Expert group joint opinion

Evaluation Procedure: Assessment of Study Field

Higher Education Institution: University of Liepāja

Study field: Arts

Experts:
1. Daina Teters (Chair of the Experts Group)
2. Rene Maurin (Secretary of the Experts Group)
3. John Butler
4. Astra Irmeja-Šēfere (Employers' Confederation of Latvia)
5. Kristaps Opincāns (Student Union of Latvia)

Summary of the Assessment of the Study Field and the Relevant Study Programmes

The importance of Liepāja University (hereinafter referred to as LiepU) as the largest university in Kurzeme is not limited to the organisation of studies and research; as a promoter of culture, LiepU plays an extensive role in shaping the mindset and identity in this part of Latvia, as well as in the public sector of Kurzeme. The axis around which the process above is formed is LiepU's Humanities and Arts. This applies to compliance with LiepU's development goals and the arts sector.

"Arts," one of the eight fields of study of LiepU, is one of the most successful fields of study at this institution due to many factors, such as

its unique focus on contemporary art and their combination, various performative practices and creative technologies;

the broad spectrum of art varieties covered by studies at three qualification levels;

its pronounced interdisciplinary orientation is fostered by the fact that almost all faculties of LiepU are involved in broad, interconnected approaches to Arts and the up-to-dateness of the "Arts" study programmes, which thus meet the changing needs of professional work.

The above orientation of the "Arts" study field mainly applies to three programmes - Academic Bachelor study programme "New Media Art and Design"(43213)(hereinafter referred to as LiepU) (all programmes retain their full name throughout the evaluation text), Academic Master study programme"New Media and Audiovisual Art" (45213) (joint with RISEBA University of Applied Sciences), and Doctoral study programme "Media Art and Creative Technologies" (51213) (joint with RISEBA University of Applied Sciences), which conceptually form a unified whole - some backbone of the "Arts" study field.

But there is also a fourth study programme in the "Arts" study field, the Academic Bachelor study programme"Contemporary Performing Arts" (43212), which can be evaluated as thematically standing somewhat apart compared to the previous three. Most likely, this is related to the fact that there were particular and pragmatic goals for its creation. If the first three programmes have a precise orientation, allowing The Review Team (RT) to assess their strengths and weaknesses, then the same cannot be said to the same extent about the fourth programme. The director of the Academic Bachelor study programme"Contemporary Performing Arts" should define with the leaders of the study field the desired result of the programme and accordingly mark its use in the nearest future.

As for the doctoral study programme "Media Art and Creative Technologies" (51213), it content-wise corresponds to Bachelor's and Master's "Arts" programmes and forms a single whole with them, united by the same leitmotif and distinguished only by different levels of complexity. As such, this programme could be evaluated as a logical and necessary conclusion of the "Arts" study field of LiepU. However, as the doctoral study programme "Media Art and Creative Technologies" (51213) was licensed only two years ago (licensed on 17.03.2021, licence number 2021/01K), it still is undergoing approbation, which puts it in a relatively weak position in terms of quality evidence: LiepU does not yet have a doctoral council in "Arts," it does not yet have graduates and demonstrably defended postgraduate theses. It still has a study programme to polish. Despite the mentioned shortcomings, RT believes that the doctoral programme "Media Art and Creative Technologies" (51213) is a necessary and irreplaceable part of LiepU's "Arts" study field. In the future, the doctoral study programme "Media Art and Creative Technologies" (51213) should become a platform that relates the main research lines proposed by all involved in the "Arts" study field. At the moment, as there are too many research directions driven by divergent individual interests, the coherence of the new research lines is yet questionable, and the research landscape is somewhat fragmented.

That "Arts" will be successful is guaranteed by the qualification of teaching staff involved in

implementing this study field: the study programmes are implemented by scientifically and artistically qualified faculty members, there is no concern about staff age profile, and the study field has a good regeneration of young teaching staff. The data presented on outputs over six years demonstrates the conformity of publications of teaching staff with the requirements established by law. True, this pertains to quantitative rather than qualitative indicators. Since the publication's focus is mainly national, the low volume of internationally cited and included publications in the databases (Web of Science, SCOPUS) significantly limits the overall impact on the scientific discipline. To rectify this weakness, increasing the "added value" of research will be necessary to make a more substantial impact and tackle more challenging problems of current interest. Thus, better international visibility will be gained, which is especially important for the doctoral programme and the whole study field due to the small number of international students.

Regarding study and research infrastructure, the Faculty of Humanities and Arts of LiepU has very good study and creative work conditions. LiepU students are guaranteed a well-equipped library, workshops, and laboratories for creative work. Apart from all that, an essential role in this regard is played by the location of the Faculty of Humanities and Arts of LiepU, separately from the main building of the university, thus concentrating all "Arts" study, research, and artistic organisations in one place and organically combining studies, research, and artistic activities. This makes LiepU "Arts House" (Liepāja, Kūrmājas pr. 13) an excellent learning and teaching resource and a student-focused approach to learning.

Taking into account the overall assessment, RT recommends accrediting LiepU's study field "Arts" and three of its programs - the Academic Bachelor study programme "New Media Art and Design"(43213), the Academic Master study programme "New Media and Audiovisual Art" (45213) (joint with RISEBA University of Applied Sciences) and Doctoral study programme "Media Art and Creative Technologies" (51213) (joint with RISEBA University of Applied Sciences) while pointing out its less successful sides.

Since it is difficult to get a complete impression of the programmes when evaluating the "Arts" study field according to the set criteria, RT considers it necessary to emphasise that in RT's view, the Academic Bachelor study programme "New Media Art and Design" (43213) should be the most highly rated, as programme demonstrates significant and positive differences with other study programmes within the "Arts" study field in LiepU regarding overall study experience, curriculum, and students satisfaction. Accordingly, the programme can be evaluated as very good.

At RT's discretion, new licensing is recommended for the Academic Bachelor study programme "Contemporary Performing Arts" (43212) to clarify the programme's purpose matched with an appropriate programme architecture.

I - Assessment of the Study Field

I - Assessment of the Study Field

1.1 Management of the Study Field

Analysis

1.1.1.

The interconnection of the study programmes included in the study field ''Art'' is clear and logical as it attempts to connect several aspects of art production and creation spanning over all three degrees of higher education. The BA level offers a visual arts and performative arts programme - those are rarely hosted by same institutions while the MA and PhD are leaning toward visual and interdisciplinary art. Covering such a wide field has its challenges – those will be accessed throughout this report, however, LiepU manages to keep those programms interconnected.

The RT received a comