is organized at least twice a year (before the beginning of each study year and at the end of it), as well as an additional General Meeting is organized for the election of the Council.

The College Board actively cooperates with the Alberta College Council (hereinafter – the Council), the director of Alberta College (hereinafter – the College Director), the deputy director of Alberta College, as well as the Students' Self-government Council, by exchanging information, consulting and coordinating various decisions. The Council is comprised of 12 Council members: the College Director, one Board Member (administrative staff 16,6%), four academic staff representatives (persons elected into academic positions) (33,3%), two representatives of general staff (16,6%), two representatives of the Students' Self-government Council (16,6%), two authorized representatives delegated by employers and non-governmental organizations according to the specifics of the study programmes (16,6%).

Pursuant to College Regulations and Regulations on Alberta College Council, the Council:

- suggest and approve new study fields and study programmes, development strategies of study fields and study programmes by monitoring their compliance with Latvian and European Union standards and strategic documents, as well as the compliance with strategic documents of Alberta College;
- approve descriptions of the contents and implementation of study programmes, as well as changes in study programmes;
- review and approve yearly study fields and study programme self-assessment reports;
- approve questions of State final examinations and topics of qualification papers, sample topics of term papers and qualification papers, practice tasks, research and science activity directions, elect academic staff;
- approve the structure and composition of methodological commissions;
- prepare recommendations regarding the admission of students and implementation of new study programmes;
- accept the yearly report on the activities of the College;
- support and encourage the functioning of the Students' Self-government Council;
- develop College Regulations and amendments thereof;
- make decisions on other matters that are within the Council's competence under the aforementioned regulations.

After the end of the Council's mandate (the Council was elected for a term of two years on October 27, 2021) in August 2023, according to the requirements stated in Article 17.2 of the Vocational Education Law, in accordance with the new College Regulations, which will be developed within the time limit set by the law, the College Assembly will be established.

As stated by Article 17.1 of the Vocational Education Law on December 8, 2022, the College Director has approved the Regulations on the Convention of the Counsellors of Alberta College (hereinafter – Convention, see *Annex 2*), according to which the composition of the Convention is determined by an order of the College Director, including no less than seven members, i.e., the College Director, the deputy director, a member of the Board (administrative staff 42,8%), and at least four representatives of employers and their unions (57,14%).

The Convention provides the College Director with suggestions regarding the development strategy and the creation of documents planning vocational education; participates in the process of selecting and evaluating teaching (administration) staff; provides suggestions on the developed study programmes before licensing; promotes the College's cooperation with regional merchants to organize learning based in practice and work environment. The decisions of the Convention are

advisory in nature.

According to the Regulations on the Alberta College Student Self-government approved on September 16, 2022 (see *Annex 2*), the College Student Self-government is an independent institution elected by the students and created to represent the rights and interests of the students. The Student Self-government consists of no less than three and no more than nine members with voting rights (100% student representatives). Self-government defends and represents the interests of students in matters of academic, material, and cultural life in College and other national and foreign institutions.

According to Article 17.3 of the Vocational Education Law, the College Director is elected for a term that is no longer than five years and no more than twice. According to the College Regulations, the College Director performs the following functions and is responsible for the operation of the College:

- implements the administrative and economic management of the College, is its official representative in all matters;
- is responsible for the implementation and execution of the Development Strategy of the College (AKAS);
- is responsible for the analysis, evaluation, and development of the general personnel;
- participates in the development, coordination, and approval of the budget for the College;
- supervises all processes taking place in the College, controls the internal quality assurance system;
- decides on the rational use of the College's resources, organizes the preparation and submission of reports, and performs other tasks according to the instructions of the Board.

The College deputy director is recruited by the College Director on the basis of competition. The deputy director is responsible for the organization and the development of the study process and methodical work, as well as ensuring and developing research and creative activities, and international cooperation; participates in the selection of the academic personnel, is responsible for its evaluation and development; monitors the quality of the studies; performs other tasks according to the instructions of the director.

See a list of the main internal regulations of the College in Annex 2.

See the administration structure of the College in Annex 3.

1.3. Description of the mechanism for the implementation of the quality policy and the procedures for the assurance of the quality of higher education. Description of the stakeholders involved in the development and improvement of the quality assurance system and their role in these processes.

The implementation mechanism of the College quality policy is based on the following pillars:

- Quality Assurance Policy – general principles and guidelines;
- Quality Manual which in the process of improvement is gradually replacing Foundation of College activities – description of areas of responsibility and all processes (goal, process, persons in charge, terms);
- "Business Calendar" online tool – all cyclic processes – tasks for each position with start and end terms and control mechanisms.

Within regular internal assessments, the following procedures are organized at the College for ensuring the quality of higher education:

1. The content of the study programme and the study environment

- Student survey about the implementation, administration of the study programme and the work of the study programme director and each teacher – each semester;
- Student survey about the AC and e-environment – once a year
- Graduate survey upon graduation – each semester;
- Employer survey each semester for all internship providers;
- Employer focus groups – upon necessity when performing an assessment of study programme contents;
- Meetings of methodological commissions – at least once a month;
- Meetings of study programme directors – 2-3 times per semester;
- Analysis of assessment results – twice a year;
- Analysis of drop-out rates and main causes – once a year.

2. Staff assessment and improvement of methodological work

- Staff survey on work satisfaction and improvement of AC work – each year
- Staff evaluation – each year in the summer;
- Staff development interviews and a plan for individual qualification growth – each year, following the assessment;
- Professional improvement of the staff – teaching methodological conference each year, methodological seminars and conferences;
- Promotion of the staff image – training plan (incl. for the promotion of digital skills and raising the level of foreign language skills), inspirational lectures, summer schools.

3. Science and research activities

- Reviewing news in the fields and research topics – in collaboration with representatives of academic staff and employers;
- Forming research groups of study fields – a collaboration among representatives of the academic staff of several directions, an employer representative and, when possible, an international partner;
- The work of the study field research group in collaboration with students – the integration of the science and research paper into the study process;
- Development of scientific publications and participation in international scientific and practical conferences, and publishing the publications in international citable science journals;
- Students' international scientific and practical conference – each year;
- Business forum – in cooperation with employers, at least once in two years;
- International scientific and practical conference – in cooperation with a strategic partner, each year;
- Business game – at least once in two years.

4. Control of truthfulness of information and updates

- Website – features up-to-date information about trending topics at the College, news on the study process or changes in study fields or study programmes;
- E-environment – active auditing of all active e-courses, checking if study course descriptions, learning requirements for the study course, deadlines, descriptions of individual tasks, etc., have been updated;
- Social media – promoting the recognizability of the College and the good public image of the

College among high-school graduates and employers, publishing news both on College events and the opportunities for current students to take part in conferences, competitions, etc.

5. **Graduates' accomplishments**

- Graduate survey (large) – once in 3-4 years;
- Graduate survey (small) – once a semester;
- Guest lectures by graduates – implemented upon possibility depending on the responses of graduates;
- Graduates' work in defense committees, reviewing papers – implemented upon possibility depending on the responses of graduates;
- Data analysis of the monitoring of the Ministry of Education and Science.

6. **Facilities and library**

- Inventory of available resources, preparing a renewal plan thereof – once a year;
- Reviewing the necessity of purchasing new resources, investment plan – once a year;
- Supplementing the library assortment – constantly, at least once a year.

7. **Finances**

- Development of the budget and controlling its fulfilment – at least once a year;
- Cost analysis of study programmes – at least once a year.

8. **Annual assessment and data analysis results**

- Decision-making regarding the necessity of process improvement;
- Development of an action plan, determining specific activities with positions and deadlines;
- Informing the involved parties.

The description of the parties involved in the development and improvement of the quality assurance system and their roles:

Board – the highest administrative institution of the College and the decision-making body for strategic, financial, and economic matters:

- determine the key principles of the quality policy,
- coordinate the development and improvement of the quality policy,
- approve the final version of the document and ensure supervision.

Director – is responsible for the activities of the College and carries out the administrative and economic management of the College, and is the official representative of the College in all related matters:

- participates in the development and improvement of the quality policy,
- is responsible for and ensures the implementation and supervision of the quality policy, initiates the improvement of the quality policy in collaboration with the parties involved,
- is responsible for the development, implementation, and maintenance of the Quality Management System.

Deputy Director for the Study Quality Issues – is responsible for ensuring the quality of the study process, for ensuring the implementation of the applied research and creative activities in College, and for international cooperation:

- participates in the development and improvement of the Quality Policy, ensures the implementation of the Quality Policy,

- is responsible for maintaining the documentation of the Quality Management System,
- is responsible for the annual internal assessment of the quality of study courses and study programmes,
- is responsible for ensuring the external quality assessment of study fields.

Council – elected at the general meeting, the higher management institution and decision-making body on matters outside the scope of the Board:

- ensure the supervision of the quality policy, initiate its improvement in collaboration with the parties involved,
- approve internal regulations, study field self-assessment reports and study programme changes, carry out the assessment of administrative and academic staff,
- provide suggestions for the improvement of Alberta College.

Student Council – a student-elected institution representing student interests:

- get involved in the development and improvement of the quality policy,
- participate in the College general meetings, the work of the Council methodological commissions and ethical commissions, participate in the development of strategic College documents,
- provide feedback: assess the study process, the work of teachers and the administration, the study environment, programme content, develop suggestions for the improvement of Alberta College functions,
- inform students of their rights, collaborate with graduates, student councils of other schools and colleges, incl. representation in the Latvian College Association.

Ethical Commission – a commission created by the Director to review violations of the norms of the Ethical and Academic Integrity Code, prove them, make decisions on applying sanctions:

- get involved in the implementation of the quality policy,
- provide suggestions for the improvement of the Ethical and Academic Integrity Code.

Head of the Career Centre – develops the strategy of the Career Development Strategy and plan of action, organizes its implementation:

- gets involved in the development, implementation, and improvement of the quality policy,
- participates in the development of the College Development Strategy and plan of action, implements various projects, and provides suggestions for the promotion of student and staff careers,
- promotes collaboration with employers, business incubators and other educational institutions.

Methodological Commission of the Study Field – a collegiate institution of the study field that assess the study process, study programme content and implementation, and provide suggestions for their improvement:

- get involved in the development and improvement of the quality policy,
- provide feedback: assess the study process, the work of the administration, the study environment, study programme content, develop recommendations for the improvement of the College functions, material and technical resources and study programmes,
- promote cooperation with the Student Council and employers.

Head of the Study Field – responsible for the development of the study field, the qualification improvement of study programme directors and academic staff, implementation of study programmes in compliance with the requirements of laws and regulations:

- gets involved in the development and improvement of the quality policy, ensures the implementation of the policy,
- participates in the development of the College Development Strategy and plan of action, develops the study field development strategy and action plan, carries out an annual self-assessment of the study field and initiates necessary changes,
- coordinates the assessment of academic staff and organizes annual development interviews, develops recommendations for the improvement of staff functions,
- coordinates research activity, ensuring compliance with the development strategy for scientific activity,
- promotes collaboration with employers, graduates, and other educational institutions,
- coordinates the updating of the material and technical resources according to the needs of the study field in Latvia and abroad.

Study Programme Director – responsible for the development of the study programme, updating study programme content and implementation of the study programme according to the requirements of laws and regulations, promotes collaboration with employers, graduates, and other educational institutions:

- gets involved in the development, implementation, and improvement of the quality policy,
- participates in the development of the College Development Strategy and plan of action, as well as the development of the study field development strategy and action plan, carries out the self-assessment of the study field, implements necessary changes for the improvement of the quality of the study programme, provides recommendations for the improvement of the College functions,
- coordinates research activity within the study programme,
- provides recommendations for the expansion and updating of material and technical resources according to the needs of the study programme,
- promotes collaboration with employers, graduates, and other educational institutions in Latvia and abroad.

Internship Supervisor – ensures the implementation of study programme internships according to the requirements of internal and external regulations:

- cooperates with the academic staff of the College and employers in improving the quality of the study programme, participates in the preparation of the study programme self-assessment, provides recommendations for the improvement of the College functions.

Academic staff

- get involved in the development, implementation, and improvement of the quality policy,
- attend general meetings, participate in the Council, participate in the work of methodological commissions, improvement of study programmes, development of strategic College documents and new study programmes,
- observe a student-centred approach to the study process,
- raise their qualification, carry out scientific and research activities, actively involve College students, participate in staff assessment at the end of each study year,
- evaluate the content of the study programme and study courses, the study process, the work of the administration, the College environment, share their opinions in surveys, personally address the administration with complaints and suggestions, participate in the preparation of the study programme self-assessment report.

Students

- get involved in the improvement of the quality policy,

- attend general meetings, participate in the Council, methodological commissions, the Student Council,
- provide feedback: assess the study process and study course contents, the study process, the work of academic and administration staff, the College environment, share their opinions in surveys, personally address the administration with complaints and suggestions.

Educational Methodologist and Study Programme Secretaries – organize the planning of the class schedule, examination period and consultations, organize records, provide information to prospective students, students, graduates, and staff, reply e-mail queries:

- get involved in the development, implementation, and improvement of the quality policy,
- attends general meetings, participates in the Council,
- assesses College processes, the work of administration staff, the College environment, shares their opinions in surveys, personally addresses the administration with complaints and suggestions for the improvement of the College functions.

E-Coordinator – carries out internal administrative coordination for organizing, improving, developing and proper function of the e-environment:

- get involved in the development, implementation, and improvement of the quality policy,
- attends general meetings, participates in the Council,
- manages online systems (incl. Nexus, E-Nexus, business calendar, Moodle with integrated Big Blue Button, Main Folder, website, etc.), the principles of their organization and maintenance, continuously learning the possibilities and news on the usage of these systems, providing recommendations to the management regarding opportunities for improvement and development,
- develops various templates, audits Moodle e-courses, controls the observance of e-course development standards and principles, their quality and compliance with deadlines,
- gives reports to the management on progress and development opportunities, prepares various reports, etc., collects, prepares, analyses, and submits statistical and other current data,
- develops and improves written and video instructions for staff and students, prepares infographics, develops manuals, templates, participates in the development of regulations,
- participates in the implementation of new processes related to the e-environment, controls the implementation and maintenance of a quality assessment system.

Erasmus Coordinator – prepares funding applications and reports for student and teacher mobility, promotes involvement in mobility programmes, provides informational support, involves foreign partners:

- is involved in the development, implementation, and improvement of the quality policy,
- provides reports to the management regarding progress and opportunities for development, prepares various reports,
- assesses College processes, the work of administration staff, the College environment, shares their opinions in surveys, personally addresses the administration with complaints and suggestions for the improvement of the College functions.

Librarian – informs students and academic staff on news, provides consultations on using the library and searching for resources in the libraries of Alberta College, EKA University of Applied Sciences, and others:

- is involved in the development, implementation, and improvement of the quality policy,
- participate in general meetings, assesses College processes, the work of administration staff, the College environment, share their opinions in surveys, personally address the

administration with complaints and suggestions for the improvement of the College functions.

Head of Communication Projects - informs the parties involved, ensures the preparation of current information and posting on the College website and social media:

- get involved in the development, implementation, and improvement of the quality policy,
- participate in general meetings, assesses College processes, the work of administration staff, the College environment, share their opinions in surveys, personally address the administration with complaints and suggestions for the improvement of the College functions.

Financial Department - ensure accounting in compliance with the requirements of laws and regulations, control and predict financial resources of the College, participate in developing the budget of the College, provide recommendations for the optimization of financial resources and availability of development investments:

- get involved in the development, implementation, and improvement of the quality policy,
- participate in general meetings, assesses College processes, the work of administration staff, the College environment, share their opinions in surveys, personally address the administration with complaints and suggestions for the improvement of the College functions.

IT Department - ensure the functioning, security and updating of the information and communication systems and technologies:

- get involved in the development, implementation, and improvement of the quality policy,
- participate in general meetings, assesses College processes, the work of administration staff, the College environment, share their opinions in surveys, personally address the administration with complaints and suggestions for the improvement of the College functions.

Lawyer - develops internal regulations, informs on the amendments to external laws and regulations, prepares legal documents, participates in the improvement and maintenance of the personal data protection system for physical persons:

- get involved in the development, implementation, and improvement of the quality policy,
- participate in general meetings, assesses College processes, the work of administration staff, the College environment, share their opinions in surveys, personally address the administration with complaints and suggestions for the improvement of the College functions.

Technical Department - ensure facility adequacy for the study process in compliance with sanitary and health and safety requirements, provide necessary resources for the work of the staff:

- get involved in the implementation and improvement of the quality policy,
- participate in general meetings, assesses College processes, the work of administration staff, the College environment, share their opinions in surveys, personally address the administration with complaints and suggestions for the improvement of the College functions.

Employers, industry associations, graduates, partners:

- get involved in the development and improvement of the quality policy,
- participate in the development, assessment, updating and improvement of strategic College

documents,

- provide support in determining research directions, participate in applied research,
- assess study programme and study course content, share their opinions in surveys, participate in focus groups, give individual suggestions, provide expert opinions,
- provide social support by ensuring guest lectures, hosting students at their organizations within teaching trips and internships, get involved in the work of defence commissions, participate in the Business Incubator as mentors, participate in the Business Forum of the College, co-fund the purchase of necessary hardware, software, etc., offer study stipends and grants.

can be found in the section “What is the role of the involved persons in the development, implementation, and improvement of the quality policy?” of the College Quality Policy, as well as in section 5 of the Quality Manual – “Areas of responsibility of the College’s divisions”.

The plans for the development of the quality management system, provide to improve the Quality Manual, including improving the annual system audit, introducing a list of elements (processes) to be analysed, and conducting individual interviews with the parties involved. The results of the interviews will be used to evaluate and improve the efficiency of the system. Until the introduction of interviews, the data is analysed in an aggregated form, based on information obtained from other sources (surveys, analysis of performance indicators etc.).

See the link to the site where the College Quality Policy, Quality Manual and other binding regulations are available, in Annex 2.

1.4. Fill in the table on the compliance of the internal quality assurance system of the higher education institution/ college with the provisions of Section 5, Paragraph 2(1) of the Law on Higher Education Institutions by providing a justification for the given statement. In addition, it is also possible to refer to the respective chapter of the Self-Assessment Report, where the provided information serves as justification.

1.	The higher education institution/ college has established a policy and procedures for assuring the quality of higher education.	The College has developed and implemented the Quality Assurance Policy of the Alberta College, the Alberta College Quality Guide, as well as developed and implemented the Development Strategy of Alberta College, the Development Strategy of each study field, a Scientific Research and Innovation Development Strategy, an academic staff development plan and other documents. At the beginning of each academic year, a Strategy Implementation Plan is developed, at the end of the academic year, the implementation of the plan is analysed, according to the previously determined indicators, future plan corrections or strategy revisions are made. In addition, see Part I, Section 1.3, “Description of the mechanism for the implementation of the quality policy and the procedures for the assurance of the quality of higher education. Description of the stakeholders involved in the development and improvement of the quality assurance system and their role in these processes.”; Part II, Section 2.1 “Management of the Study Field”, including examples of system effectiveness, as well as Section 2.2 “Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System”.
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2.	<p>A mechanism for the creation 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.</p>	<p>The College has developed a Quality Assurance Policy, as well as Regulations of Alberta College on Curriculum Development, Implementation, Supervision and Improvement, which provide for the annual evaluation of study programmes, involving lecturers, students, employers and cooperation partners. Clear procedures and responsible persons are defined. Every year, a description of the content and implementation of the study programme is developed, which integrates all the necessary changes for the improvement and updating of the study programme. It is examined and approved by the Council.</p> <p>See examples in Part II, Section 2.2 “Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System”, including justified examples for improving the study programme.</p>
3.	<p>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.</p>	<p>The College has developed a Regulation on the Procedure of Studies and Examinations, which stipulates the general principles of assessment and certain procedures. Each study programme has a study course where students are informed about the learning outcomes of the study programme and the image of the Alberta College graduate. A study course description is developed for each study course, which precisely formulates the planned study course outcomes (knowledge, skills, competences) and the evaluation criteria for each outcome. Descriptions of study courses are published in the Moodle system and are continuously available to students who study the relevant study course. Every year, at the meetings of the methodological commissions, the results set in the study course description are evaluated. It is discussed whether they have been achieved or are achievable and whether there is a need to improve the study course descriptions by clarifying the wording of the outcomes or evaluation criteria.</p> <p>See the previous section of this table and see additional examples in Part II, Section 2.1 “Management of the Study Field” and Section 2.3 “Resources and Provision of the Study Field”.</p>

4.	Internal procedures and mechanisms for assuring the qualifications of the academic staff and the work quality have been developed.	<p>Alberta College has developed and implemented an academic staff development plan (which includes the Academic Staff Image), the staff evaluation and motivation system. Staff have been involved in the development and implementation of the system. The budget provides funding for raising the qualification of academic staff. A staff selection procedure and an evaluation and motivation system have been developed and implemented and are in the process of being improved to achieve higher quality indicators, for example, individual staff development plans are being implemented; an e-environment audit has been carried out, but from 2023/2024 it is planned to introduce the assessment of on-site lectures as well.</p> <p>See also Part II, Section 2.3 “Resources and Provision of the Study Field”, Section 2.4 “Scientific Research and Artistic Creation”, etc.</p>
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.	<p>Alberta College has implemented information and data storage systems, including Nexus (student database), e-Nexus (staff database), GM (document database), etc. The Nexus e-solution stores information on students' performance, including group average performance, allowing for comparative analysis. The data are discussed at the meetings of the methodological commissions and with the State Examination Commission, as well as at the meetings of the study programme directors to make a comparative analysis between the study fields.</p> <p>Each year, the College conducts student surveys and an alumni survey on satisfaction with the study programme, the study process, growth and employability.</p> <p>The College has implemented a drop-out rate analysis and a drop-out reduction system. Academic and administrative staff are evaluated annually.</p> <p>An evaluation of the available and necessary resources for submitting proposals to the director is carried out every year, after coordination with whom the information is transferred to the Board.</p> <p>All data collected is stored in the College's databases and analysed when preparing annual self-assessment reports.</p> <p>Reports and the Director's open letter about survey results and planned activities are published on the website.</p> <p>See also Part II, Section 2.2 “Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System” and Annex 12.</p>

6.	The higher education institution/ college shall ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study field whilst implementing their quality assurance systems.	See all previous sections of the table, as well as the Quality Assurance Policy of Alberta College, the Development Strategy of Alberta College, the Development Strategy of the Study Field, a Scientific Research and Innovation Development Strategy, an Academic Staff Development Plan and other documents. Examples aimed at continuous improvement can be found in Part I, Section 1.3 “Description of the mechanism for the implementation of the quality policy and the procedures for the assurance of the quality of higher education. Description of the stakeholders involved in the development and improvement of the quality assurance system and their role in these processes”; Part II, Section 2.1 “Management of the Study Field”, Section 2.2 “Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System”, Section 2.4 “Scientific Research and Artistic Creation”, as well as Annex 25.
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2.1. Management of the Study Field

2.1.1. Aims of the study field and their compliance with the scope of activities of the higher education institution/ college, the strategic development fields, as well as the development needs of the society and the national economy. The assessment of the interrelation of the study field and the study programmes included in it.

As a private college where students choose their studies with their own funding, the College has directed its strategic specialisation early on for the preparation of specialists for business (which is included in the mission and vision of the College): organising the work and support staff of small and medium enterprises – HR management, PR, marketing, IT, etc.

The information technology industry has an important place among other industries. It includes a set of knowledge, methods, techniques and technical equipment that ensure the acquisition, storage and distribution of any information using computers. Therefore, information technologies are tools that are used or created to solve problems that are of interest to specialists in all fields.

Since opening the IT study programme, the College continues to implement this program, admitting students and following current trends in the field each year. The informative report of 2022 of the Ministry of Economics on medium and long-term forecasts of the labour market predicts that “a considerable shortage will be observed for specialists with vocational education”, “the most significant shortage of labour in the higher education group is expected for specialists with education in the fields of engineering, life sciences and ICT (STEM). The shortage of specialists with relevant qualifications could exceed nine thousand specialists by 2030, mainly in areas such as computer science, architecture and construction, physical and engineering sciences” (Section 3.3.3 of the Report).

The aim of the study field corresponds to the strategic development directions, mission and vision of the College, which are stated in AKAS 2023.

The aim of the study field is to provide a high-quality study process, promoting the development and sustainability of study programmes, cooperating with the industry and following its current events.

In order to fulfil the aim, the head of the SF, in cooperation with teachers of the College, directors of other study programs and the College Director, has developed the 2019-2023 Development Strategy for Alberta College Study Field " Information Technology, Computer Hardware, Electronics, Telecommunications, Computer Management, and Computer Science " (hereinafter referred to as the SF Strategy) (see *Annex 6*). The strategic planning involved employees of all levels and representatives of parties involved in the activities of the College. The draft of the Strategy was reviewed by the methodological commission of the program, sent out to the Students' Self-government Council for commenting, and approved at a Council meeting.

The SF Development Strategy is based on AKAS 2023, analysis of the internal and external environment of activities, recommendations of staff and other involved parties, guidelines of the education policy of Latvia, as well as trends in the field of higher education in Latvia and the world (see *AKAS 2023, Section VI*), taking into account the defined image of a College graduate (see *Part I*). The Strategy determines the development directions of the study field, its goals, tasks and results to be obtained for the next five-year period, connecting it with AKAS 2023.

In the SF one study programme "Information technologies" is implemented with two sub-programmes, which according to the "Map of professions included in the qualification structure of the electronic and optical equipment production, information and communication technology industry" (registri.visc.gov.lv) correspond to the fifth level (college) of Latvian qualification framework: "Programmer" and "Computer systems and network administrator". Therefore, the sub-programmes are included in one profession map, level, category corresponding to the study field - they are interconnected and fully comply with the SF.

By implementing the student-centred approach, the structure of the sub-programmes is created in such a way that during the first year of studies it is possible for students to change the sub-programme as easily as possible, changing the study focus from one specialisation to another (see *Annex 33*), if it is needed.

2.1.2. SWOT analysis of the study field with regard to the set aims by providing explanations on how the higher education institution/ college expects to eliminate/improve weaknesses, prevent threats, and avail themselves of the given opportunities, etc. The assessment of the plan for the development of the study field for the next six years and the procedure of the elaboration thereof. In case there is no development plan elaborated or the aims/ objectives are set for a shorter period of time, information on the elaboration of the plan for the development of the study field for the next assessment period shall be provided.

The SWOT analysis of the SF was prepared after identifying the main strengths and weaknesses at a meeting of the Methodological Commission, after individual discussions with elected and invited teachers involved in the study field, after the results of annual surveys of students and graduates, individual discussions with representatives of employers and the field, as well as summarising

feedback from internship supervisors over the past years.

The SWOT analysis of the SF was done based on the SWOT analysis of the College included in AKAS 2023 and the directions determined therein .

SWOT analysis of the study field (for 30.12.2022)

<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Weaknesses</i>
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GOOD REPUTATION AND RECOGNITION:

- The diploma is recognised nationally and internationally.
- IT study programmes are in high demand in the labour market and among students.
- The College is ranked TOP 3 in the Prakse.lv annual employer survey.

QUALITY STUDIES FOR THE CURRENT NEEDS OF THE INDUSTRY:

- An internal quality assurance system has been developed and implemented, and is being continuously improved.
- Efficient study quality monitoring and academic staff management.
- A student-centred approach is being implemented in the study process.
- When working with students the principle of democracy is always observed, the principle of “open doors” (the administration is always available and open to a conversation with students).
- An ability to quickly adjust higher education products to the needs of economic development and the demand of the labour market.
- The content of study programmes is regularly evaluated and updated.
- Active collaboration with companies, associations, high schools, and state administrative institutions.
- The study programme includes a significant amount of practical tasks and internships.
- After graduating from College, students have practical experience and skills that ensure a quicker and safer entry to the labour market.
- Successful cooperation of the team of professional teaching staff (from academia and industry).
- Extensive involvement of industry professionals and the collaboration of the College and employers in the implementation of the study process (including guest lecturers, internship providers, supervisors, and reviewers of qualification papers, etc.).
- Students are actively involved in research.
- Numerous opportunities to use the Erasmus+ mobility programme.
- Opportunity to continue studies at the strategic partner EKA University of Applied Sciences.

MODERN DIGITAL SOLUTIONS INTEGRATED INTO THE STUDY PROCESS:

- A developed e-environment for studies in all study forms.
- Regular staff training and use of the latest information and communication technologies in the study process.

MODERN AND COMFORTABLE STUDY ENVIRONMENT:

- Various study forms (full-time, part-time, a basis for distance learning has been prepared).
- Comfortable location (in the centre of Riga).
- Auditoriums are fully modernised and equipped with multimedia technologies.
- An opportunity to use the material and technical base of EKA.

OPEN AND SUPPORTIVE ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE:

- Integration of the values of the College in all processes.
- A small number of students – individual approach.
- Flexible payment schedule.
- Financial support for student activities.
- Social support programme.

DIFFICULTIES WITH THE PROFITABILITY OF CERTAIN STUDY FORMS:

- A low number of full-time students and minimal occupancy of the auditoriums.
- A small number of students in groups.
- The lowest tuition fee possible.

DIFFERENCES IN STUDENT INTERESTS DEPENDING ON PRIOR EXPERIENCE:

- Low motivation and passivity in studies and extracurricular activities in students who started their studies just after graduating from high school.
- Inability of part-time students to get involved in Student Self-government and processes of the College (due to busyness).
- Different levels of prior knowledge within one study group.
- High student dropout rate in the IT study programme.

INTERNATIONALISATION IN THE STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT:

- Insufficient acquisition of teachers' work experience abroad.
- Lack of foreign students.
- Low student involvement in Erasmus+ mobility programmes.

INSUFFICIENT RESEARCH ACTIVITY OF LECTURERS:

- A small number of lecturer publications.
- The paid scientific databases corresponding to this study field are available only at collaboration partners.

Opportunities	Threats
<p>DEMAND:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The employers' demand to obtain competent lower-level specialists with higher education in IT as soon as possible. • The needs of different professions and an interest in higher education that can be acquired quickly for interdisciplinary or retraining needs in the field of IT. <p>COLLABORATION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities of sharing resources with EKA, including the use of scientific databases, etc.; for the organisation of teacher training, including English courses. • Cooperability of strategic partners (local and international) in the development and implementation of joint study modules. • Expanding collaboration with related foreign HEIs. <p>ATTRACTING EXTERNAL FUNDING:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To strengthen science and research, as well as creativity. • To implement lecturer training. • To create a student scholarship fund and student support. • To improve the infrastructure. 	<p>INSTABILITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT POLICY:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unpredictable reforms have a negative impact on the planning and implementation of College activities. <p>DEMOGRAPHIC PROBLEMS, HIGH MIGRATION RATE AND DETERIORATION OF THE ECONOMIC SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease in the number of graduates with secondary education, including with good prior knowledge of mathematics. • Population decline. • Decrease in the solvency of the population. • Increase in the number of students who choose to study abroad. <p>UNFAIR ACTIONS OF COMPETITORS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copying the study programmes and advertising strategy. • Price dumping and subdotation of state HEIs. <p>INCREASE IN COMPETITION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foreign competitors offering studies for free. • Increase in the number of specialised short courses offered (there is no need to complete a full study programme in order to acquire some competencies required for the profession). • The high salary in the ICT sector does not help to attract highly qualified specialists to the study process.

The development process of the SF Strategy of the College and its main priorities were laid out in the previous section of this self-assessment report. The SF Strategy determines the development directions of the study field, its goals, tasks and results to be obtained for the next five-year period, connecting it precisely with AKAS 2023, as well as paying attention to strengthening weaknesses and minimising possible threats.

For example, to prevent weaknesses, increasing the number of students and reducing dropout rates, as well as the development of the internationalisation and research activities of the staff involved in the implementation of study programme are among the most important tasks at the moment, which are integrated into the development strategy of SF and into annual action plans (see Annex 6).

Use of opportunities: AC actively uses opportunities for cooperation and attracting external funding. See more about cooperation with employers and the attraction of scholarships funded by employers, strategic cooperation with the EKA University of Applied Sciences, Erasmus+ projects, the ESF-funded MaKE IT project, the project of workplaces subsidised by the National Employment Agency, etc. (see chapter 2.5 of the SAR).

Prevention of threats: in order to keep up with changes in regulatory acts, AC actively cooperates with the Latvian Association of Colleges, as well as representatives of AC are involved in the activities of various organisations (e.g., LCCI, LDDK, AIP, etc.). In order to overcome competition, AC continuously follows the trends of higher education, promptly integrating them into the study process, continuously works on the modernization of the marketing strategy and the active involvement of employers in the development, improvement, implementation, promotion and provision of scholarships.

2.1.3. The structure of the management of the study field and the relevant study programmes, and the analysis and assessment of the efficiency thereof, including the assessment of the role of the head of the study field and the heads of the study programmes, their responsibilities, and the cooperation with other heads of the study programmes, as well as the assessment of the support by the administrative and technical staff of the higher education institution/ college provided within the study field.

Only one study programme is implemented in SF, so currently the head of SF is also the director of the study programme, who has the following basic areas of responsibility:

- Updating and improving the content of the study programme;
- In cooperation with the director and the deputy director of the college, recruitment of the teaching staff and organisation of the cooperation between teaching staff within the study programme, as well as participation in evaluation of the teaching staff;
- In cooperation with the deputy director of the college, monitoring the quality of the process, conducting the self-assessment, including organising of meetings of methodological commissions and organising discussions with students and employers;
- With the support of two deputy directors of the study programme, strengthening the practical orientation of the study process, including organising internships, promoting the research-based study process and promoting cooperation with employers;
- With the support of Erasmus+ coordinator, promotion of international mobilities.

Additional support is provided to the director of the study programme:

Librarian: determination of needs according to study course descriptions; purchase and registration of books and other informational resources.

Educational methodologist: preparation of study plans, organisation of recognition of previous education and professional experience, organisation of development and approval of individual plans.

The support of the IT administrator and programmer, head of the career and training centre, secretaries, lawyer, communication project manager, technical department, etc. is provided.

Employers, field associations, graduates, partners participate in the development, assessment, updating, improvement of strategic documents and study programs of the College; provide support in determining research directions, participate in research; provide social support by giving guest lectures, accommodating students in their organisations within teaching trips, take part in the Alberta College business forum, co-finance the purchases of necessary hardware, software, etc., establish stipends and grants for studies.

The involvement of academic staff: they attend College meetings, provide recommendations for the improvement of the content and implementation of the study program; take part in the work of the Council, participate in the work of methodological commissions, , raise awareness in the event of shortcomings, participate in the preparation of study programs for licensing and accreditation; develop or update the teaching methodological documentation prior to the beginning of each semester (incl. developing a description of the study course).

In addition to the exchange of information, in order to discuss current events, clarify opinions, participate in the development of various documents or discuss draft decisions before they are forwarded for approval, meetings of heads of study field and directors of study programmes are organised, which are convened and chaired by the College Director. Heads of study fields actively

cooperate by recruiting and evaluating academic staff, developing descriptions of general study courses, promoting cooperation with employers and other educational institutions, organising student research and creative activities.

Some examples of the efficiency of the system:

1. At the administration meeting, it was found that there is insufficient support for the development of e-courses, which is mainly manifested in the organisation of training and providing technical support. In order to provide methodological support for work with the e-environment, the position of e-coordinator was created, who, in accordance with the College's Quality Assurance policy, works with e-environment systems (including Nexus, E-Nexus, business calendar, Moodle with integrated Big Blue Button, Main folder (*Galvenā mape*), website, etc.), organisation and maintenance principles thereof, continuously learning the possibilities and novelties of using these systems; provides informative, consultative support to staff and students by phone, e-mail, in person, in e-environment, etc.; organises and leads trainings on the use of e-environment (group seminars and individual trainings), informs about various digital tools that can be used in the study process; controls compliance with the standards and principles of development of the e-course; develops and improves various written and video instructions for staff and students, controls the implementation and maintenance of the quality system.
2. During the discussion of the methodological commissions, a factor hindering the work was identified - ineffective, untimely exchange and accumulation of information, the purchase and installation of specific hardware and software was necessary for the implementation of study courses. When improving the system, an additional section was introduced in the study course descriptions, in which lecturers anticipate the need for specific hardware or software for high-quality implementation of the study course (see amendments to Annex 2 of the Regulations of Alberta College on Curriculum Development, Implementation, Supervision and Improvement).
3. When implementing a high-quality Ethics and Academic Integrity control system, as the number of detected violations increased, it was realised during the meeting of the heads of study fields that the existing system does not specify specific procedures that should be implemented after the detection of a violation. The Code of Ethics was improved, the composition and tasks of the Ethics Commission were specified, the process of submitting and reviewing a report to the Ethics Commission was described, violations of ethics and academic integrity were described in more detail, detection and prevention thereof, as well as the classification of violations was introduced and relevant sanctions were determined (see SAR Chapter 2.1.6.).
4. Responding to the recommendations of the accreditation experts of other study fields, for strengthening the cooperation of the SF with employers and to attract additional external funding, the College got involved in the project "Innovation grants for students in the interdisciplinary fields of art, culture, economics and IT (MakeIT)".
5. Responding to the recommendations of the accreditation experts of other study fields, the student information and motivation system was improved with the aim of increasing the number of student survey respondents. As a result of the improvement of the system, the number of respondents in SF who completely fill out the surveys increased from 12% to 28%. The work continues, as the desired indicator is set at least 51% of students.
6. Analysing the effectiveness of the quality management system, an opportunity was seen to more effectively organise receiving feedback from employers by reworking the post-internship reporting system, abandoning internship diaries in favour of a wider survey of internship providers, which integrates AIKA's recommendations. The obtained data is more accurate and comprehensive. For the further development of the process, it is planned to

digitise the surveys, which would allow automatic data collection, facilitating their processing and analysis.

7. Analysing the College's internal processes, the procedure for issuing/submitting session protocols was changed, and electronic student files were introduced.
8. Analysing the quality of qualification papers and the most common errors found therein, from the academic year 2021/2022, consultations are organised every semester for students and supervisors of qualification papers and internships on the procedure for drawing up individual assignments.

See the study field management structure in this Self-Assessment, Annex 7.

2.1.4. Description and assessment of the requirements and the system for the admission of students by specifying, inter alia, the regulatory framework of the admission procedures and requirements. The assessment of options for the students to have their study period, professional experience, and the previously acquired formal and non-formal education recognised within the study field by providing specific examples of the application of these procedures.

Student admission requirements and system are defined in the "Rules on Admission" of the College (see Annex 2), which Alberta College updates regularly. The Rules on Admission have been developed in compliance with Cabinet Regulations No. 846 from October 10, 2006 "Regulations Regarding the Requirements, Criteria and Procedures for Admission to Study Programmes" and approved by the College Council. All additional admission requests are approved by the Council of Higher Education. Pursuant to Cabinet Regulations, the College submits updated admission requirements to the Ministry of Education and Science each year.

All persons stated in the Law on Education, Section 3, Part One, have the right to study in the College without discrimination. Considering that the SP provides short-cycle professional higher education, only persons who have acquired secondary education may study therein.

Admission to studies at the College takes place with no additional entry examinations, based on the successful results of passed mandatory centralised exams proving the acquisition of general secondary education.

Considering that the studies are provided only in the Latvian language, admission requirements were supplemented with additional criteria, coordinated with the Council of Higher Education, on the knowledge of Latvian at least at the B2 level, if the education was acquired abroad. Admission of foreign students to the SP is not common. SP students from abroad are mainly foreign Latvians who have obtained secondary education in Latvia.

In the study programme "Information Technologies", a mandatory requirement is the centralised exam in mathematics. Considering that the mandatory centralised exams include a foreign language, it ensures that the students know it (at a higher or lower level) and are generally more prepared to listen to guest lecturers, participate in various projects and mobility events, as well as use foreign literature and sources of information in the study process. The study programme integrates courses developing foreign language knowledge and skills necessary for professional activities. If it is determined during admissions that the students have a low level of foreign language skills, they are offered free preparation courses shortly prior to the beginning of the learning process. During the studies, students are offered free consultations.

There is a test available on the website for choosing one's profession, which helps to choose the most appropriate study programme and make sure that it matches students' interests, character, etc. "Shadow days" and information days are organised before the studies where students are given more detailed information about the study process at the College, contents of the SP and the chosen profession.

Considering the specialisation of the study program, it is more and more frequently chosen by applicants who already have a higher education or who need in-depth IT knowledge within their professional duties. Therefore, the matter of acknowledging previous education and experience is significant. This process at the College is regulated by the "Regulations on the Acknowledgement of Knowledge Acquired in Previous Education and Beyond Formal Education or Accomplishments in Professional Experience" (see *Annex 2*).

Students with higher education are offered study discounts for the first year of studies because a regular comparison of previously acquired study courses takes place. In practice, the main comparable study courses are the acknowledgement of study courses related to foreign languages and business. Specialised study courses are compared less frequently, mainly if students transfer from similar study programs of other educational institutions, for example, from bachelor's level programs (unfinished higher education) or reinstatement (enrolment) of expelled College students without an issued diploma for studies in the SP.

The SP has some examples of acknowledging practical experience: In the 2021/2022 academic year, previous study results of 15 applicants who planned to study in the study programme "Information Technologies" of Alberta College were recognised. The following study courses were most often recognized: mathematics (12 times), professional foreign language (11 times), Occupational health and safety, environmental and civil protection (10 times). Among the specialisation study courses, the study course "Programming I" was most often recognized (5 times). In the same academic year, the professional experience of 14 students was recognized and equated to a study internship.

It must also be noted that applicants are entitled to appeal the decision of the Admission Commission by submitting a respective complaint to the College Director. All complaints regarding the admissions process are reviewed based on an application signed by the applicant, stating the applicant's name, surname, personal identity number and address of residence, the subject matter of the complaint and preferred method of receiving a response, stating a phone number, address for sending a letter, or e-mail address, respectively. The application must be submitted within two business days after the day of announcing the results. A reply to the complaint is prepared within three business days after the day of submitting the complaint application. The College Director is not obligated to reply to a submission that does not comply with the requirements set forth. The applicant may appeal a decision made by the College Director in court pursuant to the provisions of the Administrative Procedure Law.

See the admissions procedure and requirements for students as well as regulations on the acknowledgement procedure in Annex 2.

2.1.5. Assessment of the methods and procedures for the evaluation of students' achievements, as well as the principles of their selection and the analysis of the compliance of the evaluation methods and procedures with the aims of the study programmes and the needs of the students.

The assessment criteria, types and procedure of examination of the acquired education are defined in the Regulation on the Procedure of Studies and Examinations. Students' knowledge in lectures and classes, individual assignments, tests and exams, within internship defence and state final examination. The Regulation defines the "basic principles of assessment" and forms thereof, as well as the system in general.

For example, the basic forms of assessment for the acquisition of SP study courses are exams and tests, planned at the end of each study course. Knowledge is evaluated according to a 10 (ten) point or pass (passed, failed) system. The examination forms of a specific study course are defined in the study course descriptions developed by College teachers, which reflect types of control of individual assignments and levels of meeting the planned study results.

The College has developed "Guidelines for the Development of Study Course Descriptions", which features self-control questions encouraging the study course description authors to do a more in-depth assessment of whether the selected individual assignments, teaching methods, assessment methods are interrelated with the planned achievable results of the study course. It was implemented in 2018 in a pilot project that, prior to the approval of study course descriptions, they undergo quality control (review) to check the aforementioned aspects. The study programme director maps the described results of each study course in comparison with the planned achievable results of the study programme and the image of a College graduate (soft skills, digital skills, professional skills).

For example, the basic forms of examinations are: exams and tests; multiple-choice tests – answer selection exams; "open-book" exams or tests – the students are offered to solve situations (real or model) or to find answers to complex questions while being allowed to use all sources of information available to them; "portfolio" – the test grade is formed by evaluations for each topic between tests from oral and written tests, essays, reports, papers; projects – instead of a test, the students prepare a project which requires familiarity with all topics.

The teachers, in turn, also apply attractive knowledge evaluation forms: preparation of presentations, group work, business games and role play. Such forms of evaluation develop the students' skill to express their opinion, provide arguments and seek solutions, which is in compliance with the image of a College graduate.

In organising the state final examination, the College has a uniform approach for all study fields. The aforementioned Regulation precisely determines the evaluation criteria and system.

For example, prior to granting the qualification, the students develop and defend a qualification paper, which is part of the state final examination. In their qualification paper, the students must prove their professional and theoretical knowledge, as well as their ability to demonstrate specific professional skills and provide reasoned solutions to problems within the field of their specialisation. The development of the paper is consulted by a supervisor of the paper, who also evaluates the paper. Afterwards, the paper is evaluated by a reviewer. Reviewers are highly qualified field specialists with higher education, who are not the academic staff of the College. This approach eliminates: subjective evaluation connected to the students' previous achievements at the College; conflicts of interest among teachers of the College – supervisors, if they were also reviewers; gives students objective feedback on the practical application of their qualification paper.

The defence of the qualification paper takes place at a meeting of the state final examination commission. The commission is comprised of representatives of employers, academic staff of other schools, and the College – in total, more than half are external representatives. The state final examination commission takes the following into consideration upon evaluating the qualification paper:

- the quality of the qualification paper, the solution of theoretical matters and the laying out thereof, as well as the design;
- the student's report at the defence of the qualification paper and their answers to questions;
- the practical value of the qualification paper and possibilities for application;
- the feedback and evaluation of the supervisor of the qualification paper;
- the review and reviewer's opinion of the qualification paper.

The final grade of the state final examination is composed as follows: 20% evaluation of the supervisor of the qualification paper, 20% evaluation of the reviewer, 20% average weighted evaluation of the state final examination commission on the questions for examining the theoretical knowledge and practical skills; 40% average weighted evaluation of the state final examination commission on the defence of the qualification paper.

Student achievements are analysed every semester. The data obtained is used for the student support system of Alberta College, for example, providing financial support to students of various categories, all of whom had obtained the evaluation “good” (7) and above. The data is also used for awarding state social grants.

The tasks of methodological commissions include evaluating learning outcomes of study courses and determining the need for improvement (for example, see the Regulation of Alberta College on Curriculum Development, Implementation, Supervision and Improvement).

Special attention is paid to the analysis of the results of the defence of the qualification papers, which is carried out by the chair of the commission, who is the representative of the employers, when preparing the report after the defence, and the director of the study programme, when preparing the annual self-evaluation report.

In the section of the website “Regulatory Documents”, the “Regulation on the Procedure of Studies and Examinations” are available to students, which defines the basic principles and methods of evaluation, as well as the procedure for appealing evaluations.

Students can follow their achievements in the e-environment: on the Moodle platform, lecturers post descriptions of study courses, especially highlighting the planned learning outcomes of the study course, requirements for completing independent tasks and learning the course, as well as posting evaluations of independent assignments and tests, providing feedback, justifying and explaining the evaluation.

All exam and test evaluations, as well as information about uncompleted study courses (outstanding academic obligations) can be found in the section “My data” on the college's website. Also, students can apply on the website and within three working days receive a statement about completed study courses and results.

See student result assessment criteria, conditions and binding procedures in Annex 2.

2.1.6. Description and assessment of the academic integrity principles, the mechanisms for compliance with these principles, and the way in which the stakeholders are informed. Specify the plagiarism detection tools used by providing examples of the use of these tools and mechanisms.

The "General Guidelines of Academic Integrity" published in the fall of 2019, developed and published within the Erasmus+ strategic partnership project "European Network for Academic Integrity" says that the "culture of academic integrity is an organisational spirit and climate that informs and promotes ethical behaviour and addresses ethical failures in effective and efficient ways". It's also mentioned that a "key approach to counter academic misconduct and dishonesty in higher education is to develop institution-wide strategies to promote a culture of academic integrity".

Upon experiencing a growing significance of academic integrity and ethics in the work of higher education, as well as discovering several breaches, the College developed the Ethical and Academic Integrity Code of Alberta College (hereinafter referred to as the Code). The development of the Code involved teachers of the College and its strategic partner EKA, study programme directors and heads of study fields. The draft code was reviewed by the administration. The final edit of the Code was approved by the Council. In 2022, the Code was improved, taking into account the shortcomings found during its application. The new version of the Code has been approved by the Council.

One of the breaches pushing the development of such a Code is related to unethical practice in a teacher's professional activity. A case of plagiarism was discovered in creating e-courses, which was permitted by a College teacher.

The College also rather regularly comes across cases of plagiarism in students' individual assignments, especially among first-year students who are not entirely familiar with the concept and are still learning to learn. In response, the matters of the non-acceptability of plagiarism were included in the first-year student meeting, and the study agreement clauses providing for sanctions in events of plagiarism and breaches of ethics were improved. The provision included in the study agreement is applied as follows:

- If plagiarism was detected for the first time in a current test, the lecturer who detected the plagiarism, discusses the nature of the plagiarism with the student, does not evaluate the submitted work or cancels the evaluation of it, and assigns another similar task to the student. If the student does not agree with such a decision, then the lecturer or the student turns to the director of the College, who organises discussions with the student and the director of the study programme, or initiates the review of a case in the Ethics Commission.
- If plagiarism was detected repeatedly or in the final paper, then the lecturer or supervisor of the internship reports the case in writing to the College Director, who initiates the review of the case by the Ethics Commission and acts in accordance with its decision.

In the Teaching Methodological Conference 2019 jointly organised by the College and the EKA, a section called "Academic integrity and ethics in the institution of higher education" took place, during which Rector of EKA presented the approved Codes, and Sworn Attorney, EKA lecturer read a report "Copyright and related rights, the use of such rights in the academic environment".

In December 2022, the lecture "Strengthening academic integrity in the e-environment and beyond" was organised as part of the teacher qualification programme, which was led by the associate professor from RSU.

Therefore, the principles of academic integrity and the observance mechanism thereof is defined in the Ethical and Academic Integrity Code of Alberta College, teachers and students are informed of its contents, and the code has been published and is available to teachers and students on the

College website. Upon hiring new teachers, all of them are informed of the existence of the Code, incl. by integrating appropriate clauses in the employment contract. Additional related standards are worked into the internal regulations for students at Alberta College (see *Annex 2*).

Upon the College taking over the experience and positive recommendations of EKA, the University College of Economics and Culture, with the aim of limiting plagiarism in students' individual assignments – which is a major manifestation of a breach of academic integrity – an agreement was signed with the University of Latvia on the College joining the unified plagiarism control system. It is a set of technical, methodological and organisational elements for the comparison of higher education students' papers against a base of formerly accumulated student papers and other documents. Its creation was initiated and a contract thereof was signed among the University of Latvia, Daugavpils University, University College of Economics and Culture, Riga International School of Economics and Business Administration (now – RISEBA University of Applied Sciences), Rīga Stradiņš University, Rezekne Academy of Technologies, Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies, and Liepaja University. Starting in 2020, all qualification papers in College are undergoing mandatory plagiarism checks before the defence. In addition, there is a section developed in Moodle where any lecturer can easily submit any independent assignment developed in a study course or study internship or qualification internship report for plagiarism check.

Before the implementation of such a system, the College started to include appropriate clauses in study agreements several years ago in order to ensure students' awareness of the observation of their copyrights, on the one hand, and the transfer of the data used in students' work upon importing qualification papers into the external anti-plagiarism system, on the other, which provided a possibility to immediately implement the system.

Since joining the plagiarism control system plagiarism has not been detected among students of SF.

2.2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System

2.2.1. Assessment of the efficiency of the internal quality assurance system within the study field by specifying the measures undertaken to achieve the aims and outcomes of the study programmes and to ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study field and the relevant study programmes.

The College has formulated the image of the graduate and continuously follows it to promote the achievement of an ambitious result. The image of the graduate includes the idea of the development of the most important soft skills, digital skills and professional competencies in College students. Annex 1 of the College's Quality Assurance Policy provides “Examples of Alberta College (AC) processes and procedures for the preparation of graduates in compliance with the image of a graduate” (see *Annex 2*). Not only learning outcomes of the study programme, but also of each study course contain elements corresponding to the image of the graduate (see *Annex 32*).

The goal and outcomes of the study programme are formulated in such a way that they are also linked to the goals of the study field, college-level competencies of the Latvian qualification framework (LKI 5), and professional standards. Interlinking of goals and outcomes is checked using the mapping method (see *Annexes 31, 32*).

According to the quality assurance policy and the Regulation of Alberta College on Curriculum

Development, Implementation Supervision and Improvement, at least once a year during the meetings of the methodological commissions, the progress of the students and the planned learning outcomes of each study course are evaluated. If it is identified that one of the outcomes of the study course is difficult to achieve (e.g., many students have low success in the study course or difficulties with passing the exam), the possibilities of improving the content, methods or processes are discussed. As a result, amendments to the study programme or study course are made, proposals are made to the management for process improvement.

- Process improvement: It was identified that due to the different level of prior knowledge, part-time students have difficulties with learning some study courses (including mathematics, programming, etc.). A proposal was put forward to develop and implement a monitoring system, promoting student cooperation, which would be aimed at supporting students with poorer knowledge in learning the course.
- Analysis of the final result: Every semester, the results of the defence of qualification papers are analysed in comparison with the results of previous periods in order to follow the fluctuations of the average rating. If the average rating of the defence of qualification papers differs significantly from previous periods, the reasons for this are analysed (both shortcomings and positive trends).

In order to facilitate the collection and analysis of the mentioned data, the College started work on the development of a digital tool for processing such data. At the time of development of SAR, the formulation of the technical task for the IT department is in progress.

The Quality Policy of the College and its implementation mechanism are described in Part I. The examples below show how the Quality Assurance Policy principles are actually implemented in the College and SF.

Social and legal responsibility. For example,

- See Annex 2 “Academic Integrity Principles and the Compliance Mechanism”;
- Since 2013 the College is a member of the UN Initiative “Principles for Responsible Management Education” (PRME);
- Aiming at reducing the amount of printed paper, saving time, more efficient process organisation, accessibility of information, e-courses for internships and qualification works were created, i.e., all draft internship reports and qualification works are submitted, reviewed, and commented electronically in the Moodle system.

Leadership and engagement. For example:

- See *Annex 3* “College Management Structure”, on the involvement of the staff in the work of various bodies, document preparation, decision making;
- The College management actively participates in the training for the academic staff, thus setting an example and underlining the significance of the training;
- College management supports the Open Door principle with colleagues and students, actively participates in “Shadow Days”, etc.

Efficiency and result orientation. For example:

- See the self-evaluation report sections about Implementation of the Quality Policy, Management of the Field of Study, College’s Statistical Data Aggregation Mechanism, etc.;
- See sections describing the implementation of strategic partnerships with EKA (Latvian higher education institution “*Ekonomikas un kultūras augstskola*”) etc.;
- See “Alberta College Fundamentals of Operation” Handbook and electronic Business Calendar (containing confidential information, available only in the College);

- See the examples below, section "Continuous Improvement for Excellence".

Regular internal and periodic external evaluation. For example,

- See the self-evaluation report sections about Study Programme Development and Review System and Processes, Field of Study SWOT Analysis, etc;
- Each year, the College prepares self-evaluation reports for each field of study, as well as a general College report. All reports are made public on the College website.

Continuous improvement for excellence. The College continually improves all operational processes and evaluates them in a unified system, striving for excellence in performance and quality. For example,

- Based on the comments made in the student surveys, various improvements have been introduced:
 - technical improvements in several lecture rooms (for example, installation of additional sockets in computer rooms, installation of additional lighting in lecture rooms, changing computer hardware in some lecture rooms, revision of some lecture rooms, etc.);
 - introduction of an e-course template for transparency and a unified approach in all study courses;
 - created an option of making various inquiries through the website.
- The instructions for work and study in the e-environment are updated every year and new ones are developed as necessary. The instructions are posted on the College website and in relevant e-environment courses for lecturers and students;
- The College has switched to electronic document circulation and electronic signing.

Communication and information. For example,

- See the self-evaluation report section about websites publishing information on the field of study and the corresponding study programme etc;
- See current information available on the College website.

2.2.2. Analysis and assessment of the system and the procedures for the development and review of the study programmes by providing specific examples of the review of the study programmes, the aims, and regularity, as well as the stakeholders and their responsibilities. If, during the reporting period, new study programmes have been developed within the study field, describe the procedures of their development (including the process of the approval of study programmes).

Study programme development and review system and processes in the College is governed by "Regulation of Alberta College on Curriculum Development, Implementation Supervision and Improvement" and also Quality Assurance Policy (see Annex 2).

Opening a new study programme requires the support of the Convention, the Council and the Board. Development may be initiated by the Council, the Director of the College (incl. on the initiative of the alumni or Students Self-government Council), the head of the SF, the director of the study program, representatives of the academic staff, Convention of the College, representatives of the business partners, Rector of the EKA in the strategic partnership framework.

For the development of the study program, the Director of the College shall form a work group comprising the director of the new study programme - the leader of the work group, representatives of the Convention (industry professionals and employers), lecturers, as well as students and alumni.

A new study programme is developed with clearly defined objectives, tasks, expected learning outcomes, target audience of the study programme and the image of the alumnus. Whereas the study programme goals, expected results, and tasks are defined taking into account the goals and expected results of the field of study, as well as the expected learning outcomes mentioned in the description of the qualification to be obtained according to the national qualifications framework, Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area, requirements of the education and profession standard, and the overall image of the alumnus.

After that the work group prepares an application for licensing and a self-assessment report in accordance with regulatory requirements and methodology and guidelines of the Academic Information Centre.

The implementation of the study programme is governed by the "Description of the Study Content and Implementation", which is prepared by the director of the study programme in accordance with the provisions of the "Regulation of Alberta College on Curriculum Development, Implementation Supervision and Improvement".

The director of the study programme is entitled to make changes in the study programme after it has been discussed at the meeting of the methodological commission. Substantial changes in the content must be approved in compliance with the regulatory enactments and undergoing the external evaluation. During the reporting period, no significant changes were made in the corresponding study programme of SF.

To ensure continuous and high-quality study process and the improvement of the process and the study program, a systematic internal monitoring is performed at the College, SF, and study programme levels, as well as within each study course.

At the end of each academic year, heads of the SF and study programme directors prepare a self-evaluation report of SF and study program, collect data and analyse the trend analysis, prepare reports on the performance improvement of the field of study. College Directors prepares self-evaluation report of College

Lecturers, students, alumni, and employers are involved in the self-evaluation process through meetings and surveys on the content of study programs, teaching methods, quality of academic staff work, organisation of the study process and extra-curricular activities, study environment, and e-environment.

Likewise, study programme directors maintain awareness of the latest developments in the field and consult with industry representatives and experts on the relevance of the content to the labour market and the improvement opportunities. The views of the stakeholders are assessed through surveys and the results are discussed with the administration, study programme directors, methodological commissions, the Council and staff in various meetings; the feedback is promoted by informing the stakeholders about the survey results and planned activities:

- a students' survey aimed at finding out their opinion about the quality of the study process, the work of the lecturers and administration, the satisfaction with the chosen study program;
- a staff survey to find out about their job satisfaction at the College and views on the work of the administration, available resources, and student evaluation;
- an alumni survey after graduating from the College to find out their opinion about the

curriculum, implementation of the study program, impact on alumnus's growth and further education; it is also done each three years to follow the education and career development of the alumni;

- a survey of employers: verbal and written (written survey is completed at the end of the internship by filling in the feedback of the company or organisation on the student's preparedness for the particular specialty; verbal survey is done by the study programme director when consulting about the developments of the area and the content of the study programme).

In the academic year 2021/2022, a meeting was held with representatives of "Datakom" Ltd., concluding a cooperation agreement, which provides for extensive cooperation in such matters as updating the study programme and providing internships for students.

In the academic year 2022/2023, meetings were held with representatives of the international certification platform "PeopleCert", as a result of which the College has obtained the status of an Education Partner, providing wide certification opportunities for teaching staff and students.

As far as possible, the College maintains contacts and continues to cooperate with graduates - several times the employees of the company "TestDevLab" conducted guest lectures for students, informing them about the current events of the IT industry.

For example, several examples of receiving and practical implementation of feedback in the SF can be given:

- Following the recommendations obtained through the annual student surveys, it was decided to waive the course works in the study plan and to balance the volume of both internships assigning the same amount of 8CP for both. Thus, the students load between the internship and studies was evened out;
- after studying the normative regulation, the study course "Labour, Environmental and Civil Protection" was introduced, and the content of the course was based on the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 716 "Minimum Requirements for the Content of the Mandatory Civil Protection Course and the Content of Civil Protection Training for Employees".
- responding to the recommendations of the lecturers at the methodical meetings and the results of employer surveys, the content of individual study courses was updated ("Computer Networks" supplemented with topics on VPN and the review of computer network administrator's responsibilities, "Programming" the principles of OOP are teched in depth, in study courses "Software Development Technologies" and "Database Technologies" topics were introduced on creating desktop and web applications for databases), as well as questions of the qualification examination were updated.
- although no cases of plagiarism have been detected so far, following the recommendations of the reviewers of the qualification papers, a check of the qualification papers has been introduced in the plagiarism system;
- according to the recommendations of the internship supervisors, a mandatory additional examination was set in the process of recognition of study internships - presentation and defence of internship assignments.

See Annex 2 for the internal regulations on the development of the study programme.

2.2.3. Description of the procedures and/or systems according to which the students are expected to submit complaints and proposals (except for the surveys to be conducted among the students). Specify whether and how the students have access to the

information on the possibilities to submit complaints and proposals and how the outcomes of the examination of the complaints and proposals and the improvements of the study field and the relevant study programmes are communicated by providing the respective examples.

The procedure for submitting student complaints is set out in the “Regulation on the Procedure of Studies and Examinations”, which governs the complaint cases, procedures, time limits for appealing decisions and grades. This Regulation defines the duties of the College Administration and time limits for adjudication of complaints and taking the decision. For violations of academic integrity and ethics, please additionally refer to "Ethical and Academic Integrity Code of Alberta College".

These regulations are available on the College website in the section “Regulatory documents”. If a written application or complaint is submitted, the student notes the preferred form of receiving a response: e-mail, phone call, etc.

It is important to mention, that the College operates on an "Open Door" basis, which allows for small, expeditiously negotiated proposals to be made outside the College's management hours. According to the Director of the College, the students regularly use this opportunity both individually and in groups. After such meetings, two possible scenarios prevail: 1) the issue is resolved during the interview or 2) the students are advised to write a formal application describing a situation allowing for a longer period of time for examination of the question (in compliance with the internal regulations). Board members admit that such meetings with students have taken place, but are very rare. These are usually used by Alberti of the Year (chairpersons of the Students Self-government Council) to pre-discuss the ideas of the Students Councils requiring additional funding before submitting a formal grant request.

Students can apply for an individual consultation with the director or the deputy director of the study programme, and at least once a year a meeting is held with all study course groups of the study programme; every semester there is an individual informative meeting with each study group.

The secretaries of the Study Department also record the suggestions received during the student service time and inform the management about them.

Recent Examples of Complaints:

Period of time	The recipient of the complaint	Nature of the complaint	The reason of the complaint	The solution
Academic year 2022/2023	Study Department	Quality of whiteboards in auditoriums.	The boards are raddled.	Considering that the renovation of College premises is planned in the summer 2023, it was decided to postpone the resolution of the issue until the summer.

Academic year 2022/2023, 1st semester	Study Department	Difficulties to access students profile on the College website after 22:00	System synchronization takes place every day at 22:00, because there was a malfunction of the website	The system synchronization time was changed, so currently it occurs during the night time.
Academic year 2021/2022 2nd semester	Acting Director	Students complained about not having access to information about their payment schedules.	There was no information on payment schedules in the student profile.	A section "Payment schedule" has been created in the student profile.
Academic year 2021/2022 2nd semester	Sudy Department	Students who attend lectures on Saturdays complain that it is not possible to have lunch near the College.	All the cafes near the College are closed on Saturdays.	A contract was concluded with "12eat" for the installation of a self-service store in the College premises.
Academic year 2021/2022 2nd semester	Ethics Commission	Complaint about the lecturer's communication style.	Correspondence between the lecturer and the student.	The Ethics Commission decided not to impose a penalty and gave the director recommendations for resolving the conflict.

2.2.4. Provide information on the mechanism for collecting the statistical data, as developed by the higher education institution/ college. Specify the type of data to be collected, the regularity of collection, and the way the information is used to improve the study field. Describe the mechanism for obtaining and providing feedback, including with regard to the work with the students, graduates, and employers.

To aggregate the statistics, the College has developed the following databases:

- Nexus – student data (including personal data, education, study plan, grades, orders, tuition fees, library card information, etc.) maintained by the College Study Department; semi-personal data maintained by the Director of the College;
- E-nexus – staff data (including personal data, education, study courses, participation in conferences, projects, publications, etc.) maintained by the head of the SF, Director of the College;
- GM (Main Folder, Galvenā mape, in Latvian) - College documentation (Regulations, templates

for everyday work and study process documents, signed documents, e-documents, e-registers, methodological materials, etc.) maintained by the Study Department, heads of the SF, directors of the study programs, Director of the College, Board, lawyer, communication project specialist, Erasmus + coordinator, accounting department, etc.;

- Moodle – study and informative materials supporting the study process maintained by lecturers, directors of study program, e-coordinator, IT administrator, Director of the College;
- Business Calendar – data for process organisation and control maintained by the Director of the College and Deputy Director of the College;
- ADA – Data analysis (since 2019) - for self-assessment (see below) maintained by the Study Department.

With the introduction of ACDS 2023, the College decided to establish a database of regularly collected data and indicators (ADA), which would contain, for example, the following data by semester and year:

- Number of students in the field of study;
- Number of students in the study program;
- Number of students on academic leave in the study program;
- Student mobility numbers;
- Number of alumni of the study program;
- Number of exmatriculated students without a diploma;
- Drop-out rate of the study programme %;
- Drop-out reasons of the study program;
- Results of the state final examination of the study program;
- Student satisfaction - results of the survey;
- Students' evaluation for each lecturer - results of the survey;
- Staff satisfaction - results of the survey;
- Staff mobility numbers;
- Number of academic staff involved in the implementation of the study program;
- Number of employers - active cooperation partners;
- Employers' opinion on the relevance of the study programme - results of the survey;
- Employers' opinion on the content of the study programme - results of the survey;
- Employers' opinion on the training level of trainees - results of the survey;
- Full-time study programme tuition fee;
- Part-time study programme tuition fee;
- Study programme e-studies face-to-face tuition fee;
- Quality of the e-environment - number of e-courses as % of total number of study courses;
- Financial indicators: income;
- Financial indicators: expenditure;
- Indicators defined by SRIDS 2024 (see Annex 2).

More information on what data are collected, what indicators are to be introduced, for what period of time the data are aggregated, who is responsible for entering the data, and what data are imported into ADA from other College databases can be found in ADA.

The College organises various surveys of students, graduates and employers (see Annex 12).

The following surveys are conducted for students:

- “Work of the lecturers” - at the end of each semester (a survey that allows students to express their opinion about the work of lecturers). Both, students and College staff, are introduced to the results of the survey in a summarized form, study programme directors are introduced to the individual results of lecturers who teach in their programmes, and each

lecturer receives their results. Students and College staff are informed of the decisions made during the analysis as soon as the survey summary is sent out.

- “Study process” - once a year (questions about the study process and the study programme are asked in the survey). The results of the survey in a summarized form with an action plan are sent by e-mail to both students and College staff.
- Survey for students who have decided to exmatriculate before graduation. Each student questionnaire, after filling it out, is sent to the director of the respective study programme for analysis. The results in a summarized form are discussed with the study programme directors. If any decisions are made, those are communicated to College staff and students.
- Other surveys are conducted as needed.

College graduates are surveyed:

- Shortly before graduation, questions are asked about the study process, study content, plans to continue studies, etc. The study programme directors are introduced with the results in a summarized form. If any decisions are made on the basis of the survey, the College staff and students are informed about them.
- Once every 5 years, a large survey of graduates is conducted, in which all graduates of the College are invited to participate. The survey includes various questions about studies at the College, employment, and about the level of their income. The results in a summarized form are sent to students and staff, together with the decisions made.
- Other surveys are conducted as needed.

Employer surveys are conducted:

- For all employers who provide internships (questions about the preparedness of College students for work, industry trends, etc.). The study programme directors are introduced to the results of the survey. Both students and staff are informed about the decisions.
- Other surveys are conducted as needed.

In general, the results of surveys show a positive trend in satisfaction with SP and its content, teaching staff and the College's study environment and infrastructure, as well as the opportunity to study in the e-environment.

Taking into account the results of student surveys:

- in some study courses, the planned learning outcomes and their evaluation criteria, as well as descriptions of independent assignments were improved to be more specific;
- the guidelines for the development of e-courses were changed, i.e., to make navigation and finding the necessary information faster and easier, the structure of the e-course and the amount of compulsory information were changed;
- given a more detailed description of the procedure for appealing grades, summarising all cases in a single regulation, i.e., the “Regulation on the Procedure of Studies and Examinations”, and excluding, for example, appealing the result of the state final examination from the “Regulations on Individual Assignments”;
- changes were introduced to the academic staff - following negative feedback from the students, negotiations on development possibilities were held with some of the lecturers, discussing shortcomings in the work and agreeing on improvement of the work. In the reporting period, student survey results did not show a positive trend for some teachers, discussions were repeated, cooperation was terminated and new colleagues were invited;
- the opportunity was implemented to apply for various statements online, on the College website, and receive them via email.

2.2.5. Specify the websites (e.g., the homepage) on which the information on the study field and the relevant study programmes is published (in all languages in which the study programmes are implemented) by indicating the persons responsible for the compliance of the information available on the website with the information published in the official registers (State Education Information System (VIIS), E-platform).

Information about the SF is published on the College website www.alberta-koledza.lv (Only in Latvian) with sections according to type of activity, study program, etc. The main language of the website is Latvian. Since the study process at the College takes place in Latvian, the English version of the website only allows one to familiarise oneself with general information about the College, study programs, Erasmus+ mobility opportunities and key documents.

The Communications Project Manager is in charge of publishing information on the website, the Deputy Director is in charge of the accuracy of published information. Several administrative employees are in charge of the necessity to update information, for example:

- The study programme director reviews and updates information pertaining to the study program, as well as regularly checks that the website has information about various news related to the SF or SP;
- The International Relations and Erasmus+ Coordinator reviews current information regarding mobility opportunities, application procedure, etc.;
- The E-coordinator updates information about the e-learning process and manuals, instructions published in the respective section, or e-environment presentation videos;
- The Deputy Director supervises the placement of the current version of internal regulatory acts on the website, the publication of the annual self-assessment report and the PRME report prepared every two years.
- The Director reviews the information published on the website about staff contact information, admission documentation, research activity, innovation, security and information about the College in general, updating the content of specific sections as necessary, etc.

When discovering shortcomings or pointing out the section that needs updating, the Communications Project Manager receives indications via e-mail with a link to the placement of the information and task.

Information about the study field and the corresponding study programme is available at
<https://www.alberta-koledza.lv/?parent=16&lng=lva> (ENG
<https://www.alberta-koledza.lv/?parent=25&lng=eng>)

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Field

2.3.1. Provide information on the system developed by the higher education institution/college for determining and redistribution of the financial resources required for the implementation of the study field and the relevant study programmes. Provide data on the available funding for the scientific research and/or artistic creation activities, its sources and its use for the development of the study field.

The College's financial sources are specified in the College Regulations. The main source of income is tuition fees as well as funding for various projects and Erasmus+, the contribution of cooperation companies.

The highest governing institution and the decision-making institution in strategic, financial and economic matters is the company's established Board (Article 5 of the College Regulations).

Taking into account the methodology of the Riga Technical University "Study on the Update of the Coefficients of Costs of Study in Higher Education and Proposal Preparation for their Consolidation" of 2014, as well as the provisions of Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 994 "Procedures for Financing Higher Education Institutions and Colleges from the State Budget" dated 12.12.2006., the College Board has developed in 2015 and approved and implemented in 2016 the new budgeting methodology.

Based on the above methodology, by November of each year the College Board prepares and after it has been agreed with the Director of the College, approves the College's annual budget for one year. This budget takes into account the number of students, planned income and expenditure, incl. the research group applications (written applications from research group leaders), required development investment and funding requests for upgrading the material base and increasing library stock (e-mails from study programme directors, heads of the field, librarian, and the Director of the College), and science funding. In addition, there are three mandatory requirements for budgeting:

- funding for Students Self-government Council shall not be less than one two-hundredth of the College's annual budget;
- each year, the College provides funding from its revenue to cover tuition fees for three orphans or members of a large family. The maximum number of simultaneously studying students whose tuition fees are covered by the College is nine. If the number of such students is lower, tuition fee discounts of up to 50% may be granted to non-approved candidates;
- together with the budget approval, the Board estimates the amount of expenditure and development investment required for another two years (confidential information).

After approval of the budget, the Director of the College informs the study programme directors, the heads of research fields, the librarian, the academic staff, and the Students Council of the funding available for the academic year.

The amount of study fees is determined by "*Regulations on Alberta College Tuition Fees and Other Payments*". The aforementioned regulations and the study contract provide for the possibility of increasing study fees in case of high inflation in Latvia, as well as in case of significant changes in tax policy.

In the spring of 2022, after evaluating the situation in the country, the Board of the College made a decision to increase the tuition fees for current students in accordance with the rate of inflation in the country, in accordance with the procedure specified in the study contract. Such a mechanism embedded in the study contracts was used for the first time in the last ten years and was used partially, i.e., not increasing to the full percentage of real inflation. Students were informed about the planned amendments by placing detailed explanatory information on the website, as well as sending individual information by e-mail and answering all unclear questions. Each student's individual payment schedules with discounts and deferred payment terms were placed in the students' personal profiles on the College's website in the section "My data". Thanks to active communication with students, no complaints have been received, and study contracts have not been terminated due to such changes.

On the approval of the tuition fees for academic year 2022/2023 and considering the rate of inflation as well as anticipating the decrease in the number of enrolled students due to economic and demographic projections, State Education Development Agency funding for the Project "Improving Professional Competence for Employees" that provides funded studies to the College's direct target audience in IT field courses, and other reasons, the College Board planned an increase in tuition fees.

See Annex 38 for one academic year and the whole study programme tuition fees.

In the 2022/2023 academic year, the finances of the SF are sufficient. The planned budget of the College without external funding is 699.029,49 euros, of which a little bit more than 25% (without external funding) has been allocated to finance the SF.

The planned external funding will make up no less than 23%, the planned achievable figure up to 25% of the total College budget (for example, the already known is Erasmus+, ESF funding for the MaKE IT project, while the amount of revenue from the aforementioned VIAA project is unknown - depends on the number of approved programmes and of graduates of the project, social scholarship "Studētgođs", co-financing of partners and participants for organising conferences and publishing the proceedings, etc.).

According to the approved budget of the College, the proportional distribution of the planned expenses of the study field (without external funding) is as follows:

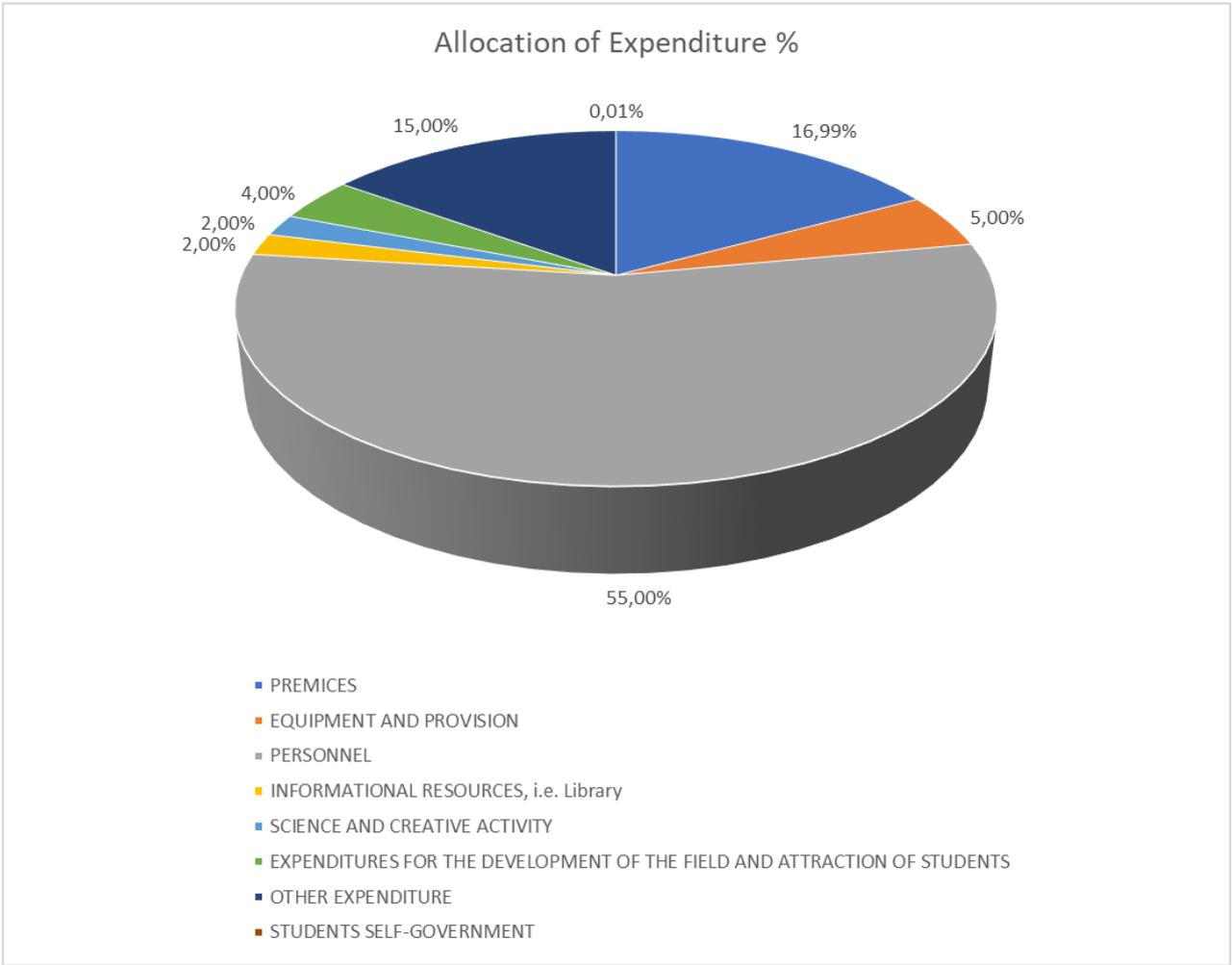


Fig. 2 Distribution of planned expenses of the SF for the 2022/2023 academic year

Taking the study programme of the SF separately, the financial resources of the study programme in the 2022/2023 academic year are sufficient, the costs directly related to its implementation per student are 72% of the tuition fee, providing the opportunity to make investments for the development of the study field.

The minimum required number of students in the SF to cover basic expenses without development investments is 36 students, the minimum number of students in a group is eight. The optimal number of students in the SF, which ensures minimal development investments from the income of the SF, is 72 students, while the desired minimum number of students in the group is 12.

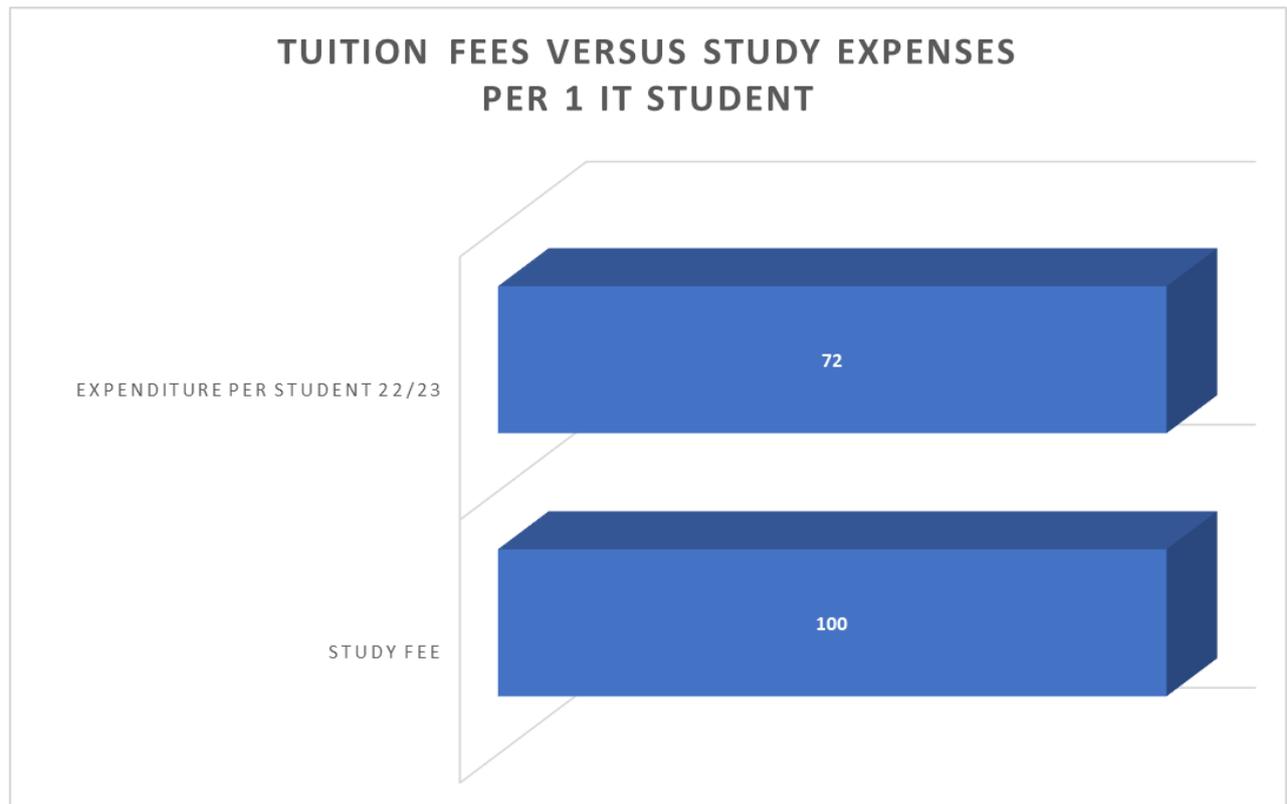


Fig. 3 Revenues from the study programme of the SF versus expenses per student

The chart does not include the following items:

- all types of mobility within Erasmus+;
- external funding for projects, co-financing for the organisation of joint events and the publication of conference proceedings.

It should be noted that the costs related to the cyclical external evaluation are also made from investment expenses (in this year's budget, a significant part under the heading "Other expenses"), which will allow this position to be slightly reduced in the following years, as well as higher revenues are planned as a result of the increase of tuition fees, which will allow to redistribute a larger funding for other positions, such as science, research and innovation, renewal of the equipment, library, provision of funded places for orphans, etc. As the number of students increases, the proportional part of the expenses related to staff remuneration will also be reduced. The college continues to actively work on increasing the percentage of external funding.

2.3.2. Provide information on the infrastructure and the material and technical provisions required for the implementation of the study field and the relevant study programmes. Specify whether the required provision is available to the higher education institution/college, available to the students, and the teaching staff.

To organise the study process, the College is developing the infrastructure and material and technical facilities. The study process takes place at Skolas Street 22, Riga. The College is located on three floors (750 sq.m.). On the basis of the cooperation agreement, the students of the College have a possibility to use rooms of the strategic cooperation partner EKA premises and laboratories.

EKA laboratories are used for implementation of the SF, incl. the digLAB (see <https://www.augstskola.lv/?parent=358&lng=eng>).

Students can work in the computer rooms and library of the College and use the Internet. Wireless (WI-FI) Internet is available throughout the College. All lecture rooms are equipped with computer hardware allowing the usage of multimedia projectors during the classes.

For students' convenience, lounges are available in the halls and the library, as well as a coffee machine.

To ensure the study process, the College has 112 computers (including staff computers), incl. 94 computers for the students in the computer rooms, 3 computers in the library, 1 computer for the Students Self-government Council, and 8 laptops for lecturers' work in the lecture rooms and e-lectures. Every year the oldest hardware is renewed and replaced. The software is licensed or officially rented from the developers.

Currently, the material base of the College includes:

- Projector – 11 (Benq);
- SMART TV – 2 (Samsung);
- Switches – 3 (D-LINK 100/1000)
- Wireless Access Devices – 6 (MikroTik);
- Routers – 3 (MikroTik);
- Computers for administrative staff – 10;
- Computers in computer rooms – 94 (CPU Intel Pentium/Core; RAM 4-8 GB; HDD/SSD; Windows 10; MS Office);
- Laptops in the lecture rooms – 8 (CPU Intel Pentium/Core; RAM 4-8 GB; SSD Windows 10; MS Office);
- Camcorder with professional microphone for sound recording – 1;
- Photo cameras – 2;
- Voice recorder – 1;
- Printing machines – 6;
- Photocopiers – 2 (including colour);
- Scanners – 4;
- Landline Phones – 2;
- Mobile phones – 4;
- Information storage servers – 3 (including 1 - FreeNas);
- Cloud Solution – 1 (Microsoft);
- Green background (curtains) for video recording and photography – 1;
- The College Library holds 4025 books, 12 Supreme Court bulletins, about 50 journals (the number varies depending on the frequency of publication);

- College website platform and intranet;
- Moodle system;
- Big Blue Button Video Lecture System;
- NEXUS – student/ staff database;
- E-Nexus – staff database;
- Business Calendar – an internal task scheduler.

The following software is provided for student work:

- Microsoft Windows 10, Microsoft Office;
- VLC media player;
- Oracle VM VirtualBox hypervisor for virtualization;
- Dev-C++ development environment distributed under the GNU General Public License for programming in C and C++;
- Visual Studio – Microsoft integrated development environment;
- Firefox and Mozilla Firefox free and open-source web browsers;
- Google Chrome a web browser that uses the WebKit layout engine;
- 7-Zip free open-source file archiver;
- GIMP or GNU Image Manipulation Programme – a raster graphics editor used to process and create photographs and other images;

Inkscape is a free and open-source vector graphics editor used to create vector images, primarily in scalable vector graphics format.

2.3.3. Provide information on the system and procedures for the improvement and purchase of the methodological and informative provision. Description and assessment of the availability of the library and the databases to the students (including in digital environment) and their compliance with the needs of the study field by specifying whether the opening times of the library are appropriate for the students, as well as the number/ area of the premises, their suitability for individual studies and research work, the services provided by the library, the available literature for the implementation of the study field, the databases available for the students in the respective field, the statistical data on their use, the procedures for the replenishment of the library stock, as well as the procedures and possibilities for the subscription to the databases.

The College Library (hereinafter – Library) user service rules, user responsibilities and rights, procedures for the information resources use, as well as damage and penalty fees and indemnification are governed by the Regulations on Alberta College Library Use (see Annex 2).

The Library's reading room is located in comfortable rooms, where students have free access to computers with free Internet access and a scanner. The Library is purchasing the latest editions - most of the available books are published after 2000.

The Library lists over **4000** books, out of which **168** are on information technology and computer science (among them, 48 in English, 24 in Russian), **295** are on mathematics and statistics, **10** are on electrical engineering, **638** – on entrepreneurship, business management and accounting (among them, 29 in English, 35 in Russian); **189** – on human resources management (among them, 30 in English, 15 in Russian) and other fields, not including periodicals. The books in the Library are organised by thematic area. Library stocks are regularly replenished at the request of lecturers. The

latest books were purchased in the summer 2022.

The Library's book catalogue is available on the College website, and students can place book orders. Various books may be taken for work outside the Library. The catalogue is available at <https://www.alberta-koledza.lv/?parent=10001> (Only in Latvian).

Every year, the student works (internship reports, qualification works, etc.), which have been evaluated with a grade not less than 8 (eight) are added to the collection of the best works of the College students. This collection can be found here: <https://www.alberta-koledza.lv/?parent=10002> (Only in Latvian). With the introduction of stricter rules for the protection of personal data, many students do not allow the publication of works, mainly for confidentiality purposes, however, these works are available for viewing in the Library.

When attending the Library, the Library User shall present a document proving his / her identity. In order to use the services of the libraries of other higher education institutions and the National Library of Latvia (hereinafter - NLL), the students are invited to create an NLL Reader Card free of charge. At the beginning of the studies, each study programme organises introductory excursions to the NLL and seminars on using the NLL catalogue.

For study and research purposes, the students have access to a variety of electronic databases and Internet-based information resources in foreign languages at the library of the College's collaboration partner EKA. The EKA library provides an electronic catalogue as well as various subscription and trial databases. The catalogues of books and databases available at EKA can be found here: <https://www.augstskola.lv/?parent=26&lng=lva> (Only in Latvian).

Since 2007, the College and its lecturers have been publishing textbooks, lecture notes, and study materials for seminars. Most study course summaries and textbooks are available in a closed e-environment within the study course.

Each year, the needs for expanding the Library's collection are identified. The budget of the College includes a respective position. Funding is granted on the basis of the figures for the previous year and projections for the new academic year. For example, an audit may result in decisions to substantially renew a Library collection for a study programme that requires higher (compared to annual average) funding.

Before the beginning of each semester, the course descriptions are updated, indicating the books and sources that must be read while studying the course in the section "Compulsory Literature". The lecturers are encouraged to include the latest literature and ensure it is available in the Library. If the book is not available in the Library, the lecturer requests the director of the study programme to order the book. In cooperation with the librarian, new books are purchased. If the book cannot be purchased because it is not available for sale, the director of the study program, in cooperation with the lecturer, looks for other solutions.

To provide students and staff with access to databases, mainly the collaboration agreements with other organisations and institutions (e.g., NLL, EKA) are used. The students are informed and motivated to use the provided opportunities. The College website has a more detailed description of all the possibilities provided by the College. The College also regularly updates information on the College website about open access databases.

The annual library reports and the analysis of sources used in independent works, internship reports, and qualification works shows that students tend to use databases poorly, therefore, ACDS 2023 includes measures for improving these processes. For example, during methodological committee meetings, it was discussed that several independent assignments (e.g., essays), internship reports, and qualification works should make the use of recent publications from specific

databases, such as EBSCO, available at EKA and NLL, mandatory.

2.3.4. Provide a description and assessment of information and communication technology solutions used in the study process (e.g., MOODLE). If the study programmes within the study field are implemented in distance learning, the tools specially adapted for this form of study must also be indicated.

The College has an integrated information system. All the students (as well as lecturers and administration with different levels of access), regardless of the form of study (full-time, part-time, distance learning), are provided with the possibility to access:

1. To publicly available information on the website, including personnel contacts, regulatory documents, news, announcements, e-environment instructions, safety briefings, etc.
2. Section "My data", which is linked to Nexus and provides the possibility to track personal list of classes, progress, payment schedule, financial data, requests for references, etc.
3. Lecturers are provided with the opportunity to access the E-Nexus system - a personnel management tool
4. Surveys are also integrated into the College's website
5. Moodle, which is linked to the Nexus system and automatically connects students to all study courses, which according to the study plan (or individual plan) are intended for the relevant semester. Moodle students have access to optional courses that students take in addition, as listeners, as well as to those courses in which they have outstanding academic obligations (if any). Moodle courses include e-courses developed by lecturers according to the standard approved by the College (see the e-course template in Annex 2), including data about the lecturer, study course descriptions, requirements for learning the course and planned learning outcomes, teaching materials, descriptions and evaluations of independent work. Moodle courses have forums where students communicate with the lecturer and with each other. E-courses have also been created for internships and the development of qualification papers. Also, a common e-course is available on Moodle for all students of the relevant study programme, where current information is exchanged between students and the director of the study programme. A similar e-course is also available to all employees of the College for the exchange of current information between management, administration and teaching staff.
6. Big Blue Button (BBB) video conference system integrated into the Moodle system for providing remote lessons, consultations, tests. A personal video lecture-room has been created for each lecturer, the creation and storage of video recordings is ensured. For organising group work, the system provides an opportunity to divide students into subgroups, allowing lecturers to switch from group to group.

The College has developed the following regulatory documents for the organisation of the study process in the e-environment (see Annex 2):

- Regulation on the Procedure of Studies and Examination determines the identification procedure;
- Regulation of Alberta College on Curriculum Development, Implementation Supervision and Improvement, Alberta College Guidelines for Description of the Study Course determine the standards for the development of study course descriptions, i.e., for the distance learning,

providing a detailed description for the provision of contact hours or video lectures (content, scope, methods), as well as including descriptions of independent work and tests;

- Alberta College Procedure of Organizing E-learning include general descriptions, College standards, including e-course templates with explanations and examples, organisation standards video lecture-rooms (BBB).

The section “E-studies” has been created on the College's website, where descriptions and instructions for working in the e-environment can be found to support students. Tutorials and video instructions for lecturers can be found in the Moodle e-course “Administration of AC”.

In addition to the above, College lecturers actively use various external digital tools in their work. For example, the College has a MURAL account, various programmes are used for effective interaction with students, such as Google Jamboard, Padlet, programmes for organising small surveys integrated in lectures, such as Menti or Slido, Clipchamp for preparing video lectures, and other tools that are a support for lecturers for the preparation of up-to-date and interactive lectures for both face-to-face and remote studies and distance learning.

Due to the amendments to the laws and the adoption of new regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers, which determine the procedure for the organisation and implementation of remote studies, at the time of the development of the self-evaluation report, a working group was established and operates in the College, which works on the improvement of the existing system, integrating the innovations contained in the regulatory acts.

2.3.5. Provide information on the procedures for attracting and/or employing the teaching staff (including the call for vacancies, employment, election procedure, etc.), and the assessment of their transparency.

In compliance with the College Regulations, persons in academic and elected administrative positions shall be elected in an open competition in accordance with the “Regulation of Alberta College on Academic and Administrative Posts”, which sets out the requirements for candidates and describes the application and selection procedures for candidates. For example, pursuant to Articles 12-17 et seq. of the Regulations, the competition for academic positions shall be announced at least one month before the election, through a notice published in the official newspaper “Latvijas Vēstnesis” and posted on the College website, under the section “Vacancies”. For academic positions, the Council may elect a person with a doctorate or master's degree, as well as with a university degree without a scientific degree, provided that in this case, a person has at least five years of practical experience and teaching experience relevant to the study course. The mentioned Regulations establish 10 evaluation criteria for the candidates (Article 18), including education, teaching experience, professional experience, research or creative achievements, digital skills, foreign language skills, etc.

Elections in academic and elected administrative positions are secret. After approval by the Board, the Director of the College shall conclude a contract of employment with the elected person for the duration of the election period.

Staff data are entered into the College database NEXUS, staff database E-nexus, staff gets a profile created and remote access via the Internet. E-nexus and the College website provide staff with access to all internal regulations, video tutorials, including those on work safety and working in the e-environment. The staff gets a Moodle system profile, which gives access to the “Alberta College

Administration" section, whereas academic staff also has access to the lectured study course e-courses and video conferencing system with a personalised video lecture room. In addition, the academic staff is also made aware of the content of "Ethical and Academic Integrity Code of Alberta College". Prior to taking up an academic position, the person's absence of a criminal record is checked and a letter of commitment on the use of personal data at the College is signed.

In 2019, the College approved ACDS 2023, pursuant to which an Academic Staff Development Plan (hereinafter ASFP 2023) was developed, defining the principles of academic staff renewal and career development.

For an electronic link to internal regulatory enactments regulating the recruitment and employment process of academic staff see Annex 2.

2.3.6. Specify whether there are common procedures for ensuring the qualification of the academic staff members and the work quality in place and provide the respective assessment thereof. Specify the options for all teaching staff members to improve their qualifications (including the information on the involvement of the teaching staff in different activities, the incentives for their involvement, etc.). Provide the respective examples and specify the way the added value of the possibilities used for the implementation of the study process and the improvement of the study quality is evaluated.

The procedure for ensuring the qualification and quality of work of the academic staff is established in the "Regulation of Alberta College on Academic and Administrative Posts" and ASFP 2023 on the basis of what the "Alberta College Staff Evaluation and Motivation System" has been developed to identify the individual development needs and develop the competencies of the lecturers.

ASFP 2023 defines the principles of academic staff renewal, staff career opportunities, required education, experience, and competencies. ASFP 2023 includes an activity plan for staff development and defines the image of the College's lecturer:

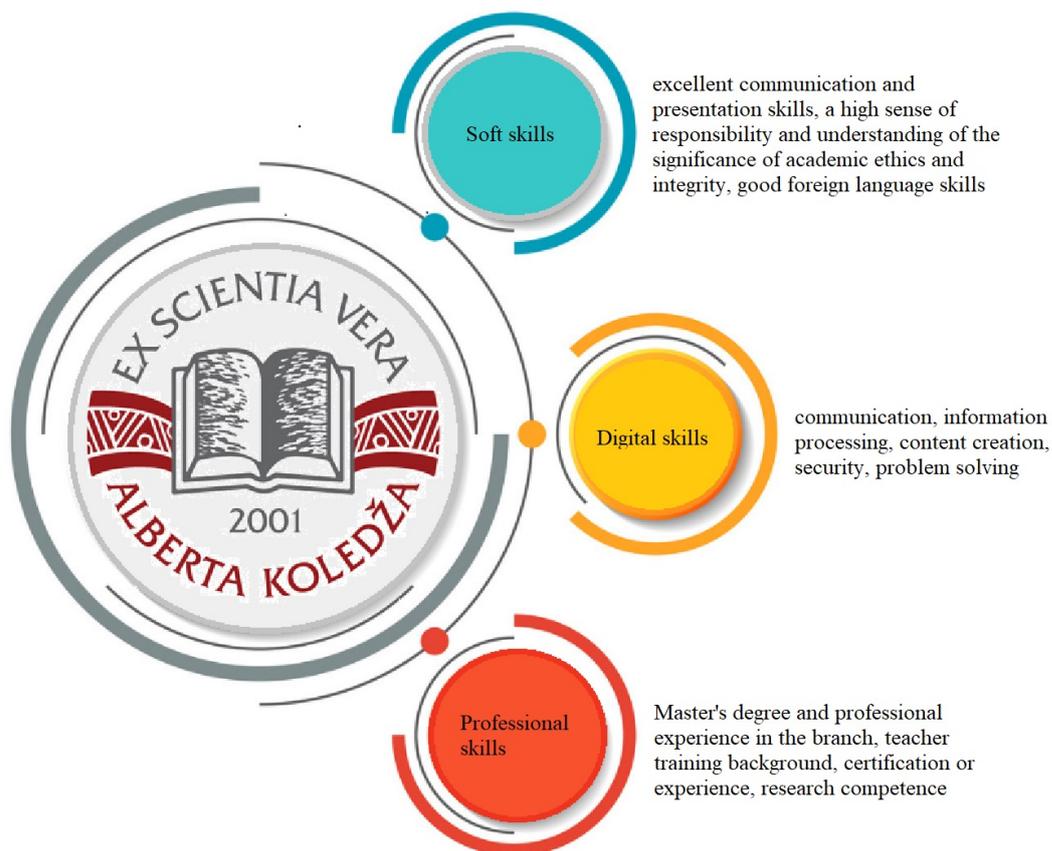


Fig. 4 The image of a lecturer at Alberta College

The aim of the College Academic Staff Development Plan: The study process is provided by highly qualified academic staff.

There are five development priorities to achieve this goal:

1. Continuing professional development;
2. Continuing teaching refresher training;
3. Development of digital literacy of academic staff;
4. Development of foreign language skills;
5. Development of scientific and research skills.

Continuing professional development is a new priority for ASFP, which aims to provide opportunities for refresher training (internships, in-service training, deep company research, organisational work, etc.) in a Latvian or foreign company or organisation in the relevant field of study to a lecturer who has no practical experience in the branch in the last six years or at all.

Each semester, activities in the framework of a specialised study course are organised with the participation of branch professionals: guest lecture, seminar, creative workshop, learning excursion, etc. (see examples on the College website under "News" section, Archive).

The College also provides continuous access to extra-curricular activities organised by the College, including lecture series "Guest lectures of the stars", guest lectures, College Business Forum, scientific conference, methodological conference, etc.; the information about the activities is published on the College website, in the "Alberta College Administration" section of Moodle, and also included in the informative letters about the developments in the branch and discussed at

methodological commission meetings.

To broaden the horizons and to exchange informal experiences, the College yearly organises discussions on a variety of topics within the framework of the “Discussions with a cup of coffee” project, such as:

- During the epidemiological safety measures established in 2020-2021, the College organised remote meetings in an informal atmosphere, where lecturers shared their experiences of the challenges of implementing remote studies, talked about their hobbies or exciting adventures, including with the aim of maintaining the spirit and emotional well-being of lecturers in the difficult conditions of social isolation;
- In 2019, a colleague from EKA, College guest lecturer, Dr.hist. Imants Ļaviņš shared his experience of the conference in Iran, offering a discussion topic “Islamic Spring 2019. 40 years of Islamic Revolution”;
- In 2018, Assoc.prof. of at the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics of the University of Latvia, Dr. Vjačeslavs Kaščejevs shared the latest in physics about gravity waves and ripples in space-time;
- In 2017, the College staff went on a tour to Novikontas Maritime College with demonstrations and simulations, trying out the state-of-the-art simulators, navigation, cargo and mechanics simulation machines, and fire-fighting, water rescue, and first aid equipment and tools;
- In 2015, art scientist Ramona Umblija visited the College for a discussion on "How to deal with contemporary art?"

With regard to the teaching professional development of the academic staff, the goal of the College set to 2023 is that all lecturers have a pedagogical education or, in compliance with Article 16 of the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 569 of September 11, 2018 “Regulations on the Education and Professional Qualifications of Teachers and the Procedure for Professional Development of Teachers” an updated certificate (refresher training every six years). In order to accomplish this, in 2019, the College, in collaboration with EKA and Daugavpils University, organised and fully funded the professional development programme for higher education teachers, entitled "Innovations in Higher Education".

In 2022, the College organised and financed for five lecturers and administrative staff professional development courses provided by the University of Latvia “Didactics of Higher Education: Modern Theory and Practice”.

As part of the evaluation of the academic staff once per academic year, the College identifies the needs of each lecturer, preparing an individual development plan and providing a certain amount of financial resources to support the implementation of the development plan. At least one seminar or summer school is organised each year; more than 50% of the lecturers attended the last seminar or summer school. The College also each year hosts a teaching methodological conference.

To promote the development of digital literacy of the academic staff, at the beginning of each semester, the College organises face-to-face and e-environment learning for different levels of digital skills. Individual regular consultations on Moodle and Big Blue Button are also provided continuously. The subject of digitalisation of the study process and research is discussed during the meetings of the Methodological commissions, as well as in the programs of seminars, conferences, summer schools, and other events. For example, in 2016, the conference report was “Using Smartphones in the Study Process”; in 2018 - “Usage and Development of Audio-Visual Materials for Study Process”; “Application of Interactive Tools Working with Foreign Students”,

In 2022, in cooperation with EKA and the Centre for Pedagogical Development of Riga Stradiņš University, courses of professional development were organised, in which lecturers could learn how

to create interactive content using Moodle and H5P, as well as interactive knowledge (self) testing using flash cards, H5P, Moodle tests, Quizlet and other tools.

In order to improve the knowledge of the English of academic staff, once a year the College organises face-to-face and online English courses for the acquisition of different levels of knowledge and skills. For example, in 2019, training was provided to four, and in 2022, by organising courses together with EKA, to 30 members of the teaching staff. Each year there is at least one topic / lecture or English course prepared for each lecturer. At least once every five years, at least one mobility possibility for the planning period is provided. Likewise, the College continuously supports the opportunity for each lecturer to participate in at least one research or project during the planning period. The College is actively engaging the lecturers in International Academic Week, which has been organised since 2013.

The development of scientific and research skills is integrated into SRIDS 2024. In recent years, several activities have been carried out, including organising summer schools for writing research papers and paying special attention to it during Teaching Methodological Conferences. A more detailed description can be found in the chapter on the scientific activity of the SAR.

The staff is highly motivated and all events are well attended.

2.3.7. Provide information on the number of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the relevant study programmes of the study field, as well as the analysis and assessment of the academic, administrative (if applicable) and research workload.

There are 18 lecturers involved in the implementation of the SF, 7 of them are College elected academic staff - 4 lecturers and 3 assistant professors (see *Annex 13*). The detailed evaluation of the academic staff is discussed in Part III of this self-evaluation report.

In accordance with the "Alberta College Staff Remuneration Regulations", the College Board each year approves the budget of the College, including the salary fund based on the needs of the study programs, providing them with the academic and administrative staff and taking into account the minimal rate for one academic hour as provided in Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No.445 of July 5, 2016 "Regulations on Teachers' Pay".

The workload of the academic staff includes the development and updating of study courses, including e-courses, lecturing and conducting seminars, organising study excursions, consulting, applying exams and tests, as well as research work. To ensure quality work with students, the maximum number of supervised course works and qualification works per semester is defined for each lecturer, these are calculated in addition to the basic workload.

The "Academic Staff Evaluation and Motivation System" provides payment of bonuses. For example, at the end of each semester, the e-Coordinator prepares an evaluation of all lecturers' work in the e-environment, which results in lecturers being awarded bonuses for compliance of the e-courses with the College template as well as for active work and communication with students in the e-environment. To stimulate research, in 2017 the College has introduced a research grant system that allows receiving additional funding through active participation in the research group.

At the time of writing the self-evaluation report, there are no lecturers in the SF with a full workload.

See Annex 13 to the self-evaluation report for general information about the academic staff involved in the implementation of the field of study.

Curriculum Vitae of the academic staff (in Europass format) can be found in Annex 14 of this self-evaluation report.

See Annex 23 to the self-evaluation report for data on incoming and outgoing academic staff mobility in the reference period.

2.3.8. Assessment of the support available for the students, including the support provided during the study process, as well as career and psychological support by specifying the support to be provided to specific student groups (for instance, students from abroad, part-time students, distance-learning students, students with special needs, etc.).

The College provides students with informative, methodological and financial support for studying, working in the e-environment, finding internship, pursuing a career, and starting their own business, as well as mentoring for studies and self-development.

Before starting the studies, the potential students are provided with the following support:

- profession selection test on the College website;
- face-to-face and e-information days, shadow days, career day's events;
- individual meetings with study programme directors in person and on-line;
- remote preparatory courses in English and mathematics, helping to prepare for the state centralised exams.

Considering that the College has a large number of applicants who opt for part-time studies (even after a long study break), the College provides:

- preparatory courses in English and mathematics (also online);
- free self-development training for study, work, and personal lifetime planning.

Information support:

- The website and social network profiles are active means of communication with students where one can find the descriptions of all study programs, their self-evaluation reports, staff contacts, all internal regulations, various tutorials and instructions, lecture and consultation schedules, announcements, news, a list of partners, a summary of the results of the student surveys and the response of the management to the planned activities, etc. In the personal section "My data" one can see personal progress, financial situation, submit and receive various documents;
- An introductory meeting for first-year students face-to-face and in e-environment is organised, covering the following topics: College environment, e-environment, website, staff and its areas of responsibility, support options, consultations, job safety, ethics and academic integrity, key terms and conditions of learning agreement, conditions of study interruption, the study process and plan, other issues;
- Group meetings are organised with the study programme directors face-to-face and in an e-environment, informing about the study programme content, academic year plans, academic year results, and various news;
- The Study Department provides answers to technical, organisational, and other questions in

person, by phone, by email;

- The accounting department answers questions related to finance, student loans;
- The College operates on an "Open Door" basis, which enables students to directly discuss brief issues with the Director and the Board of the College, for discussion of bigger questions the students are encouraged to apply for meetings during management working hours; and other support.

Methodological support:

- E-courses have been created in all study courses, providing the necessary study materials;
- All lecturers give free consultations face-to-face, in the e-environment, through email, and on Moodle forums;
- Before elaboration of each internship and qualification work, group meetings with the study programme directors are organised in person and in the e-environment;
- The library provides both in-person and through the e-environment examples of the students' best works, lecture notes, and other support.

Career support:

- Group and individual meetings with study programme directors are organised in person and through the e-environment;
- "Career days", "Business Forum", meetings with industry professionals, study excursions, guest lectures, creative workshops, etc.;
- Business games, personal development seminars and trainings;
- In cooperation with EKA the students can participate in the "EKA Business Incubator";
- To provide internships, research, guest lectures, etc., collaboration agreements have been signed with various organisations;
- It is possible to attend study courses in other study programmes and extracurricular activities.

Financial support:

- To encourage the work of the Students Self-Government Council, the Chairperson of the Students Council gets a tuition fee discount;
- Social support:
 - tuition fee can be waived for up to nine students - orphans and members of large families;
 - tuition fee discounts for collaboration partners and their children;
 - tuition fee discounts for students with higher education.
- Promoting the research through grants for participation in research groups;
- Actively informing students about state social scholarships;
- Erasmus+ student mobility funding;
- Mobility funding from the College funds;
- Support for participation in branch activities.

During Covid-19, the College was involved in the project of the State Employment Agency, providing subsidised jobs for unemployed students (<https://www.alberta-koledza.lv/index.php?parent=1456&lng=lva> (Only In Latvian)). It should be noted that within the project, students were given the opportunity to gain practical experience, develop their competencies, and receive a scholarship, however, the project does not provide for administrative expenses - they were covered by the College's funding.

Additional support is provided for e-students. A detailed description of the available support for e-students can be found on the College website, under the section "E-students" (see <https://www.alberta-koledza.lv/index.php?parent=464&lng=lva> (Only In Latvian)). This section

provides a general description of the studies, includes instructions and manuals, provides contact information for various issues, provides a record of a 1st-year introductory e-meeting, and more.

Students of the SF have a special opportunity to get mentor support for starting a career or their own business, or for creating a self-development plan. Students of SF can apply for mentoring at the career centre or through the Alberta College Board.

As part of continuous development, at the time of the development of the SAR, the student mentoring system and the student mutual support system for learning the study content are in the development stage.

All students, regardless of their form of studies, their location, and individual needs, have access to all the mentioned support channels. College staff consider each student's needs individually and do all the best to provide all necessary support. Students with special needs are provided with individual support.

For example, students with mobility impairments choose e-studies, where all processes are provided in the e-environment. For students with visual impairments, all study materials by request are provided in a format that can be processed by assistive programmes for people with visual impairments.

2.4. Scientific Research and Artistic Creation

2.4.1. Description and assessment of the fields of scientific research and/or artistic creation in the study field, their compliance with the aims of the higher education institution/ college and the study field, and the development level of scientific research and artistic creation (provide a separate description of the role of the doctoral study programmes, if applicable).

The main goal of scientific research at the College is advancing the competitiveness of the College and its study programmes by achieving the study results set for the SP in research, thus promoting the implementation of research-based studies, developing competencies and results of academic staff and students, especially in the area of applied research, and developing cooperation with employers and other interested parties. The higher goal of the College in science and research development is to become the leader among Latvian colleges in terms of development of science and research and come as close as possible to the university level.

The College Regulations define one of the tasks of the College to be conducting research according to the study profile and encouraging scientific research by students.

The focus of scientific research for the College is applied research initiated by employers, industry associations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), partners, public administration institutions, and implemented by College academic staff.

The scientific research activities of the College take place in compliance with Council-approved research and scientific activity directions and an annual research program.

The research and scientific activity directions for the College are approved by the Council for the period until 2024. The research and scientific activity directions are developed by the head of the SF in collaboration with the SP director, academic staff, students and partners, taking into account

their interests and Latvian and European Union policies on research and higher education and development trends of the economy and public administration.

According to the mission of the College, the goal of the SF and the specifics of the SP, the following research directions for the current period were approved:

- use of information technology tools in the company's internal control system;
- application of information and communication technologies in solving business problems;
- development prospects of the information technology industry in Latvia.

The research programme for each year is developed by the head of the SP in collaboration with the SP deputy directors and the methodological commission. The programme provides for the implementation of specific research projects considering the approved directions of research and scientific activities. Each research project is granted funding, subject to approval by the College Board.

Priority is given to research projects matching the following criteria:

- they are implemented between different study programmes or study fields (interdisciplinarity);
- their execution involves various interested parties: academic staff, students, employers, partners, etc.;
- their results are or will be integrated into the study process;
- their execution involves foreign partners or experts;
- their execution involves or is planned to involve external funding;
- their results can be commercialised;
- their results will be reflected in high-quality publications or monographs and presented at international scientific conferences.

In order to inform the public about the College's research activities, information is placed in the website sections "News" (*Aktualitātes*), "Conferences", etc., as well as in social networks.

To inform the staff about the above-mentioned events, research grants and other activities, an e-course "Administration of AC" has been created in Moodle, which also gathers information about various conferences, funding available for research and other scientific research activities. Current information is also published in the forum "News and announcements from the College management". The staff is informed about the importance of the research activity and the achieved results at the opening and closing general meetings of the academic year, as well as during staff evaluation.

The closed section "Notices" (*Paziņojumi*) of the website, which can only be accessed by College students, is also used to inform students, information is disseminated in Moodle forums, and also discussed in student meetings with the director or deputy directors of SP and teaching staff within the framework of study courses in which research work is carried out.

At the end of each academic year, the Director of the College prepares a "Yearbook", which includes a report on scientific and research activities, and publishes it in the section "Self-Evaluations" of the College's website.

2.4.2. The relation between scientific research and/or artistic creation and the study process, including the description and assessment of the use of the outcomes in the study process.

One of the greatest challenges of the College, which implements short-cycle professional higher education programs, is developing research and linking it to the study process.

In order to improve the connection between scientific research and the study process, the College has developed and implemented ZPJAS 2024, which replaced the strategy of the previous period (see Annex 2, 17, 18). The main goal of ZPJAS 2024 is "advancing the competitiveness of the college and its study programs by achieving the study results set for the programs in research and creative activities, thus promoting the implementation of research-based studies, developing competencies and results of academic staff and students, especially in the area of applied research and creative activities, and developing cooperation with employers and other interested parties".

ZPJAS 2024 is harmonised with AKAS 2023, its tasks and planned results are connected with State strategic documents, e.g., the "Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030", "National Development Plan of Latvia for 2014-2010", as well as the "National Concept on the Development of Higher Education and Higher Education Institutions in Latvia for 2013-2020". ZPJAS 2024 is linked with an improved staff assessment and motivation system.

One of the College SF's strategic goals is to provide a professional team of academic professionals to implement the study process, who base the quality of study programs and the execution of the study process on science and research, practical industry experience, as well as close cooperation with employers and strategic partner schools. Although the main emphasis is made on the study process based on the working environment, practical experience and cooperation with industry, the College is moving towards the development of research-based studies, promoting the application of research methods in the study process, thus developing the students' competencies.

The College provides institutional and financial support for the scientific research of academic staff and students in compliance with College Council-approved research and scientific activity directions and the annual research and creative activities program.

The College supports the publishing of academic staff and student scientific research results at conferences, in article and thesis compilations, monographs, reports, and other forms, as well as supports their commercialization. The College promotes the advancement of professional competencies of academic staff and students in conducting scientific research, e.g., learning research methods, data processing, publishing research results.

Every year, Alberta College, in cooperation with the strategic cooperation partner EKA, organises a teaching methodical conference, the focus of which is also the connection of research activity with the study process. For example, the following reports were presented at the conference: "Internet resource Google Scholar", "Possibilities of using Research Gate and SSRN in the study and scientific work process in Latvian HEIs"; "How to prepare a scientific article for submission in a highly rated scientific journal?". The basic theme of the conference in 2016 was "Integrating research into the study process to improve its quality" and the reports: "Research directions at EKA: integrating research into the study process"; "Preparation and assessment of final theses"; "How to motivate students to participate in the student conference and how to help them write an article?" etc.

Whereas, within the framework of the 2018 methodological conference, there was a discussion about connecting research results with the results of study courses, like at the 2019 conference, copyright issues were discussed, including discussing the cooperation between students and research supervisors. Part of the conference of 2020 was devoted to research-based studies: "Staff involvement in research and internationalisation processes". At the conference in 2021, staff were introduced to the recommendations provided by accreditation experts, including emphasising the

importance of research activities. The materials of all methodical conferences can be found on the college website <https://www.alberta-koledza.lv/?parent=1226&lng=lva> (Only in Latvian).

In order to develop the practical skills of the staff in the preparation of scientific articles, as well as to share their experience on the peculiarities of the process of submitting articles for publication, in 2016 and 2017 the college staff participated in the creative seminar "Preparation of scientific articles" organised by the EKA, while in 2021 and 2022, the international Staff Training Week "Training on Academic Writing and Research Methods" (STW) was dedicated to the preparation of scientific articles.

Students of the SF are involved in research and creative activities both within study courses and practice, as well as during the development of qualification papers. The College and EKA organise student conferences, the purpose of which is to present the conference participants with the results of students' research work on current theoretical and practical issues related to the knowledge gained during the study process and its application in the acquisition of research skills. Conference reports are published in the collection of conference theses and several collections of articles published by the College and EKA.

To connect the research activity with cooperation with employers, the College has developed and summarised cooperation conditions for commissioned research to define the procedure for conducting research, determining the confidentiality policy and quality assessment, and encouraging employers' involvement in defining and implementing research topics. In cooperation with employers involved in the SF, the College has established a scope of possible research topics and created a list of possible research topics. The SF and corresponding SP have been defined as priority research directions until 2024.

Regardless of the fact that the chosen place of internship, choice of qualification paper topic and research group funding applications should be linked to SP priorities, College academic staff and students have the right to freely choose the topic, directions and methods of their scientific research by evaluating the urgency of each individual activity and publishing the research results.

The College is also planning to improve the research group grant system and supplement it with research support instruments in order to motivate research groups to involve students, employers and foreign partners.

The College is improving the grant system for research groups, supplementing it with research support tools to motivate students, employers and foreign cooperation partners. The College finances the research grants from its own resources.

Examples of cooperation between the College and SF with Latvian and foreign companies and institutions can be found in Annex 24.

2.4.3. Description and assessment of the international cooperation in the field of scientific research and/or artistic creation by specifying any joint projects, researches, etc. Specify those study programmes, which benefit from this cooperation. Specify the future plans for the development of international cooperation in the field of scientific research and/or artistic creation.

The College is aware that international collaboration in scientific research is an important prerequisite for the competitiveness of the College, and one of the types of collaboration in conducting applied research.

Cooperation with external interested parties in scientific research at the College may be implemented in the following ways among others:

- conducting research according to the partner's assignment;
- conducting research with the partner's funding;
- implementation of the research results in the partner's organisation (commercialization);
- involvement of the partner's specialists in the work of the research group;
- transferring intellectual property rights to research results.

International collaboration for research is encouraged at a College, staff and student level.

To ensure financial support, the College has created research grants; in order to attract foreign partners to College research, more research grant funding involving foreign partner/s is planned.

In 2019, 2020, 2021, the International Academic Week: "Advanced Research and Teaching Methods (for Academic Staff)" was organised in order to promote the establishment of contacts between the teaching staff of the college and foreign researchers.

The College provides Erasmus+ mobility, to attract additional funding, it participates in the Erasmus+ programme project KA107, within the framework of which it operates in research groups of teaching staff and students.

In order to strengthen cooperation and ensure the publication of research results, as well as the more active involvement of staff in research work, since 2014, the College every year (since 2017) in cooperation with EKA organises an International Scientific Conference, (so-called etECH), which has an IT section corresponding to SF. After the conference, EKA publishes a collection of theses and a magazine. More information about the conference (including programmes, collections of theses, and magazines) is available on the college's website <https://www.alberta-koledza.lv/?parent=1226&lng=lv> (Only in Latvian). Until now, in the relevant section of the SF, the College staff participates mainly in the role of auditors together with colleagues from the USA, Germany, Poland, Lithuania, Kazakhstan, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Belarus, Ukraine, etc.

Within the framework of the aforementioned student conference, an international section has been established, and a collection of conference theses and articles is published. In 2019, mobility students from Kazakhstan conducted research work at the college, the results of which were presented at a conference (<https://www.alberta-koledza.lv/upload/Programma-02.04.pdf> (Only in Latvian)) and published in a theses collection (https://www.alberta-koledza.lv/upload/T%C4%92%C5%BDU%20KR%C4%80JUMS_2019.pdf (Only in Latvian)).

One of the most successful projects is the Erasmus+ KA107 project "Personnel mobility between programme countries and partner countries in the higher education sector" implemented by the college with the Eurasian National University named after L. Gumilyov of Kazakhstan (ENU). The project included regular mutual experience exchange trips, during which guest lectures were conducted, conferences and seminars were attended, as well as other activities were implemented. As a result of the project, under the guidance of Latvian and Kazakh teaching staff, students conducted comparative studies of two countries, presenting them at Kazakh and Latvian student conferences; faculty members of the college participated in the ENU conference in Kazakhstan, the Kazakh delegation participated in the etECH conference. (For example, see <https://www.alberta-koledza.lv/index.php?parent=1202&lng=lv> (Only in Latvian)).

Research activities and results within the framework of international cooperation see in Annexes 17, 18, 19, 24.

2.4.4. Specify the way how the higher education institution/ college promotes the involvement of the teaching staff in scientific research and/or artistic creation. Provide the description and assessment of the activities carried out by the academic staff in the field of scientific research and/or artistic creation relevant to the study field by providing examples.

It is College policy to develop teachers' scientific and research activity because it ensures the application of the newest and most up-to-date information in the study process, as well as promotes the research skills of students. Therefore, College teachers:

- participate in international scientific conferences, seminars and discussions in Latvia and abroad as reporters and listeners. The obtained new information is used in teaching study courses and supervising papers, as well as in preparing teaching materials;
- prepare publications on industry innovations, summarising the results of conducted research. Collecting research information involves students to the possible extent, and they summarise the information and present data;
- conduct research in cooperation with employers with the involvement of students;
- participate in projects. Project results are used in updating study course contents.

In order to ensure scientific and research activities, since 2003, the College has been organising a students' conference, a business conference (forum), an international scientific conference, as well as applied games. These events get the active involvement of both students and teachers, thus promoting the development of practical skills, searching for interdisciplinary approaches and encouraging the emergence of creative ideas. Since 2014, conferences and business games have been organised in collaboration with the College's strategic partner, EKA.

Ever since 2007, the College and industry professionals have been cooperating to organise the Business Conference "Developing Business: How to Do It in the Modern Latvian Situation?", dedicating it to the role of technology development and innovations in promoting business competitiveness. In 2018, the Business Conference turned into the Business Forum, becoming an even more important and accessible space for development, inspiration and cooperation. The Forum is an annual tradition of the College, the purpose of which is to gather the best industry professionals and prominent persons who share inspiring stories of their experiences on their achievements, observations and trends in their respective fields. In 2018, the Business Forum was dedicated to the Centenary of Latvia and trends in business, marketing, communication, personnel management, law, IT and creative industries. The Forum featured College and EKA students and employees, College partners and special guests, as well as other interested parties. Forum programmes for 2018, 2020 and 2022 are available at <https://www.alberta-koledza.lv/?parent=1226&lng=lva> (Only in Latvian).

The previous sections describe how the College, in cooperation with EKA, organises the Teaching Methodological Conference, the International Academic Week and summer seminars for the development of the research competencies of teaching staff.

Financial support is provided through participation in various projects, as well as through the research grant system mentioned in the previous sections. Each year, the college budget provides

funding for research grants in each study field, as well as for the development of individual research, participation in conferences and support for publications.

The academic staff involved in the implementation of the SF work in the field of scientific research and creativity individually or by participating in research groups.

Research conducted by the lecturers is an important contribution both to the growth of their field and the development of the SP and improvement of study contents. Through their research, lecturers include the most current innovations of their fields in their study courses. All lecturers have appropriate education, and many of them continue to supplement their knowledge by studying in doctoral programmes, taking further education courses, developing scientific research work, and preparing teaching materials and methodological materials.

The main achievements, publications are reflected in the biographies of teaching staff (Europass CV) and summarised in Annex 17.

In general, the academic staff of the College is actively involved in research activities, however, regarding the SF, despite actively informing the staff about the grant system through various information channels, the SWOT analysis shows that one of the weaknesses of the SF is the small number of publications of the lecturers involved in the implementation of the SF, which is a challenge for the College, because for the implementation of the study programme, especially for the specialised study courses, industry professionals are attracted, who share their practical experience, preparing College graduates for quick integration in the labour market, which, in turn, according to student surveys, is evaluated as an advantage of the College.

The College's participation in the projects has brought positive results. For example, with the financial support of project KA107, the results of the research carried out in cooperation with colleagues from ENU (Kazakhstan) turned into publications of the staff and students. Whereas, the introduced system of research grants has not brought significant results to the SF. The management of the College is constantly looking for solutions.

To improve the situation, in 2022 the College improved the staff evaluation and motivation system, focusing not only on financial support for the results achieved in the previous year but also on the development of individual development plans for the academic staff for the coming period. The individual development plan will include an agreement with the relevant lecturer on the expected results in a perspective of at least two years, indicating support (administrative, informational, financial) for the implementation of the plan.

Positive results can be seen in the involvement of the teaching staff of the SF in the management and coordination of students' research activities, where the biggest emphasis is placed on conducting applied research in cooperation with real companies and organisations. Under the guidance of the teaching staff, students conduct research within the framework of study courses, internship and qualification paper, the best research is delegated for participation in the student conference, publishing the results in the conference proceedings. Although there is a drop in student publications during the years of the Covid-19 restrictions, overall, the dynamic of the SF is positive. Compared to the period of the previous accreditation, the teaching staff managed to increase the research activity of students, there is an increase in the number of high-quality research papers of the students to be delegated to the conference.

2.4.5. Specify how the involvement of the students in scientific research and/ or applied research and/or artistic creation activities is promoted. Provide the assessment and description of the involvement of the students of all-level study programmes in the

relevant study field in scientific research and/ or applied research and/or artistic creation activities by giving examples of the opportunities offered to and used by the students.

Students of the SF are involved in research and creative activities both within study courses and internships and during developing their qualification papers, which are described in detail in previous sections, therefore only the achieved results will be reflected within this section.

Students' research works as a part of the study process are largely implemented in various study courses of the SP, for example, "Computer Networks", "Web Technologies", etc.

In the academic year 2020/2021, one student developed a qualification paper within the study course "Web Technologies" and participated and presented it in the student conference, while in the academic year 2021/2022, several students developed a qualification paper in the study course "Computer networks" and presented them in the student conference.

In the academic year 2022/2023, students of the SP researched the market of Latvian colleges within the framework of the study course "Introduction to Business", by studying the study programmes of Latvian colleges, the offer and content thereof, tuition fees and other aspects. The best works are delegated to the student scientific conference organised by the Association of Latvian Colleges, which will take place in March 2023.

The students of the SF participate both in the international scientific and practical student conference "Student research activity: theory and practice" organised by the College and EKA, as well as in the student conference of the Association of Latvian Colleges and conferences organised by other higher education institutions. Students participate both with reports in the conference sections and prepare articles for student conference proceedings. Over the past six years, students of the SF have been active and participated in student conferences with good results, except during the Covid-19 restrictions, due to the overload of the IT sector, it was not possible to actively involve students of the SP in the presentation of research results.

As it is shown in Annex 19 and Fig. 5, the College ensures stable participation of the students of the SF in the appropriate section of the conference. Thus, the results of two studies were presented at the conference in 2017, one in 2018, and five in 2019, in 2020 college students participated in the conference only as auditors, and in 2021 one report was presented, and seven in 2022.

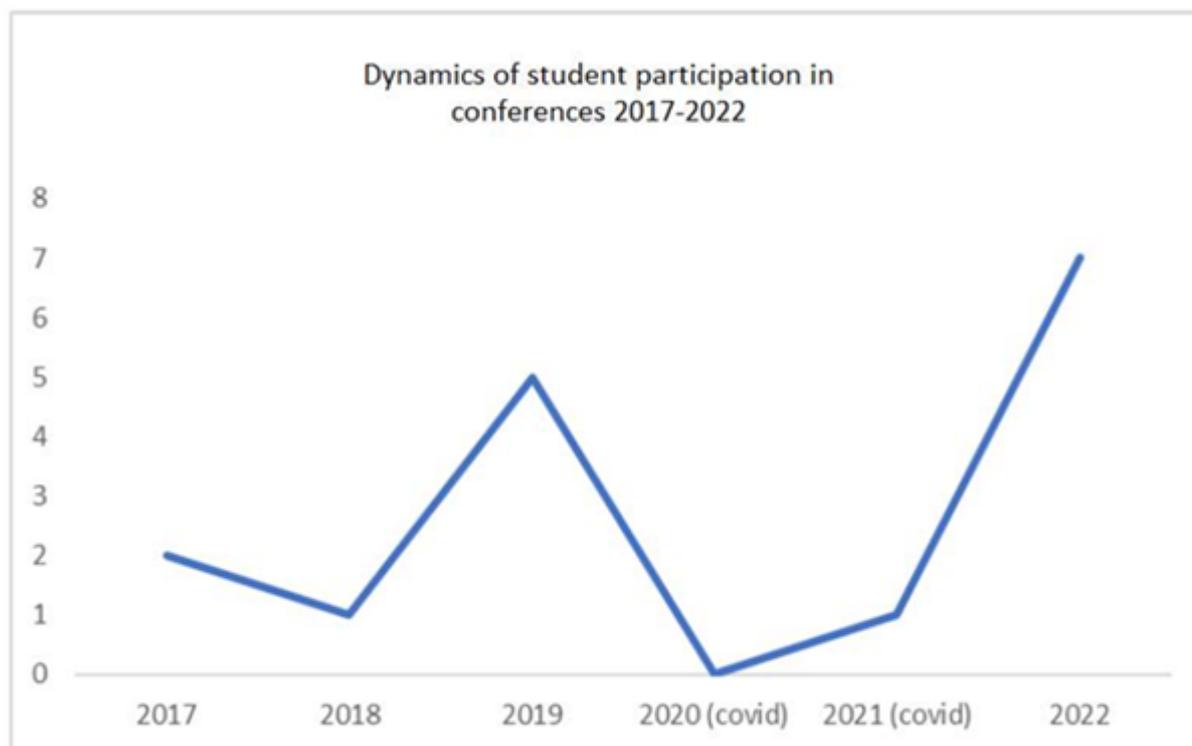


Fig. 5. Participation of the students of the SF in conferences during the reporting period

The results of the conference presentations are published in the abstract proceedings of student conferences published by the College and EKA:

- “Research activity of students: theory and practice 2022. Abstract proceedings of the conference”. Alberta College, ISBN 978-9934-9004-4-0 (pdf), publicly available: https://ej.uz/AK_student_abstract_proceedings_ISBN_20227pdf (Only in Latvian);
- “Research activity of students: theory and practice 2021. Abstract proceedings of the conference”. Alberta College, ISBN 978-9934-9004-1-9/ 978-9934-9004-2-6 (pdf), publicly available: https://ej.uz/AK_student_abstract_proceedings_ISBN_20217pdf (Only in Latvian);
- “Research activity of students: theory and practice 2020. Abstract proceedings of the conference”. Alberta College, ISBN 978-9934-8772-7-8/ 978-9934-8772-8-5 (pdf), no publications of students of the SF;
- “Research activity of students: theory and practice 2019. Abstract proceedings of the conference.” Alberta College, ISBN 978-9934-8772-3 / 978-9934-8772-4-7 (pdf), publicly available: https://ej.uz/AK_student_abstract_proceedings_ISBN_20197pdf (Only in Latvian);
- “Research activity of students: theory and practice 2018. Abstract proceedings of the conference.” Alberta College, pdf ISBN 978-9984-9633-8-9, publicly available: https://ej.uz/AK_student_abstract_proceedings_ISBN_20187pdf (Only in Latvian);
- “Research activity of students: theory and practice 2017. Abstract proceedings of the conference.” Alberta College, ISBN 978-9984-9633-3-4, publicly available: https://ej.uz/AK_student_abstract_proceedings_ISBN_2017pdf (Only in Latvian).

Research is carried out in cooperation with real companies and institutions (especially if the research is carried out as part of the internships or qualification papers). For example, in 2022, students were looking for IT solutions for a trading company, an insurance company, a logistics warehouse, an educational institution, etc. Considering that these solutions are often related to the IT security of the researched organisations, the specific names of the organisations are not disclosed, referring to the sphere of activity of the organisation to reflect its specificity.

Research is also carried out in cooperation with other educational institutions. For example, cooperation with the University of Kazakhstan within the framework of project KA107 is described in detail in other chapters. As well in the academic year 2014/2015, the College implemented the Nordplus Horizontal international project “Skills on Demand: Meeting Labour Market Needs” (NPHZ-2014/10084) in collaboration with Kauno Kolegija University of Applied Science (Lithuania) and the Estonian Entrepreneurship University of Applied Sciences (Estonia), as well as employers from various industries. The aim of the project: developing collaboration between two sectors - educational institutions and employers, with the purpose of improving study programs according to employers' requirements for general and professional skills, as well as promoting the collaboration of employers and educational institutions in raising business competitiveness. The project activities involved both SF teaching staff and students through focus groups with employers, heading student creative workshops, etc.

The topics of reports for the participation of students of the SF in the student conference see in Annex 19.

2.4.6. Provide a brief description and assessment of the forms of innovation (for instance, product, process, marketing, and organisational innovation) generally used in the higher education institution, especially in study field subject to the assessment, by giving the respective examples and assessing their impact on the study process.

The main form of innovation applied by the College is the introduction of e-studies unique to Latvia more than ten years ago and the use of the latest information and communication technologies in the study process (digitalization).

The College has been developing the form of e-studies since 2011, including developing its methodology, organising staff training, linking positive results with the staff motivation system. In 2015, Alberta College won the LATA Award of the Year in the category “Outstanding Open Technology Solution in Business”. Experience has been actively shared with foreign colleagues since 2016 (for example, see <https://www.alberta-koledza.lv/index.php?parent=1036&lng=lva>) (Only in Latvian).

Investments in the implementation of an innovative form of studies were justified when the Covid-19 epidemiological safety restrictions came into force in 2020 (and beyond), as the College was the only educational institution in Latvia that ensured the implementation of a continuous remote and live study process from the first day of the announcement of the emergency situation (video lectures, consultations, seminars, etc.) according to the previously scheduled list of classes for students of all forms of studies.

It should be noted that after the introduction of Covid-19 restrictions, based on ten years of experience in providing the study process remotely, within a few weeks the college, in cooperation with EKA, organised several training seminars free of charge for colleagues from other educational institutions, sharing experience in organising the remote study process and using various free digital tools. More than 1,000 teachers participated in the seminar online, while the recording was watched by about 5,000 people. The college quickly organised remote preparatory courses in mathematics and English to help students of secondary schools to prepare for the centralised state exams.

Initially, the aforementioned form of study was offered to College students who choose e-studies

online in the evenings, receiving all the same benefits and opportunities of face-to-face studies offered by modern information technologies.

Ten years ago, and still, the college provides the opportunity to access virtual classrooms from anywhere in the world, participate in online video lectures, and communicate with the lecturer and classmates both individually and in groups.

The College has developed a modern e-learning environment for the student to be able to study at their convenience using the *Moodle* platform, which has teaching materials for each study subject (notes, home assignments, tests, additional materials) and forums for interpersonal communication.

Focusing on continuous development, taking into account the amendments to the regulatory acts, which provide for the possibility for students of all forms of studies to implement up to 50% of contact hours remotely, the College forms a working group for the development of respective methodology.

Since 2014, the College has been implementing, and since 2019, it has set it as a priority and tries to "educate" its students as digital citizens, ensuring the use of modern, effective teaching methods and digital solutions in daily work and the study process, which are defined in the image of the College graduate defined in AKAS 2023 (see *Chapter I of the SAR*).

For administrative work, the aforementioned programs and databases NEXUS, E-Nexus, Business Calendar are used, which collect data and information on all processes within the College.

In the following years, the College is planning to refuse as much document printing as possible and digitalize all College processes and documents, as well as develop the practice of using e-documents, ensuring possibilities of digitally signing applications, orders and other documents. For this purpose, a digital document circulation system and digital document signing were implemented in 2019 and are still being improved.

The college cooperates with EKA, which as a leading institution implements the ESF project "Automation tools for creative industries AutoRade" with several cooperation partners. The main activities of the project: development, adaptation and implementation of the content, methods and technologies for acquiring digital skills; development or improvement of digital solutions and platforms for strengthening the digital capacity of universities and providing digitised study courses, etc.

2.5. Cooperation and Internationalisation

2.5.1. Provide the assessment as to how the cooperation with different institutions from Latvia (higher education institutions/ colleges, employers, employers' organisations, municipalities, non-governmental organisations, scientific institutes, etc.) within the study field contributes to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study field. Specify the criteria by which the cooperation partners for the study field and the relevant study programmes are selected and how the cooperation is organised by describing the cooperation with employers. In addition, specify the mechanism for the attraction of the cooperation partners.

Cooperation takes place in multiple forms and is implemented both in Latvia and abroad.

For cooperation with higher education institutions, cooperation agreements have been concluded on possibilities of continuing studies in the bachelor's programmes, or in case of liquidation of the study programme or the College, as well as mutual cooperation in research or other fields (see *Annex 8*).

The college has chosen one strategic cooperation partner - EKA, signing an extensive cooperation agreement in 2014. EKA implements study fields corresponding to the college's study fields, which provide students with opportunities to continue their studies, as well as effective cooperation in the study process and research.

For example, on the basis of the agreement, the College has transferred to EKA its methodology for organising and implementing e-studies, effectively shares the material and technical base, including using EKA's premises, laboratories and library with its common catalogue; organises joint guest lectures, creative workshops, student conferences; the staff of both institutions are involved in the implementation of study programmes; joint international academic weeks, as well as methodological and scientific conferences, and other events are organised.

The EKA Vice-Rector for Science provides consultative support for the development of research in the College; colleagues from EKA with a doctoral degrees are recruited to lead research groups. The college and EKA jointly implement projects, for example, MaKE IT as a full project partner, or the AutoRade project. Cooperation is evaluated as very effective, achieving high results in all areas of cooperation, each activity is described in more detail in the corresponding chapters.

The college actively cooperates with secondary schools, organising training seminars for school management (every year, about 50 secondary school and technical school principals and their deputies from all over Latvia attend the seminars), teachers, sharing experience in digitising the learning process, using digital tools in the learning process to make it more interesting, more interactive, more efficient. During the Covid-19 restrictions, the college organised training remotely. For example, the seminar on the YouTube platform "Board games - an entertaining and educational activity (in families and for diversifying the learning process)".

The college organised development seminars for students of secondary schools, technical schools and their parents, such as "What to pay attention to when signing the first employment contract", "How to successfully prepare for the first job interview?"; "How to make dreams come true (for life and career development)"; "Higher education system in Latvia: how to choose a more suitable study programme" etc. The college provided face-to-face seminars in several schools in Riga and other cities of Latvia - Ogre, Jelgava, Sigulda, Jurmala, Cesis, Gulbene, Liepaja, Valmiera, Daugavpils, etc. The geographical location of participants in online seminars is much wider. (see *Annex 24*)

The college organised Olympiads for secondary school students, as well as for students in the final year of vocational school. Since 2015, the Olympiad in the IT field "Open mind" has been organised in the field of the SF in cooperation with EKA and the Latvian Open Technologies Association (see <https://www.alberta-koledza.lv/index.php?parent=875&lng=lva> (Only in Latvian)).

Cooperation with employers takes place in areas such as improving the content of study programmes, providing internships, providing guest lectures, study tours, reviewing qualification papers, and other creative activities within the study process, organising a Business Forum, attracting lecturers, conducting research in companies and organisations, attracting scholarships for students, mobility of lecturers in companies. Each activity is described in more detail in the corresponding chapters.

IT companies, as well as large organisations and companies with IT departments, are attracted to cooperation in the SF. Cooperation is evaluated as active and effective. Some examples: the

College's strategic cooperation partner, the leading computer game developer "innoWate", and the IT company "CatchSmart" has established scholarships for College students; the management of "CatchSmart" is involved in the work of the Council and the Convention of the College, and in 2022 in the hackathon by organising a mentoring session for student teams within the MaKE IT project (photo report: <https://www.alberta-koledza.lv/index.php?parent=1562&lng=lva> (Only in Latvian)). The college team participates with its project in the MaKE IT project <https://www.makeitstudents.eu/> (Only in Latvian).

MicroTik provides hardware for improving WiFi quality, certified lecturers, and a study course integrated into the study programme, as a result of which students have the opportunity to take the course Certified Network Associate (MTCNA) of MikroTik to gain knowledge and practical skills in working with Mikrotik RouterOS equipment and software, which is widely used in the world. At the end of the course, students have the opportunity to take the certification exam to obtain the MTCNA certificate.

The College is actively involved in activities of other companies and organisations related to the SF, for example, for several years College participates in the activity "Work anywhere!" ("*Strāda jebkur!*") (<https://www.alberta-koledza.lv/index.php?parent=1118&lng=lva> (Only in Latvian)).

Cooperation with non-governmental organisations also takes place in such areas as participation in the development of state strategic documents, initiation of improvement of regulatory acts, improvement of professional standards, etc. The College actively cooperates with the Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, is a founder and member of the Association of Latvian Colleges (LKA). The College student has chaired the LKA Student Council, some years the College students were actively involved in the work of the LKA Student Council board.

The College attracts representatives of the industry not only as lecturers but also as professionals in the work of the governing bodies of the College. Considering the great potential of the SF, the College integrated professionals of the IT industry into the work of the Council. Since 2022, the College has established a Convention, which also includes professionals from the IT industry.

The college is actively involved in the development of the Latvian higher education system and the improvement of regulatory acts, cooperating with state administration institutions. For example, in 2021, members of Saeima of the Commission for Education, Culture and Science visited the College, discussing the role of Colleges in Latvia (<https://www.alberta-koledza.lv/index.php?parent=1455&lng=lva> (Only in Latvian)). Another example of cooperation is the study conducted by students in 2016 in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science "Do Latvian youth want to study in Latvia" (see <https://www.alberta-koledza.lv/index.php?parent=1010&lng=lva>). The member of the College Board is an active member of the Council of Higher Education in the second convocation (see https://www.aip.lv/eng_kontakti.htm).

As it follows from the previous analysis, the range of cooperation partners of the College in the study field is very wide, including both secondary and higher education institutions, employers and information technology companies, non-governmental organizations, etc. When inviting higher education institutions to cooperate, it is ensured that appropriate study field and equivalent study programmes are implemented in these institutions, when starting the cooperation with institutions and companies, the main criterion is the possibility of attracting industry professionals for the implementation and improvement of the study programme, namely by attracting lecturers, guest lecturers, members of the qualification commission, providers of the internship, etc. from the industry, as well as to attract funding for the implementation of various projects. The purpose of cooperation with the above-mentioned partners, as well as non-governmental organizations, is to promote the development, recognition and competitiveness of the College in order to provide

students with quality higher education.

2.5.2. Provide the assessment as to how the cooperation with different institutions from abroad (higher education institutions/ colleges, employers, employers' organisations, municipalities, non-governmental organisations, scientific institutes, etc.) within the study field contributes to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study field. Specify the criteria by which the cooperation partners suitable for the study field and the relevant study programmes are selected and how the cooperation is organised by describing the cooperation with employers. In addition, specify the mechanism for the attraction of the cooperation partners.

As only one short-cycle professional higher education study programme is implemented in the study field, to attract active cooperation partners various activities are organised at the College level.

In order to attract foreign partners, since 2015 independently, and since 2016 in cooperation with the strategic partner EKA, every September the College organises an International Staff Training Week (STW), sharing experiences on the implementation of e-studies, and other current events falling within the competence of the College. Remotely and in a hybrid format, STW was also implemented during the Covid-19 restrictions:

- Years 2016, 2017: "E-learning: Theory and Practise for Beginners" (see <https://www.alberta-koledza.lv/index.php?parent=1036&lng=lva>) (Only in Latvian);
- Year 2018: "Digitalization of Higher Education (for Academic Staff)";
- From 2019 to 2022: "Advanced Research and Teaching Methods (for Academic Staff)".

International Academic Week (IAW) is held every year in April, within the framework of which representatives of foreign partners are invited with various guest lectures and creative workshops for students and staff. IAW was also organised during the Covid-19 restrictions, i.e., in 2020 and 2021.

Within STW and IAW, ties are established with new foreign partners and relations with representatives of existing foreign partners are strengthened. In different years, the participants included representatives from Lithuania, Hungary, Germany, Russia, Greece, Italy, Scotland, Bulgaria, Finland, Cyprus, Croatia, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Türkiye, etc.

The college staff is invited to participate in the international weeks and international conferences of other Latvian and foreign universities and colleges, including with the aim of establishing new contacts for future cooperation.

The circle of cooperation includes a small number of foreign universities and colleges that implement study programmes of a similar level and content as the study programme of the SF. The College tries to expand the geographical locations of its partners, for example by choosing educational institutions of neighbouring countries (Lithuania, Estonia) as strategic cooperation partners, as well as from Europe (e.g., CTL Eurocollege (Cyprus)), Asia (e.g., on behalf of the Eurasian National L. Gumilev named university (Kazakhstan)) and also America (e.g., Walsh College).

Cooperation with Lithuanian partners and the Cyprus College takes place both within the Erasmus+ programme and outside it. For example, in the academic year 2014/2015, the College implemented

the Nordplus Horizontal international project “Skills on Demand: Meeting Labour Market Needs” (NPHZ-2014/10084) in cooperation with Kauno Kolegija University of Applied Science (Lithuania) and Estonian Entrepreneurship University of Applied Sciences (Estonia).

To attract an Asian partner from 2016 to 2019, the College implemented the previously described project KA107. Within the framework of cooperation with ENU (Kazakhstan), several incoming and outgoing mobilities were organised for both students and academic and administrative staff. Representatives of the administrative staff participated in the working group of ENU, providing expert advice on the development of distance learning study forms, accounting and library digitization (see Annex 23). Within the framework of cooperation, the research was carried out by forming research groups led by the academic staff of both institutions, involving students from both countries, the results were presented at conferences in both countries. Colleagues from ENU actively participated in the aforementioned international weeks and etECH conferences.

Cooperation with Walsh College (USA) mainly takes place by organising the joint international scientific conference etECH in the conference section relevant to the SF and within the framework of IAW. It should be noted that, although a written contract with Walsh College has not been signed, real, active cooperation is taking place. Walsh College supports the mentioned events financially; the names and surnames of college representatives can be found in programmes of etECH and IAW. The leading partner of the conference is EKA. In 2022, EKA also invited Sumy State University (Ukraine) to cooperate in organising the conference.

It should also be mentioned that since 2013 the College has been a member of the UN programme Principles of Responsible Management Education (PRME). In order to implement the six principles, set forth in this programme in higher education, guest lectures on the subject of corporate social responsibility are organised in the study process of all study fields, as well as questions about these principles are integrated into various study courses, self-assessment is regularly conducted, which is published on the college website and on <https://www.unprme.org/alberta-college>.

In the 2022/2023 academic year, a meeting was held with representatives of the international certification platform "PeopleCert", as a result of which Alberta College has obtained the status of Education Partner, which provides wide certification opportunities for the College's teaching staff and students.

As it follows from the previous analysis, the College attracts foreign partners mainly within the International Academic Week (IAW) and Staff Training Week (STW), which are organized in cooperation with the strategic partner EKA, as well as by participating in the organization and implementation of the International Scientific Conference etECH, and implementing Erasmus+ mobility project. When evaluating foreign higher education institutions with which to conclude cooperation agreements for the implementation of mobility, it is ensured that the relevant educational institutions implement the same level (short-cycle professional higher education) or bachelor study programmes in the information technology field.

2.5.3. Specify the system or mechanisms, which are used to attract the students and the teaching staff from abroad. Provide the assessment of the incoming and outgoing mobility of the teaching staff in the reporting period, the mobility dynamics, and the issues which the higher education institution/ college faces with regard to the mobility of the teaching staff.

Involving foreign students and teaching personnel at the College mostly is implemented through the lifelong education programme *Erasmus+*. A list of the College's *Erasmus+* partners is available at https://www.alberta-koledza.lv/upload/Erasmus_partners_AK_2019_2020.pdf.

Studies at the College are conducted only in Latvian, there are no foreign students who study at the College permanently. The college does not implement long modules in English, which makes it difficult to attract foreign students to study. For example, as part of the aforementioned project KA107, in the 2018/2019 academic year, four ENU (Kazakhstan) students not related to the SF studied at the College for three months. As mentioned above, during mobility, these students conducted research, the results of which were presented in the international section of the student conference, and theses were published in conference proceedings. Since foreign students are not common practice in the College, a special study plan was prepared for the admission of these students, and the teaching staff of the SF were also involved.

The College invites foreign students by providing internships, thus providing College students with exposure to foreign experiences at home. For example, during the reporting period, two incoming internship mobilities related to the SF were implemented: in the 2015/2016 academic year, one student from HS Kaiserslautern University of Applied Sciences (Germany) had an internship in the IT department of the College, and in the 2016/2017 academic year one student from the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (Greece) had an internship at the College, working with the College's international relations and Erasmus+ coordinator.

The short duration of studies is the main obstacle to the implementation of student mobility. Most of the students of the study programme study part-time, i.e., they are working students, many students already have a higher education, they are retraining or building a dual career, and their work hinders the implementation of mobility.

Despite the college's contribution, informing students during lectures, placing information about Erasmus+ programme opportunities on the website, Moodle and at College premises, as well as sending individual invitations by email, during the reporting period no student mobility has taken place in the study field.

While searching for solutions and conducting discussions with students, the practice initiated by the College is as follows:

1. Students are offered, to participate in traineeship mobility, instead of studies, by adapting the plan for the internship and the period of internship;
2. Mobility is implemented within the framework of projects, where an individual mobility plan is prepared for the students. For example, the students who visited the University of Kazakhstan in 2018 with a presentation of research results were financed by the college from its own financial resources (<https://www.alberta-koledza.lv/index.php?parent=1186&lng=lva>).

In order to broaden students' horizons, the college attracts foreign teaching staff to conduct guest lectures, and creative workshops, as well as to teach part of the study course - attendance is compulsory. Such cooperation takes place in different periods, organising both face-to-face lectures and remote lectures in the e-environment of the College.

For example, in 2018, an assistant professor of the IT faculty of Kazakhstan talked about the possibilities of using Internet resources in the study process in the e-guest lecture "Digital Educational Resources. Structure and content. General requirements". A representative of the same faculty gave an e-guest lecture "Cloud computing". In the guest lecture "Public Relations in the era of digitalization", the students were told about the influence of the Internet and social media on modern society. The lecturer of the IT Department of Vilnius Business College (Lithuania) gave a guest lecture "Computer networks and information security". Whereas, in 2019, the head of the IT

Department of CTL Eurocollege (Cyprus) conducted a series of guest lectures “Computer network construction and IP addressing” remotely in the e-environment, and in 2021 a guest lecture was organised for the development of research skills, which was led by a Lithuanian professor on the topic “Application of research methods: SAW, TOPSIS, EDAS for students” etc.

To facilitate the international mobility of staff for all teaching staff involved in the SF, the head of the SF has compiled and submitted appropriate proposals to the College management. Those are taken into account and included in AKAS 2023, as well as in staff development strategies of the SF and of the academic staff, with the main goal that every member of the academic staff of the SF has participated in international mobility or an event for professional development abroad at least once during the strategic period.

Each year, the academic staff of the SF participates in international projects implemented by the College, engaging in regular cooperation with international partners (e.g., joint research, innovation project, etc.).

As it was mentioned before, the College has implemented the European Union Erasmus+ Programme KA107 project "Higher education student and staff mobility between Programme and Partner Countries", and a number of SF academic staff members enrolled in the programme and participated in outgoing lecturing or learning mobility at the cooperation partner - L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University. In the framework of this collaboration the teaching staff of the College:

- lectured, participated in conferences, implemented a research project (involving students from both universities) and presented its results (see an example at: <https://www.alberta-koledza.lv/index.php?parent=1198&lng=lva>) ;
- lectured study courses to L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University students who studied at the College during the Spring semester of the 2018/19 academic year as part of the Erasmus+ Learning Mobility Project;
- put bases for the development of a collaborative e-course.

In general, the teaching staff of the College shows interest in mobility opportunities, compared to the situation in the previous accreditation period, the dynamics of mobility have significantly improved (see Annex 23). Nonetheless, the College has relatively minimal funding for academic staff mobility within the annual Erasmus + project, therefore, not everyone can benefit from this opportunity every year. Accordingly, the priority and waiting lists are created upon the recommendation of the Head of the SF and these are communicated to the International Relations and Erasmus+ Coordinator and to the Director of the College, thus drawing a list of all SF lecturers and a mobility plan for the next one or two years. Oriented towards continuous development, in the future, the College plans to pay increased attention to the expansion of the circle of persons who go to mobility. This task is planned to be solved by implementing individual development plans.

For a compilation of statistical data on the incoming and outgoing mobility of students during the reporting period, see Annex 22; on the incoming and outgoing mobility of teaching staff in the reporting period, see Annex 23.

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

2.6.1. Assessment of the fulfilment of the plan regarding the implementation of the

recommendations provided by the experts during the previous accreditation of the study field, as well as the assessment of the impact of the given recommendations on the study quality or the improvement of the study process within the study field and the relevant study programmes.

The previous accreditation of the study field took place in 2013 together with the accreditation of the same study field and study programmes implemented by other higher education institutions, the joint opinion of experts was prepared in 2012, and it provides complex recommendations for all study programmes implemented in this study field, or, as stated in the opinion: "Recommendations for Programme improvement for Programmes listed in the second group", i.e. Programmes where several improvements to the continued existence are considered. The opinion contains the following recommendations:

1. Library and study material availability for the study process should be improved.
2. Participation in mobility programs should be increased.
3. The number of academic staff's publications at scientific conferences should be increased, especially at international scientific conferences.
4. All lecture materials should be prepared in English.
5. The E-learning system Moodle should be used in full potential for study process.

The 4th recommendation given by the experts in this formulation does not apply to the College, because the study programmes in the College are implemented only in Latvian, therefore the necessary investments and the results to be achieved would not make a significant contribution to the improvement of the quality of the study process, however in order to broaden the horizons of the students, the College has ensured that for all study courses the literature units in English should be specified in the course descriptions.

The implementation of all other recommendations was started soon after receiving them, the implementation of the recommendations has been completed, and a continuous process for quality assurance continues, for example, the library stocks are renewed and replenished every year; within the framework of mobility programmes, the College has expanded the geographical location of partners, increased the amount of funding available for mobilities. The College continues to look for solutions for the active implementation of students' outgoing mobility in this study field. In order to increase the number of academic staff publications and participation in scientific conferences, the College has developed a strategy for the development of scientific research and creative activity (ZPJAS 2024); together with a cooperation partner, organizes an International Scientific Conference in which teaching staff participate by publishing articles in the scientific journal of the conference, and has significantly improved the student research activity. The Moodle system has been fully implemented; e-courses are available to students of all study forms in all study courses. Teaching staff receive a bonus every semester for quality e-courses.

See Appendix 25 for a detailed overview of the implementation plan of the recommendations given by experts in the previous accreditation of the SF and the impact of the given recommendations on the improvement of the study process in the SF and the corresponding SP.

2.6.2. Implementation of the recommendations given by the experts during the evaluation of the changes to the study programmes in the respective study field or licensed study programmes over the reporting period or recommendations received during the procedure for the inclusion of the study programme on the accreditation form of the study field (if

applicable).
(Not applicable)

Annexes

I - Information on the Higher Education Institution/ College		
Information on the implementation of the study field in the branches of the higher education institution/ college (if applicable)		
List of the governing regulatory enactments and regulations of the higher education institution/ college	Annex_02_Internal_Regulatory_Acts_of_AC.docx.pdf	02_pielikums_AK_ieksejie_normativie_akti_regulejami.docx.pdf
The management structure of the higher education institution/ college	Annex_03_Structure of AC_2022.pdf	03_pielikums_AK_parvaldibas_struktura.pdf
II - Description of the Study Field - 2.1. Management of the Study Field		
Plan for the development of the study field (if applicable)	Annex_06_Study_Field_Development_Strategy_IT.pdf	06_pielikums_Studiju_virziena_attistibas_plans_IT.pdf
The management structure of the study field	Annex_07_Management_Structure of SF.pdf	07_pielikums_Studiju_virziena_parvaldibas_struktura.pdf
A document certifying that the higher education institution or college will provide students with opportunities to continue their education in another study programme or another higher education institution/ college (agreement with another accredited higher education institution or college) if the implementation of the study programme is terminated.	Annex_08_Agreements_with_HEIs_in_case_of_Termination_IT.zip	08_pielikums_Ligumi_ar_All_partraukšanas_gadjumam.zip
A document certifying that the higher education institution or college guarantees compensation for losses to students if the study programme is not accredited or the study programme license is revoked due to actions (actions or omissions) of the higher education institution or college and the student does not wish to continue studies in another study programme.	Annex_09_Conformation_on_Recovery_of_Loss.docx.pdf	09_pielikums_Aplicinajums_par_zaudējumu_kompensāciju.pdf
Standard sample of study agreement	Annex_10_Sample_Study_Agreement.pdf	10_pielikums_Studiju_liguma_paraugs.docx.pdf
II - Description of the Study Field - 2.2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System		
Analysis of the results of surveys of students, graduates and employers	Annex_12_Analysis_of_Surveys_IT.pdf	12_pielikums_Aptauju_analize_IT.pdf
II - Description of the Study Field - 2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Field		
Basic information on the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study field	Annex_13_Academic_Staff_of_Study_Field_IT.pdf	13_pielikums_Studiju_virziena_iesaititie_macibspeki_IT.pdf
Biographies of the teaching staff members (Curriculum Vitae in Europass format)	Annex_14_Academic_Staff_CV_IT_pdf (2).zip	14_pielikums_Macibspeku_biografijas_CV_IT_pdf (4).zip
A statement signed by the rector, director, head of the study programme or field that the knowledge of the state language of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programmes within the study field complies with the regulations on the state language knowledge and state language proficiency test for professional and official duties.	15_pielikums_Aplicinajums_macibspeku_valsts_valoda_IT.docx (1).edoc	15_pielikums_Aplicinajums_macibspeku_valsts_valoda_IT.docx (1).edoc
A statement of the higher education institution/ college on the respective foreign language skills of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programme at least at B2 level according to the European Language Proficiency Assessment levels (level distribution is available on the website www.europass.lv, if the study programme or part thereof is implemented)		
II - Description of the Study Field - 2.4. Scientific Research and Artistic Creation		
Summary of quantitative data on scientific and/ or applied research and / or artistic creation activities corresponding to the study field in the reporting period.	Annex_18_Quantitative_data_on_research_IT.pdf	18_pielikums_Kvantitativie_dati_par_petniecibu_IT.pdf
List of the publications, patents, and artistic creations of the teaching staff over the reporting period.	Annex_17_List_of_Publications_Achievements_of_Academic_Staff_IT.docx.pdf	17_pielikums_Macibspeku_publicaciju_saraksts_IT.pdf
II - Description of the Study Field - 2.5. Cooperation and Internationalisation		
List of cooperation agreements, including the agreements for providing internship	Annex_20List_of_Cooperation_Agreements_Miscellaneous_IT.xlsx	20_pielikums_Sadarbibas_ligumu_saraksts_dazadi_IT (1).xlsx
Statistical data on the teaching staff and the students from abroad	Annex_21_Statistics_on_Foreign_Teaching_Staff_IT.pdf	21_pielikums_Arvalstu_macibspeki_statistika_IT.pdf
Statistical data on the incoming and outgoing mobility of students (by specifying the study programmes)	Annex_22_Statistics_of_Students_Mobility_IT.pdf	22_pielikums_Studejoso_mobilitates_statistika_IT.pdf
Statistical data on the incoming and outgoing mobility of the teaching staff	Annex_23_Statistics_of_Teaching_Staff_Mobility_IT.pdf	23_pielikums_Macibspeku_mobilitates_statistika_IT.pdf
II - Description of the Study Field - 2.6. Implementation of the Recommendations Received During the Previous Assessment Procedures		
Report on the implementation of the recommendations received both in the previous accreditation and in the licensing and/ or change assessment procedures and/ or the procedures for the inclusion of the study programme on the accreditation form of the study field.	25_pielikums_Rekomendaciju_izpildes_parskats_IT.zip	25_pielikums_Rekomendaciju_izpildes_parskats_IT.zip
An application for the evaluation of the study field signed with a secure electronic signature	Annex_26_Application_AIC_SV_SP_evaluation_IT_2023.edoc	26_pielikums_Iesniegums_AIC_SV_SP_novertesana_IT_2023 (1).edoc
III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme		
Sample of the diploma and its supplement to be issued for completing the study programme		
For academic study programmes - Opinion of the Council of Higher Education in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (if applicable)		
Compliance of the joint study programme with the provisions of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (table) (if applicable)		
Statistics on the students in the reporting period		
III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof		
Compliance with the study programme with the State Education Standard		
Compliance of the qualification to be acquired upon completion of the study programme with the professional standard or the requirements for professional qualification (if applicable)		
Compliance of the study programme with the specific regulatory framework applicable to the relevant field (if applicable)		

Mapping of the study courses/ modules for the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study programme		
The curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme)		
Descriptions of the study courses/ modules		
Description of the organisation of the internship of the students (if applicable)		
III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.4. Teaching Staff		
Confirmation that the academic staff of the doctoral study programme includes not less than five doctors, of which at least three are experts approved by the Latvian Council of Science in the branch or sub-branch of science in which the study programme intends to award a scientific degree (if applicable)		
Confirmation that the academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements specified in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (if applicable)		

Other annexes

Name of document	Document
01. pielikums AK attīstības stratēģija (Lv)	01_pielikums_AK_attistibas_strategija.pdf
01 Annex AKAS 2023 AC Strategy	Annex_01_AKAS_2023_AC_Strategy.pdf
11. pielikums Studiju virziena SVID IT	11_pielikums_Studiju_virziena_SVID_IT.pdf
11 Annex SWOT Analysis of the Study Field IT	Annex_11_SWOT Analysis of the Study Field_IT.pdf
19. pielikums Ziņojumu tēmas SV studējošo konferencē IT	19_pielikums_Zinojumu_temas_SV_studejoso_konference_IT.pdf
19 Annex Topics of Students Conference IT	Annex_19_Topics_of_Students_Conference_IT.pdf
38. pielikums Studiju maksa gads kopa IT	38_pielikums_Studiju_maksa_gads_kopa_IT.pdf
38 Annex Tuition fees IT	Annex_38_Tuition_fees_IT.pdf
37 pielikums SP iesaistīto mācībspēku salīdzinājums IT	37_pielikums_SP_iesaistito_macibspeku_salidzinajums_IT.pdf
37 Annex Comparison of the academic staff of SP IT	Annex_37_Comparison_of_the_academic_staff_of_SP_IT.pdf
04. pielikums. Studējošo skaita AK dinamika 2016-2022	04_pielikums._Studejoso_skaita_AK_dinamika_2016-2022.pdf
04 Annex Dynamics of Students of College 2016-2022.	Annex_04_Dynamics_of_Students_of_College_2016-2022.docx.pdf
16. pielikums Pieejas dati tīmekļa vietnei AK	16_pielikums_Pieejas_dati_timekla_vietnei_AK.pdf
16 Annex Access data webpage AK	Annex_16_Access_data_webpage_AK.pdf
24. pielikums Sadarbības piemēri LV ārvalstu institūcijas IT	24_pielikums_Sadarbibas_piemeri_LV_arvalstu_institucijas_IT.pdf
05 Annex Compliance of the Internal Quality Assurance System with LHEIs	Annex_05_Compliance of the Internal Quality Assurance System with LHEIs.pdf
05. pielikums AK iekšējās kvalitātes nodrošināšanas sistēmas atbilstība AL	05_pielikums_AK_ieksejas_kvalitates_nodros_sistemas_atbilstiba_AL.docx.pdf
24 Annex Examples of Cooperation LV Foreign Institutions IT	Annex_24_Examples_of_Cooperation_LV_Foreign_Institutions_IT.pdf

Information Technologies (41484)

Study field	<i>Information Technology, Computer Hardware, Electronics, Telecommunications, Computer Management, and Computer Science</i>
ProcedureStudyProgram.Name	<i>Information Technologies</i>
Education classification code	<i>41484</i>
Type of the study programme	<i>First level professional higher education study programme</i>
Name of the study programme director	<i>Andrejs</i>
Surname of the study programme director	<i>Liepiņš</i>
E-mail of the study programme director	<i>andrejs.liepins@alberta-koledza.lv</i>
Title of the study programme director	<i>Mg.sc.comp.</i>
Phone of the study programme director	<i>20175667</i>
Goal of the study programme	<i>To prepare qualified and competitive Computer Systems and Network Administrators and Programmers in accordance with the requirements of the fifth qualification level (5th LQF), who are oriented towards further education, acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills that would allow to successfully enter the labour market and independently adapt to the changing socioeconomic situation</i>
Tasks of the study programme	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. To ensure the study process in accordance with the requirements of the education standard, Latvian regulatory acts, and Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015).</i> <i>2. To provide students with the conditions and opportunities to receive a short-cycle professional higher education in accordance with the requirements of the standard of the profession of a Programmer or a Computer Systems and Network Administrator.</i> <i>3. To provide students with the necessary theoretical knowledge, as well as the practical and professional skills of the profession by providing practical lessons, independent assignments, and practice.</i> <i>4. To ensure the quality of studies by attracting qualified teaching staff and using modern methodical, scientific, and technical materials in the study process.</i> <i>5. To develop the scientific analysis skills of students, their ability to independently solve problems, as well as to promote their involvement in solving practical and scientific problems.</i> <i>6. To promote the involvement of students in professional development and further education processes, as well as motivate them to improve their qualification level.</i> <i>7. To provide students with practical work experience in the profession of Programmer or Computer Systems and Network Administrator.</i> <i>8. To introduce students to professional ethics and the standards of the information technology industry.</i> <i>9. To promote collaboration with other Latvian and foreign higher education institutions.</i> <i>10. To collaborate with employers in the information and communication technology sector.</i>

Results of the study programme	<p><i>For the study programme “Information Technologies”:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Knows and understands the theories, regularities and technologies of computer science and the information technology industry. 2. Is able to discuss practical issues and solutions with colleagues, clients, and management in the chosen profession. 3. Is able to work individually and in a team, planning and organising, as well as evaluating and improving own work and the work of others, to perform certain tasks in the chosen profession. 4. Is able to formulate, describe, and analyse practical problems in the chosen profession. 5. Knows and understands the regulatory acts and standards. <p><i>For the sub-programme: “Programming”:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can develop software in accordance with the rules of functionality, quality, and resource capacity, preparing and configuring an environment for developing. 2. Can evaluate the requirements of the programme, create the design, and write its code in accordance with the programming guidelines. 3. Can analyse the source of software errors, debug the programme, and improve software performance. 4. Is able to collaborate in cross-functional teams in the software development and delivery processes. <p><i>For the sub-programme “Computer Network Administration”:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can ensure the optimal performance of the computer technology and software, as well as the computer network for the needs of the users. 2. Can design, configure, and administer computer systems and computer networks. 3. Is able to ensure information protection and safety. 4. Is able to provide technical and advisory support to the users. 5. Is able to prepare the necessary technical documentation.
Final examination upon the completion of the study programme	<i>State final examination, which includes a defence of qualification paper</i>

Study programme forms

Full time studies - 2 years - latvian

Study type and form	<i>Full time studies</i>
Duration in full years	<i>2</i>
Duration in month	<i>0</i>
Language	<i>latvian</i>
Amount (CP)	<i>80</i>
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Secondary education</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	<i>—</i>
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	<i>Computer Systems and Network Administrator</i>

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Alberta College	RĪGA	SKOLAS IELA 22 - 5, VIDZEMES PRIEKŠPILSĒTA, RĪGA, LV-1010

Part time studies - 2 years, 6 months - latvian

Study type and form	<i>Part time studies</i>
Duration in full years	2
Duration in month	6
Language	<i>latvian</i>
Amount (CP)	80
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Secondary education</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	-
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	<i>Computer Systems and Network Administrator</i>

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Alberta College	RĪGA	SKOLAS IELA 22 - 5, VIDZEMES PRIEKŠPILSĒTA, RĪGA, LV-1010

Full time studies - 2 years - latvian

Study type and form	<i>Full time studies</i>
Duration in full years	2
Duration in month	0
Language	<i>latvian</i>
Amount (CP)	80
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Secondary education</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	—
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	<i>Programmer</i>

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Alberta College	RĪGA	SKOLAS IELA 22 - 5, VIDZEMES PRIEKŠPILSĒTA, RĪGA, LV-1010

Part time studies - 2 years, 6 months - latvian

Study type and form	<i>Part time studies</i>
Duration in full years	2
Duration in month	6
Language	<i>latvian</i>
Amount (CP)	80
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Secondary education</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	—
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	<i>Programmer</i>

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Alberta College	RĪGA	SKOLAS IELA 22 - 5, VIDZEMES PRIEKŠPILSĒTA, RĪGA, LV-1010

Part time extramural studies - 2 years, 6 months - latvian

Study type and form	<i>Part time extramural studies</i>
Duration in full years	2
Duration in month	6
Language	<i>latvian</i>
Amount (CP)	80
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Secondary education</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	—
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	<i>Computer Systems and Network Administrator</i>

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Alberta College	RĪGA	SKOLAS IELA 22 - 5, VIDZEMES PRIEKŠPILSĒTA, RĪGA, LV-1010

Part time extramural studies - 2 years, 6 months - latvian

Study type and form	<i>Part time extramural studies</i>
Duration in full years	2
Duration in month	6
Language	<i>latvian</i>
Amount (CP)	80
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Secondary education</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	—
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	<i>Programmer</i>

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Alberta College	RĪGA	SKOLAS IELA 22 - 5, VIDZEMES PRIEKŠPILSĒTA, RĪGA, LV-1010

Part time extramural studies distance education - 2 years, 6 months - latvian

Study type and form	<i>Part time extramural studies distance education</i>
Duration in full years	2
Duration in month	6
Language	<i>latvian</i>
Amount (CP)	80
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Secondary education</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	—
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	<i>Programmer</i>

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Alberta College	RĪGA	SKOLAS IELA 22 - 5, VIDZEMES PRIEKŠPILSĒTA, RĪGA, LV-1010

Part time extramural studies distance education - 2 years, 6 months - latvian

Study type and form	<i>Part time extramural studies distance education</i>
Duration in full years	2
Duration in month	6
Language	<i>latvian</i>
Amount (CP)	80
Admission requirements (in English)	<i>Secondary education</i>
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	—
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	<i>Computer Systems and Network Administrator</i>

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Alberta College	RĪGA	SKOLAS IELA 22 - 5, VIDZEMES PRIEKŠPILSĒTA, RĪGA, LV-1010

3.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

3.1.1. Description and analysis of changes in the parameters of the study programme made since the issuance of the previous accreditation form of the study field or issuance of the study programme license, if the study programme is not included on the accreditation form of the study field, including changes planned within the evaluation procedure of the study field evaluation procedure.

The name of the study programme “Information technologies” has not been changed, but, as since April 21, 2022, when the amendments to the Law on Higher Education Institutions entered into force “within the study programme, a study sub-programme (sub-programmes) can be created, which is a part of the study programme and corresponds to [...] the professional qualification to be obtained” [Law on HEIs, Article 55 paragraph one], two sub-programmes “Programming” and “Administration of Computer Networks” are introduced according to the professional qualification “programmer” and “computer systems and network administrator” to be obtained after completion of the programme. In fact, no changes were made in the study outcomes of the study programme, because previously the study programme had two specializations, each of which had both common (at the programme level) and different (at the specialization/sub-programme level) study outcomes, in accordance with the standards of the profession. Two education classification codes are assigned according to the study programme and its sub-programmes (see next section).

Following the demand of students and current trends in the field of education, the study programme has been prepared for implementation in two new forms – part-time extramural and distance learning.

Following the approval of the new professional standards on 8 June 2022, the study programme has been reviewed and updated to ensure that it is in line with the new professional standards. No major changes to the content of the study programme were necessary, as the content of the courses is regularly updated to keep up with current developments in the field (see next section).

See Annex 29 for the parameters of the study programme “Information Technologies”.

3.1.2. Analysis and assessment of the study programme compliance with the study field. Analysis of the interrelation between the code of the study programme, the degree, professional qualification/professional qualification requirements or the degree and professional qualification to be acquired, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and the admission requirements. Description of the duration and scope of the implementation of the study programme (including different options of the study programme implementation) and evaluation of its usefulness.

The short-cycle professional higher education study programme “Information technologies” with two sub-programmes “Programming” and “Administration of Computer Networks” is developed on the basis of two professional standards included in the fifth level of the Professional Qualification Framework of the Electrical and Optical Equipment Manufacturing, information and communication technology industry, i.e. programmer and computer systems and network administrator (both

professional standards approved on 08.06.2022 at the PINTSA meeting).

Taking into account the fact that after the completion of the study programme, one of the two above-mentioned qualifications is awarded, which according to the Cabinet Regulations No. 322 of 13 June 2017 "Regulations on the Classification of Education in Latvia" correspond to different educational groups, i.e., 483 "Computer systems, databases and computer networks" and 484 "Programming", the study programme is assigned two classification codes - 41 483 and 41 484. It follows from the analysis that the study programme with sub-programmes complies with the requirement set out in the first part of Article 55 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions "sub-programmes are part of the study programme and correspond to a specific [...] professional qualification to be obtained". The title of the study programme "Information Technologies" is interconnected with the two qualifications to be awarded, because, as already mentioned above, according to the map of professions included in the qualification framework of the Electronic and Optical Equipment Manufacturing, **Information** and Communication **Technology** industry, the professional qualifications to be awarded in both sub-programmes of the study programme are included in these maps at the fifth professional qualification level, which also clearly indicates the compliance of the study programme with the study field "**Information technologies**, computer engineering, electronics, telecommunications, computer management and computer science".

The aim of the study programme is to "prepare qualified and competitive administrators of computer systems and computer network and programmers in accordance with the requirements of the fifth professional qualification level (LQF 5), who are oriented towards further education, providing the necessary knowledge and skills that would allow them to successfully enter the labour market and independently adapt to the changing socio-economic conditions" which corresponds to the name of the study programme and each of the qualifications to be obtained. Both sub-programmes have a common aim and objectives, while the learning outcomes are defined both in common and in different ways, reflecting the commonalities and differences in the qualifications to be obtained and the professional standards.

As a short-cycle professional higher education study programme, the admission requirements do not include any specific preliminary knowledge, they only include the knowledge acquired at the secondary education level, including a foreign language.

The amount of study programme is 80 CP (120 ECTS) and the duration: full-time studies - two years (20 CP (30 ECTS) per semester), part-time intramural studies, part-time extramural studies and distance learning - two years and six months (16 CP (24 ECTS) per semester).

The study programme is implemented in Latvian only. Full-time studies are organised on weekdays during working hours, part-time intramural studies - on Saturdays, part-time extramural studies - on weekday evenings in the e-environment, and distance learning - for students studying according to an individual plan. Each form of study thus has its own target audience, so their usefulness is not in doubt.

See Annex 29 for the parameters of the study programme "Information Technologies".

3.1.3. Economic and/ or social substantiation of the study programme, analysis of graduates' employment.

Short-cycle professional higher education study programmes have the advantage: unlike bachelor's programmes, upon graduation of which, after three or four years of study, the student obtains an

academic or professional bachelor's degree, in short-cycle professional higher education study programmes it is possible to obtain a fifth-level professional qualification in a shorter period of time (within two to two and a half years), for example, in this study programme in programming or administration of computer systems and networks. Moreover, after graduating from a short cycle professional higher education study program, with an already obtained professional qualification, it is possible to continue one's studies in bachelor's programs at later stages of studies.

Obtaining a professional qualification faster and learning the basics of the chosen sector of business is also important for students who need an education or knowledge of the industry to fulfil their professional duties.

The updated professional standard for programmers states that “a programmer develops software under conditions of functionality, quality and resource intensity by preparing and configuring the development environment; Evaluates the requirements of the programme, designs the programme and writes the programme code according to the programming guidelines; analyses sources of software errors, debugs software, improves software performance; collaborates in cross-functional teams in software development and delivery processes.”

The professional standard for a computer systems and network administrator states that “an administrator of the computer systems and computer networks ensures the optimum performance of computer hardware and software and the computer network for the needs of users; designs, configures and administers computer systems and networks; ensures information protection and security; provides technical and advisory support to users; prepares the necessary technical documentation”.

The Latvian labour market is increasingly demanding information technology specialists. The study programme is aimed at those in society who, after obtaining secondary or higher education, feel the need for modern professional education which is compatible with European standards and requirements. Alberta College trains professionals in a short period of time. They acquire practical skills during the study process and are competitive in today's market conditions.

For example, according to data from the portal Cv.lv, as of 20.01.2023, the section “Information Technologies” has 607 active vacancies, where more than 100 are related to the area of programming or administration of computer networks. Therefore, graduates with qualifications obtained in the SF are in very high demand both in the public and the private sectors.

The study programme differs from other short-cycle professional higher education study programs due to:

- study courses meeting the current and updated professional standards or requirements of professional qualification;
- study programme contents adjusted to modern trends;
- a unique form of studies (see more below);
- a strategic partnership with implementers of higher-level study programs, incl. EKA;
- active cooperation with employers.

The fact that information technology specialists are in demand is evidenced both by the results of the College's employers' surveys and by the current situation in the labour market, where the demand for such specialists is very high. The success of the graduates so far shows that such specialists are in high demand in the labour market. Of the 2018 graduates, 60% received a job offer during their internship, while 90% had already found a job in the industry and had completed real projects in their workplace as part of their qualification work by the time they graduated from the study programme.

In comparison with other similar study programs in Latvia (bachelor level) and abroad, in addition to the College providing the acquisition of the study programme onsite, in the period of accreditation the College also offers a unique type of studies for that time to its students - e-learning onsite, which was comparable to the onsite form, but took place online. It is a unique system and methodology developed at the College, which only the College is implementing in short-cycle professional higher education programs. This experience was being assimilated by the College's strategic partner, EKA, in order to provide graduates of the College with the opportunity to continue their studies in bachelor's programmes in a similar study form.

E-learning features:

- the same study results, goals, and tasks;
- online lectures, meaning *live* contact with the lecturer;
- individual consultations online or at College premises;
- group work, seminars, discussions, and presentations.

A detailed description of e-learning is available in the Regulations "Alberta College Procedure of Organizing E-learning" (See *Annex 2*).

3.1.4. Statistical data on the students of the respective study programme, the dynamics of the number of the students, and the factors affecting the changes to the number of the students. The analysis shall be broken down into different study forms, types, and languages.

In the reporting period, the number of students matriculated in the SP (see Fig. 6) varied and showed a stable tendency for a higher demand for part-time studies in the College compared to full-time studies. This is explained by the employment of the students immediately after graduating from high school. By the end of the first year, full-time students choose to start working, combining work with studies and often changing the form of studies from full-time to part-time to combine work and studies.

At the same time, the students who choose this SP are motivated and growth-orientated. The students choose part-time studies because they are already employed in the field of information technologies and are willing to upgrade their professional knowledge and competencies or have a university degree in another field in which they operate, but feel that they are lacking specific knowledge in programming or administration of computer networks.

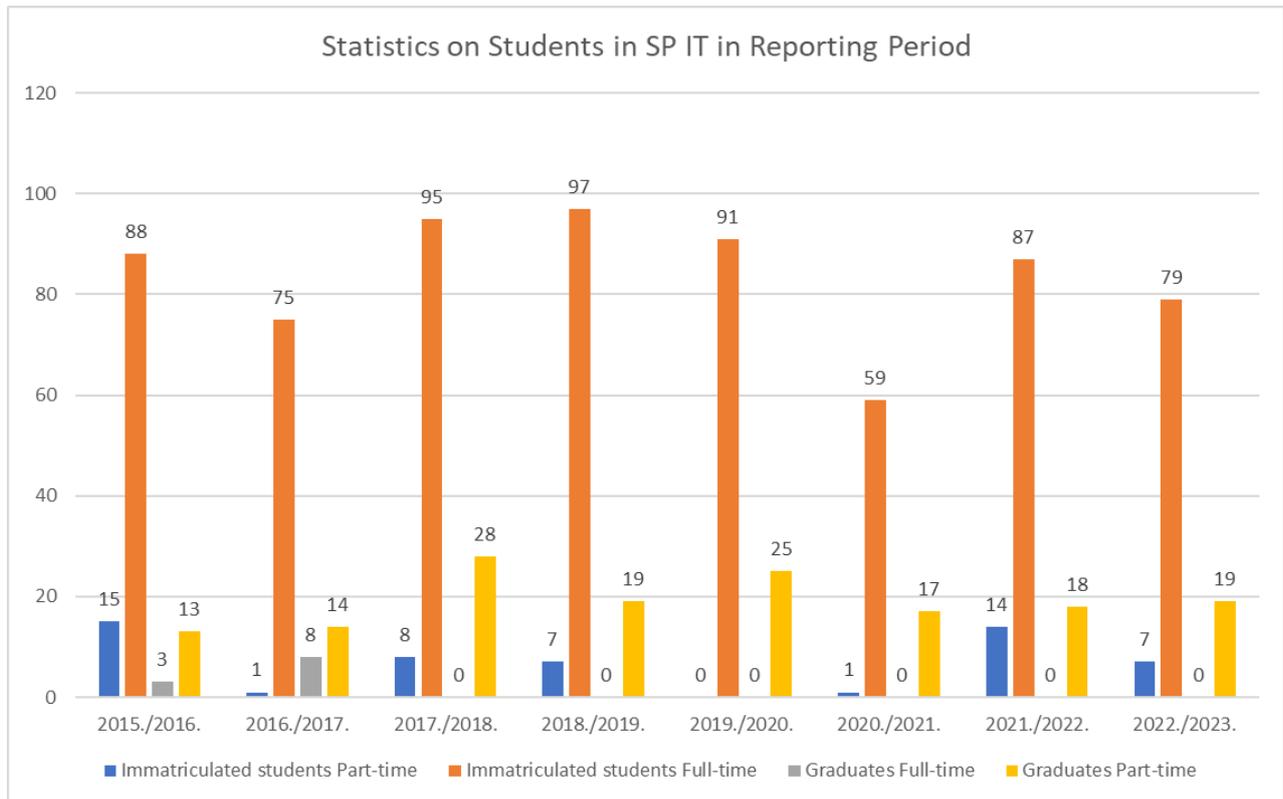


Fig. 6. The statistics on the students of the SP IT in the reference period

The number of matriculated students has not changed significantly. There is stability in terms of the number of graduates. According to the aims set in the ACDS2023, there is a planned increase in these indicators. In addition, the decision on supplementing SP contents with current industry trends involved the consideration of an increase in the interest of prospective students. The (planned) number of graduates is also affected by the fact that students can use the opportunity to take an academic break and decide for themselves when to graduate from the study programme.

The drop-out rate is relatively high (see Annex 28), which is characteristic of the initial stage of studies - in the transition from the first to the second year of study. The main reasons for this are students' lack of prior training in exact sciences, inability to fulfil obligations, lack of motivation, and transition from school to another study environment where requirements, intensity and work style are different. To address this situation, before choosing a study programme, applicants are offered to take a test for choosing a profession. To support students, the College provides preparatory courses in mathematics (also available remotely, thus ensuring accessibility not only for Riga, but also for regional applicants and those who are working). The College ensures the availability of video recordings of the course lessons, which allows a student to watch the most difficult topics repeatedly, as well as free individual counselling during studies, etc.

Reducing the drop-out rate in IT programmes is not only a College concern. The 2022 Informative Report of the Ministry of Economics regarding the medium and long-term labour market forecasts emphasises that the drop-out of students in STEM fields remains a significant problem. Approximately 28% of students in STEM education programmes drop-out of their studies every year (see Section 3.3.2).

The biggest drop-out is among part-time students, the most common reasons are financial aspects, family circumstances, unexpectedly high requirements in the extramural form of studies compared to other experiences, and inability to organise one's learning process. There are other reasons for dropping out, such as lack of willpower, insufficient prior training, and for students who work, chronic lack of time. On the other hand, full-time students often change the form of studies to part-

time in order to combine studies and work or to fulfil the requirements of the programme within the intended term, and in case of dropping out, they are added to the part-time drop-out statistics.

It should be emphasised that the reflected student drop-out does not mean that all these students have interrupted their studies. For example, students who are ex-matriculated due to academic debt often choose to resume their studies after a while. The College has developed a financial support system for returning students.

Drop-out reduction is only possible if students find the motivation to study. Experience shows that it is impossible to persuade or impose a desire to study. When interrupting studies, the reasons for such action are always clarified.

The College is always looking for various solutions to reduce the drop-out rates, where the introduction of new forms of study is one of the examples that allows students to study according to an individual plan, for example, by combining distance learning and work (other examples are mentioned in Part 2 of the SAR), in order to promote the development of student competencies, interest and financial support for studies.

See Annex 28 of this self-evaluation for statistical data on students in the reference period.

3.1.5. Substantiation of the development of the joint study programme and description and evaluation of the choice of partner universities, including information on the development and implementation of the joint study programme (if applicable).

3.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

3.2.1. Analysis of the content of the study programme. Assessment of the interrelation between the information included in the study courses/ modules, the intended learning outcomes, the set aims and other indicators with the aims of the study course/ module and the aims and intended outcomes of the study programme. Assessment of the relevance of the content of the study courses/ modules and compliance with the needs of the relevant industry, labour market and with the trends in science on how and whether the content of the study courses/ modules is updated in line with the development trends of the relevant industry, labour market, and science.

The purpose of implementing the programme is consistent with the vision, strategic goal and objectives of Alberta College and the professional standards. The parallel implementation of the two sub-programmes meets the requirements of the labour market and the interests of students, and is aimed at training competitive and competent specialists for the labour market. The two specialisations share a number of common general tasks for ensuring professional activity, and their acquisition basically takes place in the first two semesters of studies. On the other hand, similar professional duties and tasks with an emphasis on the specific tasks of programming or administration of computer systems and computer networks and specialisation study courses are

mostly only started in the second year of study, so students have the opportunity to purposefully choose the specialisation that best suits their interests, abilities and needs.

The aims, objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme reflect the set of knowledge, skills and competencies to be acquired within the framework of the study courses and internships included in the programme. The information contained in the study courses (objectives, learning outcomes, topics and other details) is reflected in the course descriptions. The information contained in the study courses is derived from the objectives and learning outcomes of the study course, which in turn are derived from the aim and learning outcomes of the programme. The link is clearly visible in the programme mapping. Each study course ensures the acquisition of one or more learning outcomes of the programme. Each learning outcome of the programme corresponds to at least one study course, but on average it is two or more courses.

According to Cabinet Regulations No. 141, the study programme consists of general education, industry and optional study courses, namely part A - general education study courses in the amount of 20 credits, which are common to both sub-programmes, part B - industry study courses in the amount of 32 credits, of which 20 credits are common to both sub-programmes, and 12 credits are specialized industry courses, which differ for each sub-programme according to the different requirements of each of the professional standards, as well as part C - optional study courses in the amount of 4 credits, where students, to exercise academic freedom, can choose two of the study courses from the five study courses offered in the study plan, or any other study course that is provided by College in the relevant semester, as well as any study course at any other higher education institution. The rest of the study programme consists of a study internship in the amount of 8 credits, qualification practice in the amount of 8 credits and development and defence of the qualification paper in the amount of 8 credits.

In accordance with the Quality Assurance Policy of the College, the content of the study programs and the study courses is assessed as follows:

- the lecturers, students, alumni and employers are involved in the self-evaluation process through meetings and surveys on the content of the study programs, teaching methods, quality of academic staff work, organization of the study process and extra-curricular activities, study environment, and e-environment;
- the directors of the study programs maintain awareness of the latest developments in the field and consult with industry representatives and experts on the relevance of the content of the study programme to the labour market and the opportunities for improvement;
- the views of the stakeholders are assessed through several surveys and the results are discussed with the administration, study programme directors, methodological commissions, the Council and staff in various meetings; the feedback is promoted by informing the stakeholders about the survey results and planned activities.

In accordance with the Regulation of Alberta College on Curriculum Development, Implementation Supervision and Improvement (*see Annex 2*), at least once per academic year, the director of the programme shall convene a meeting of the methodological commission to discuss and decide upon any necessary improvement measures for:

- the content of the descriptions of the study courses and their updating;
- duplication of the content of the study courses, elimination of thematic shortcomings;
- the progress in reaching the learning outcomes of the study courses and the need for improvement of the description of the learning outcomes (refinement of results, improvement of teaching methods, improvement of independent assignments, improvement of assessment criteria, etc.).

Based on the results of self-evaluation, opinions and decisions of the methodological commission, as well as based on feedback from student internships, reviews of qualification papers, reviews of the Qualification Examination Commission and reports of the chair of the Commission, the director of the study programme makes and organises the approval of changes in the study programme content, study course descriptions, internship assignments, sample themes of qualification work and controls and ensures compliance with the documents mentioned in the Regulations on curriculum development.

The improvement of SP is based on shortcomings identified during the methodological commission meetings, for example,

- the internship has been evenly redistributed between study and qualification internships, assigning eight (8) and eight (8) credits to them (previously it was divided into six (6) and ten (10) credits);
- after consulting with employers, the CP amount for the study course “Mathematics” was reduced from six (6) to two (2) CPs, as a result of which the study courses “Project Management” and “E-commerce” were moved from the optional course block to the general education course block that is more in line with the professional standard;
- the term paper was cancelled, thus planning for a larger CP amount for industry study courses, for example, the course “WEB Programming” has been added to the list of industry study courses;
- the names of several study courses were updated based on industry trends or a more precise definition of the contents, e.g., “Foreign Language in Computer Science” was renamed “Professional Foreign Language”, “Economics and Business” was renamed “Introduction to Business”;
- the optional courses have been supplemented with the courses “Graphic Editors” and “MikroTik Technologies”, which are implemented in cooperation with MikroTik, offering students additional certification opportunities within the course.

The SP is structured around the following trends in the branch:

1. In the study process:

- student-centred approach;
- result-orientated studies;
- interdisciplinarity;
- alignment of the Latvian Qualifications Framework with the European Qualifications Framework.

1. In the labour market:

- digital skills;
- communication skills, teamwork;
- presentation skills;
- problem-solving and decision-making skills;
- social responsibility and ethics;
- continuous improvement of knowledge and skills;
- critical and analytical thinking skills.

1. In the field of entrepreneurship:

- creation of modern and thoughtful architecture of projects;
- modernization of IT infrastructures and systems;
- reduction of IT system maintenance costs;

- increasing the role of technology;
- requirements of cyber security.

The elaboration and updating of study course descriptions are regulated by the “Regulation of Alberta College on Curriculum Development, Implementation Supervision and Improvement”, which contains guidelines for the elaboration of the course description. The development and update of study course descriptions are coordinated by the director of the SP who organizes discussions within the methodological commissions and ensures:

- that the lecturers are aware of the aims, tasks and learning outcomes of the SP and of the image of the College graduate and the requirements of the profession standard;
- that the learning outcomes identified in the course descriptions are relevant to the aims, objectives and learning outcomes of the SP, the College graduate and the requirements of the profession standard;
- that the duplication and shortcomings of the courses are eliminated.

Before elaborating the description of the study course, the lecturers are additionally introduced to the study course description development guidelines (a video recording of the training seminar is also available) that explain the link between the study results and the learning outcomes to be achieved at the end of the course. According to the formulated outcomes of the study course, a thematic plan and a plan of independent assignments is developed and the teaching methods are selected. The outcomes of the study courses are related to the professional standard and to the outcomes of the SP and can be divided into three groups:

- knowledge and understanding;
- skills - the ability to apply knowledge in the field of the study course, as well as communication and general skills in this field;
- competencies - when formulating competencies in the course, the level of education (LQF 5) should be taken into account and applied to the particular study course.

In accordance with the College guidelines for the development of the course description, to check the formulation of the learning outcomes, the lecturers use the following self-checking questions, for example, are the learning outcomes related to the profession standard, are the learning outcomes student-orientated, is the outcome achievable? a.o.

The director of the SP verifies the aim, outcomes, content, methods, and topicality of the study course description, the topicality and actual availability of the literature and sources used. The director of the SP performs the mapping of the outcomes of the study course against the aim and the outcomes of the study program, the image of the College graduate, and the profession standard. If necessary, the course description is corrected with the help of the author of the description of the study course.

After mapping, the study course descriptions are approved by the director of the SP. After approval of the description of the course, it is published in the Moodle system under the respective e-course, thus providing information to the students. The E-Coordinator verifies the publishing of the information necessary for the study course in the e-environment and its compliance with the College standards (E-course template).

3.2.2. In the case of master’s and doctoral study programmes, specify and provide the justification as to whether the degrees are awarded in view of the developments and findings in the field of science or artistic creation. In the case of a doctoral study programme, provide a description of the main research roadmaps and the impact of the

study programme on research and other education levels (if applicable).

3.2.3. Assessment of the study programme including the study course/ module implementation methods by indicating what the methods are, and how they contribute to the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study courses and the aims of the study programme. In the case of a joint study programme, or in case the study programme is implemented in a foreign language or in the form of distance learning, describe in detail the methods used to deliver such a study programme. Provide an explanation of how the student-centred principles are taken into account in the implementation of the study process.

The student chooses the study sub-programme (i.e. the professional qualification to be obtained at the end of the studies) and the type and form of the study programme implementation by signing the study contract, however, in exercising the academic freedom stipulated by the law, the student has the opportunity to change the sub-programme during the studies, if necessary, by additionally learning the industry specialization courses not learned until then in another subprogram.

According to the College guidelines for the development of the course description, the following study implementation methods are used in theoretical and practical learning:

- theoretical: lectures (introductory, review/repetition lecture, informative lecture, problem lecture, visual lecture, single-student lecture, lecture with planned mistakes, etc.);
- practical: case study, group work, group discussion, pair work during classes, role-playing games, simulation games, discussions, seminars, creative workshops, projects, brainstorming methods, exercises, reading, field trips, study visits, etc.;
- evaluation examples: seminars, discussions, presentations, tests, essays, exams, etc.

The methods of study implementation are chosen so as to achieve the intended outcomes of the study course, also guided by Bloom's taxonomy for the determination of study course outcomes and methods.

The implementation of the SP is carried out creatively and diversely, using different methods:

1. lectures and guest lectures – mainly to acquaint the students with the basic principles of the study course and questions in which the available textbooks are scarce, as well as for the study courses where independent learning is difficult;
2. independent work – mainly to independently read the necessary normative acts and the literature and other sources recommended by the lecturer;
3. work in small groups – mainly to learn how to work in a team and to develop communicative and presentation skills;
4. dialogue and discussions – it is used in the study courses, where together with the theoretical knowledge the students acquire and develop communicative and argumentative skills;
5. practical classes – to help in the application of the obtained theoretical knowledge, for example, solving programming tasks, drawing up document templates, etc.;
6. internship – to acquire and develop practical working skills through getting acquainted with the work processes taking place in the internship company and taking part in them;
7. seminars – are organized to develop the culture of speech of the students, their presentation

- skills, argumentation skills, and ability to defend their opinion;
8. student conferences – to discuss current issues in the branch, conduct and present independent research, improving presentation and public speaking skills;
 9. business and situational games – to learn how to apply the acquired theoretical knowledge through solving different problems and situations;
 10. study tours – to get acquainted with the functioning of various organizations and to obtain new information from the specialists in the branch;
 11. eLearning – to improve the communication between the academic staff and the students, each study course includes online video lectures (the recording is then available in the e-environment), consultations in the e-environment, and the students receive, complete, and submit their assignments in the e-environment, the lecturers review and evaluate the assignments in the e-environment.

The College guidelines for the development of the course description include a comprehensive explanation of the independent assignment, including the balance of the compulsory reading volume and its correspondence to the amount of awarded credits (ECTS), and the consistency of the chosen methods with the planned outcomes of the study course. The lecturers use the following self-checking questions:

- do the students have to do the described independent assignments outside the contact hours?
- are most assignments practical?
- are the independent assignments aimed at reaching the learning outcomes?
- are the independent assignments aimed at gaining the knowledge and skills specified in the profession standard?
- is there a link to real examples from the labour market?
- does the description of the independent assignment specify if it is an independent, group, or another assignment?
- does the number of assignments correspond to the volume of the credits (is not lower or higher)?
- is compulsory reading included (what about listening, watching)?
- does the total reading volume correspond to the volume of the credits (is not lower or higher)?
- does the type of control make it possible to make sure that each task, including compulsory reading, is completed?
- do the chosen study methods correspond to the planned outcomes of the study course?

Testing and evaluation of knowledge is carried out in compliance with the evaluation methods set by the "Regulation on the Procedure of Studies and Examinations"; for example, aggregation of positive achievements, the principle of mandatory evaluation, the principle of openness and clarity of the requirements, the principle of diversity of the testing methods used for evaluation (see *Section 9 of this Regulation*).

In the description of the study course the lecturers include an explanation of how the evaluation of the study course is formed and how the achievement level of each learning outcome is assessed, which method is used for testing.

The student-centred approach at the College is implemented as follows:

- integrating into the study process, practically orientated assignments, training, internship;
- providing opportunities for students to engage in discussions, attend seminars, guest lectures, and workshops, work individually and in groups, engage in research and creative work, prepare scientific papers and present them at conferences, participate in project

- development and implementation, and participate in creative activities;
- organizing meetings with experienced professionals who share experiences, inspire self-development and success during guest lectures, workshops, seminars, study tours, and the Business Forum;
- promoting access to education and personalization of studies, integrating modern teaching methods, actively digitizing the study process, providing informative and material support to students;
- designing result-orientated study courses, aiming at the achievement of the planned learning outcomes at the level of the study course, study program, profession standard, education standard, and European and Latvian Qualifications Frameworks (EQF/LQF);
- ensuring the availability of information, including through posting internal regulating documents on the website and course descriptions and methodological materials - in the Moodle system;
- providing various forms of study in all study programs: full-time and part-time, face-to-face and e-learning, preparing individual study plans and providing consultations;
- ensuring the recognition and equivalence of prior education and practical experience;
- providing a possibility to study isolated study courses from other study programs of the College, providing study and internship mobility opportunities in Latvia and abroad, and providing possibilities for further studies;
- involving students in the work at institutions of all levels, providing opportunities for real participation in decision-making;
- providing opportunities for further studies at the next (undergraduate, bachelor) level.

In distance learning, contact hours have been replaced by watching video lectures, group work and seminars are not organized for students, because each student learns the study plan independently in an individual way, using the study materials offered by the College, which are available in the Moodle environment for each course of study (for example, self-learning tests to control the progress of learning), various technical and electronic means of communication to contact the instructor if consultation is required. Skills that students of other study forms learn in group work and seminars (working in a team, as well as communicative, argumentation, presentation skills, etc.) students learn during internships, working in industry institutions and companies.

3.2.4. If the study programme envisages an internship, describe the internship opportunities offered to students, provision and work organization, including whether the higher education institution/ college helps students to find an internship place. If the study programme is implemented in a foreign language, provide information on how internship opportunities are provided in a foreign language, including for foreign students. To provide analysis and evaluation of the connection of the tasks set for students during the internship included in the study programme with the learning outcomes of the study programme (if applicable).

The organization of the internships offered to students is implemented in compliance with College "Guidelines on Independent Assignments". College student internships are an integral part of the study process. The internship is divided into two parts: the study internship and the qualification internship. The internship is intended for students in the last two semesters of college according to the SP plan.

Under the study agreement, the student is obligated to search for their own place of internship. If

the student's search is unsuccessful, the College gives recommendations for searching places of the internship.

The student chooses the place of internship independently according to the general and individual internship goals. It can be done at private companies, public administration institutions or social organizations: associations and foundations. In choosing an internship position, it is considered whether the student is provided with the opportunity to fulfil their internship assignments fully and well. If the student's work duties correspond with the chosen qualification, the student may choose their workplace as the place of internship. The internship position is approved by the internship supervisor at the College.

For the purposes of the successful implementation of an internship, an internship supervisor is approved at the College (by the SP director or another member of the College academic or administrative staff), who is responsible for the general organization of the internship and control of its implementation. A person in charge of managing the internship is appointed at the place of internship, who provides sufficient opportunities for the student to complete internship assignments.

Therefore, the student solves all matters related to organizing the internship in cooperation with the internship supervisor at the place of internship and at the College, as well as with the SP director.

During the internship, the student:

1. completes internship assignments developed by the head of the SF, the SP director in collaboration with the methodological commission, and approved by the College Council;
2. prepares an internship report describing the completion of all internship assignments.

The student is responsible for a quality completion of internship assignments within the terms defined by the College, the timely and full preparation of the internship report, its submission within the terms defined by the College, and its defence in compliance with the requirements set forth in the Regulations - that is how the student proves their practical preparedness for work in the profession.

The internship must be done based on a three-way agreement between the College, the place of internship, and the student. A sample agreement on the internship of a student of a higher education institution is available in Annex 3 to the "Guidelines on Independent Assignments".

The leading strategic partner of the SF in providing places for internships is TestDevLab Ltd., n-fuse Ltd., Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Latvia, as well as partner businesses and public administration institutions.

At least once per academic year, the director of the SP shall convene a meeting of the methodological commission to discuss and decide upon any necessary improvement measures for the internship tasks. The internship tasks may be updated, for example, if:

- the internship supervisor has indicated the necessary changes or shortcomings;
- there are current trends in the field of study of the SP and it is essential to study and master them within the framework of the internship;
- the students have rightly pointed out the possibilities for improvement of the internship tasks.

Before and during the internship, the director of the SP organizes a consultation for the students (face-to-face and in the e-environment), informing them of the general conditions for choosing the most appropriate internship place, the procedure of the internship, key deadlines, and explains the

internship tasks, their content, and internship report structure. The main criterion for choosing the internship place is that it provides the student with the possibility to complete the internship tasks fully and efficiently.

Both study and qualification internships have a study course description that defines the aim of the study course, learning outcomes, internship tasks, and other information that should be included in the course description in accordance with the College guidelines.

Internship assignments are divided into topics and sub-topics which are included in the study course description and available via the Moodle system. To complete the internship tasks the student needs to apply their soft skills, digital skills, and professional skills identified in the image of the College graduate. Completing the internship task, preparing and defending the internship report require using and developing all these skills, thus fully achieving the outcomes of the SP.

SP internship assignments are a result of internship study results, which are in turn harmonized with achievable results of the SP, which are reflected in the internship course descriptions and study result mapping of study courses (see *Annex 32*).

See a description of the internship organization in Annex 35.

See information on agreements for student internship coverage at companies in Annex 36.

3.2.5. Evaluation and description of the promotion opportunities and the promotion process provided to the students of the doctoral study programme (if applicable).

3.2.6. Analysis and assessment of the topics of the final theses of the students, their relevance in the respective field, including the labour market, and the marks of the final theses.

A list of sample themes for qualification works is drawn up by the director of the SP consulting with the relevant methodological commission. The sample themes for the qualification works follow from the content and outcomes of the SP. The list of sample themes for qualification works shall be approved by the Council.

In 2018, the College Council approved the following sample themes for qualification works:

- In the sub-programme “Programming”:
 - Company/organisation website development.
 - Development of an information system for the needs of the company/organisation.
 - Implementation/improvement/automation of the testing system in an information technology company.
 - Software/app development.
- In the sub-programme “Administration of Computer Networks”:
 - Development of the technical project regarding the local computer network of the company/organisation or development/improvement of the implementation plan.
 - Development of the security policy plan of the company/organisation.
 - Development of the technical solutions project of the company/organisation or

development/improvement of the implementation plan.

Deadlines for the selection of the theme, elaboration and defence of the qualification work are approved by the director of the SP who informs the Study Department. The Study Department publishes the schedule on the College website and the director of the SP - In the Moodle system.

The student chooses the theme of the qualification work according to the approved list of sample themes or proposes another theme that is agreed upon with the supervisor and the director of the SP. The themes and supervisors of the qualification works shall be approved by the Council on the proposal of the director of the SP. Once the theme of the qualification work has been approved, it cannot be changed during the semester unless there is a valid reason.

During the last two years, the Council approved the following examples of themes of the qualification works chosen by the students:

- In the sub-programme “Programming”:
 - Development of a business management tool in an information technology company;
 - Data migration of the auto spare parts trading company from the internal ERP system to the RabbitMQ message broker;
 - Development of an interactive financial model for public education;
 - Development of a graphical user interface for the debt collection system;
 - Video quality measurement and rating for uploaded videos on the most popular social media video apps;
 - Automation of functional tests of the document management system module;
 - Development of the management system in an electrical network design company;
 - Functional improvement of the communication app with framework and cloud service options in an information technology company;
 - Development of an individual merchant's website;
 - Development of a risk accumulation calculation tool in an insurance company, etc.
- In the sub-programme “Administration of Computer Networks”:
 - Implementation and configuration of systems monitoring software in the local data centre;
 - Implementation of a mobile equipment management tool in a logistics company;
 - Migration of information systems to a data centre in a medical institution;
 - Development of a technical project for the installation of a local computer network in the state defence institution / interest-related educational institution;
 - Development of a hand-held scanner system implementation project in an IT component distribution company;
 - Virtual server migration project from the existing environment to a new one;
 - Development of the Internet of Things system and its network for monitoring home environmental conditions;
 - Installation and configuration of the operating system from the network using “Microsoft Endpoint Manager” software in a state institution;
 - Implementation of multimedia data management and archiving solution in a state administrative institution;
 - Development of a cash register system replacement project in a retail company;
 - Installation and configuration of the file server in the state defence institution;
 - Implementation of the virtual telephone exchange in the information system of the state institution;
 - The company's IT security policy for video surveillance systems;
 - SMTP daemon solution offering in an information technology company;
 - Creation of a local network intrusion detection system in a food production company;

- Automation of the process of resetting user passwords in the company's internal information system;
- Development of an information technology security improvement plan in a large information technology company;
- Modernisation of remote work solutions in a state institution, etc.

In general, the trends in the choice of themes for qualification papers are related to the modernisation, improvement or optimisation of existing systems or solutions. This, in turn, is related to the students' active involvement in the work of the company during the implementation of the qualification internship.

In the reports of the heads of the State final examination commission, who are representatives of the IT industry, conclusions are that “The topics, goals and content of the works chosen by the students correspond to the qualification characteristics of a specialist given in the professional standard. Current business topics and problematic issues in the field of information and communication technologies are discussed in the papers. Solutions to problems are practical, and related to the needs and problems of a specific company or public administration. In the future, more emphasis should be placed on the validation of the chosen solution by the specific company, the evaluation of the obtained solution and the identification of development opportunities.” (2015) “The connection of the selected topics with the specific company is evaluated positively, as the problem not viewed in isolation from the company's capabilities and available resources.” (2014) “Qualification papers are developed for companies operating in various fields - a credit institution, an educational institution, an information technology company.” “The presentations are defended convincingly, the presentations are organized in a structured manner, and all students fit in within the specified time. Wide and in-depth answers are given to the theoretical questions, according to the essence of the question. After the presentation, the commission's questions are answered in detail with references to the information from the paper”.

(2019) “The qualification works cover a spectrum of different problems. Students demonstrate a good understanding of the use of modern technologies” (2023)

The average evaluations for the qualification papers vary from 6.4 in 2015 to 8.3 in 2014 and 2022, and 8.09 in 2023.

See Annex 30 for the table on the compliance of the study programme with the National Education Standard.

See Annex 31 for a table on the compliance of the qualification awarded in the study programme with the professional standard.

See Annex 32 for a mapping of study courses to achieve learning outcomes of a study programme.

See Annex 33 for the study programme plan

See Annex 34 for descriptions of the study courses in the study programme.

3.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

3.3.1. Assessment of the compliance of the resources and provision (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 the learning outcomes to be achieved by providing the respective examples.

Since the College is a relatively small educational institution and SF contains just one SP, see the assessment of resources and provision in Part II, sections 2.3.1. and 2.3.2.

The College's resources are adequate to meet the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and for the achievement of the learning outcomes. For the organisation of the study process, teaching staff are provided with auditoriums with a projector or computer classrooms, if required by the specifics of a course, and have access to a computer with an internet connection for performing extra-curricular duties. Teaching staff are provided with the opportunity to conduct off-site lectures on the College premises.

During lectures, each student has access to a stationary or portable computer with the necessary software for the study process, as well as a library with the necessary books for learning the content of study courses. All students have access to the Moodle system, where the materials necessary for the organisation of the study process are located. The Big Blue Button system for attending video lectures is intended for off-site lectures, but the system is also used for other forms of study in the implementation of various study courses and College activities. Video recordings of lectures, etc., are stored for at least one academic year, providing students with access to lecture materials throughout the course.

Each administrative employee is provided with a stationary or portable computer with access to the Internet and the necessary software. The internal system NEXUS is provided for those who need access to the student or staff database for the performance of their work duties.

3.3.2. Assessment of the study provision and scientific base support, including the resources provided within the framework of cooperation with other science institutes and higher education institutions (applicable to doctoral study programmes) (if applicable).

3.3.3. Indicate data on the available funding for the corresponding study programme, its funding sources and their use for the development of the study programme. Provide information on the costs per one student within this study programme, indicating the items included in the cost calculation and the percentage distribution of funding between the specified items. The minimum number of students in the study programme in order to ensure the profitability of the study programme (indicating separately the information on each language, type and form of the study programme implementation).

The methodology for developing the budget of the College and the study field, and the procedure for coordination thereof, as well as the methodology for the costs per student within the study programme, including the items included in the cost calculation and the percentage distribution of funding between the specified items, are described in detail in Part 2, Section 2.3.1.

This section provides a more detailed explanation of the differences in tuition fees for different study forms and sub-programmes.

According to the College's budgeting methodology, the majority, i.e. about 75% of the expenses intended for the implementation of the study programme of the study field are constant expenses independent of the number of students in each specific group, incl. renovation and maintenance of premises, material and technical base, methodical work, promotion of research activities in the study field, staff training and competence development, remuneration of administrative staff, etc. Considering the amount of constant expenditures, which are calculated for each year, the tuition fee for the complete study programme differs for full-time students (duration of studies - 2 years) and part-time students (duration of studies - 2 years and 6 months).

A smaller part of expenditures are variable expenditures, which are affected by the number of groups and students in them, incl. remuneration of academic staff, renewal of library resources, availability of premises, etc. Evaluating the available resources before the admission of each study year, the College Director decides on the number of groups and the permissible number of students in each group (not only the minimum but also the maximum number) for each study programme (sub-programme) and form of studies.

Considering that the College is strategically interested in developing a full-time form of study, in which enrollment in the analyzed study programme recently has decreased, the possibility of opening such a group is envisaged, provided that there are at least 5 students in one sub-programme. The College has a practice of opening small full-time groups. Such cases are foreseen in the study agreements and the students are individually informed that in case of student dropout, the students will be offered to change the form of studies. A full-time group with a minimum number of students is opened after receiving informed consent from all applicants.

In the process of developing the methodology for budget planning, comparing the variable expenditure positions of the two sub-programmes for part-time intramural and part-time extramural studies, it was concluded that their correlation is relatively small, therefore the methodology provides for planning the same amount of expenditure for the mentioned study forms and sub-programmes. It is intended that the analyzed group of the study forms of the sub-programme can be opened if there are at least 5 students in each and if there are at least 12 students in the combined study programme group. The opening of one sub-programme group without the other is permissible if there are at least 8 students in it, but there are no such cases in College practice.

Although the study programme is fully prepared for implementation in the form of distance learning, until now distance learning was not offered to groups. It is intended to offer such a form, implementing the student-centred approach, by agreeing with the student on the learning part of the study programme according to an individual plan, the individual payment schedule being a part of it.

3.4. Teaching Staff

3.4.1. Assessment of the compliance of the qualification of the teaching staff members (academic staff members, visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting docents, visiting lecturers, and visiting assistants) involved in the implementation of the study programme with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the provisions set out in the respective regulatory enactments. Provide information on

how the qualification of the teaching staff members contributes to the achievement of the learning outcomes.

The qualification of the staff of the SP of the field of study is consistent with the implementation of the objectives and tasks of the College. The greatest value of the College is its staff, who shares common values, research and a strong link with the industry, pedagogical talent, and teamwork. One of the College's strategic tasks is to provide a professional team of academic staff for the study process, who bases the quality of the study programme and the implementation of the study process on science and research, hands-on industry experience, and close collaboration with employers and strategic partner higher education institutions.

Seven representatives of the elected academic staff of the College are involved in the implementation of the SP, their study courses form 27 CP (including four (4) CP of optional study courses) out of a total of 80 CP of the SP, accounting for 33.75% of the total volume of study courses.

In total, 18 teaching staff members are involved in the implementation of the SP, of which 16 have obtained a master's degree in a field corresponding to the study course to be taught (including two studying at doctorate level), and two teaching staff have obtained a doctoral degree. Eight teaching staff members, or 44%, have scientific publications. All teaching staff, who do not have scientific publications, have the professional experience required by the Law on Higher Education Institutions in the field related to the taught study courses.

Among the guest lecturers involved in the implementation of the study programme are leading specialists of information technology departments of various information technology companies or companies of other industries, experienced lecturers in the field of information technologies of higher education institutions, information security specialists, experienced programme developers and programmers, IT system architects, etc., who provide students with content that is constantly relevant to the realities of the field for the acquisition of knowledge and skills, ensuring the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study programme.

3.4.2. Analysis and assessment of the changes to the composition of the teaching staff over the reporting period and their impact on the study quality.

Comparing the qualifications of the academic staff involved in the SP during the previous accreditation period (2011/2012) with the current qualifications (2022/2023), the situation has changed slightly - the number of lecturers in the SP has decreased from 24 to 18, the number of full-time lecturers has decreased from 12 to 7, and the number of guest lecturers - from 12 to 11.

Currently, three associate professors are involved in the implementation of the SP, two of them with a doctoral degree or currently studying at the doctorate level. Four lecturers with a master's degree and professional experience in the branch corresponding to the study course are employed as lecturers.

Among the guest lecturers, three have a doctoral degree or are studying for a doctoral degree, and eight have a master's degree and professional experience in the industry.

In total, 18 academic staff members are involved in the implementation of the SP, of which seven

are College employees and 11 are guest lecturers.

This trend implies that the SP has a close relation to the realities of the IT field, as the academic staff is not only academically educated in the areas relevant to the study course, but also has the professional IT experience, and provides students with knowledge and skills relevant to the industry which is an essential cornerstone of the professional higher education implemented in the College.

See Annex 37 for the comparison of the academic staff involved in the implementation of the study program.

3.4.3. Information on the number of the scientific publications of the academic staff members, involved in the implementation of doctoral study programme, as published during the reporting period by listing the most significant publications published in Scopus or WoS CC indexed journals. As for the social sciences, humanitarian sciences, and the science of art, the scientific publications published in ERIH+ indexed journals or peer-reviewed monographs may be additionally specified. Information on the teaching staff included in the database of experts of the Latvian Council of Science in the relevant field of science (total number, name of the lecturer, field of science in which the teaching staff has the status of an expert and expiration date of the Latvian Council of Science expert) (if applicable).

3.4.4. Information on the participation of the academic staff, involved in the implementation of the doctoral study programme, in scientific projects as project managers or prime contractors/ subproject managers/ leading researchers by specifying the name of the relevant project, as well as the source and the amount of the funding. Provide information on the reporting period (if applicable).

3.4.5. Assessment of the cooperation between the teaching staff members by specifying the mechanisms used to promote the cooperation and ensure the interrelation between the study programme and study courses/ modules. Specify also the proportion of the number of the students and the teaching staff within the study programme (at the moment of the submission of the Self-Assessment Report).

The implementation of the SP ensures proportionality between the academic staff of the professional and the academic environment, thus creating a well-balanced staff of both academic and IT backgrounds, which contributes to the achievement of the aim and the outcomes set for the SP.

The cooperation of the academic staff is formed through methodological committee meetings, individual discussions with the director of the SP, discussions with other lecturers, and joint meetings of the College lecturers where various issues in the College, higher education and

professional field are discussed.

SP lecturers cooperate in implementing and updating the content of the study course, coordinating topics to avoid duplication. The lecturers also collaborate within the research groups, offering ideas for sample themes of the qualification works, SP improvement, or College development. At the same time, the lecturers are jointly involved in developing extra-curricular activities for students, for example, providing student study trips to employers (often to their own workplace) or engaging industry guest lecturers in a Business Forum, creative workshop, or a guest lecture on some branch-related topic.

The academic staff is also represented on the Council, in various project work groups, and in the activities that promote international relations.

On the initiative of the academic staff, a discussion and ideas exchange forum has been created in the Moodle course "AC Administration".

Comparing the total number of students in the SP with the number of academic staff involved in the implementation of the SP, the ratio of students to academic staff at the time of submitting the self-assessment report is 177 to 18, which makes 9,83.

Annexes

III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme		
Sample of the diploma and its supplement to be issued for completing the study programme	Annex_27_Sample_Diploma_and_supplement_translation_IT.zip	27_pielikums_diploma_un_pielikuma_paraugs_IT.zip
For academic study programmes - Opinion of the Council of Higher Education in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (if applicable)		
Compliance of the joint study programme with the provisions of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (table) (if applicable)		
Statistics on the students in the reporting period	Annex_28_Statistics_on_Students_of_the_SP_IT.docx (1).pdf	28_pielikums_Statistika_par_SP_studejosajiem_IT.docx.pdf
III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof		
Compliance with the study programme with the State Education Standard	Annex_30_Compliance_of_the_SP_with_State_Education_Standard_IT.pdf	30_pielikums_SP_atbilstiba_valsts_izglitiba_standartam_IT.pdf
Compliance of the qualification to be acquired upon completion of the study programme with the professional standard or the requirements for professional qualification (if applicable)	Annex_31_Mapping_qualification_compliance_with_professional_standard_IT.xlsx.xlsx	31_pielikums_Kvalifikacijas_atbilstiba_profesiju_standartam_kartejums_IT (2).xlsx
Compliance of the study programme with the specific regulatory framework applicable to the relevant field (if applicable)		
Mapping of the study courses/ modules for the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study programme	Annex_32_Mapping_Learning_Outcomes_of_Study_Courses_IT.xlsx	32_pielikums_Studiju_kursu_studiju_rezultatu_kartejums_IT.xlsx
The curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme)	Annex_33_Study_Programme_Plan_IT.pdf	33_pielikums_Studiju_programmas_plans_IT.pdf
Descriptions of the study courses/ modules	Annex_34_Study_Course_Description_IT (1).zip	34_pielikums_Studiju_kursu_apraksti_IT_pdf (5).zip
Description of the organisation of the internship of the students (if applicable)	Annex_35_Organization_of_Internship.pdf	35_pielikums_Studejoso_prakses_organizacijas_apraksts.pdf
III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.4. Teaching Staff		
Confirmation that the academic staff of the doctoral study programme includes not less than five doctors, of which at least three are experts approved by the Latvian Council of Science in the branch or sub-branch of science in which the study programme intends to award a scientific degree (if applicable)		
Confirmation that the academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements specified in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (if applicable)		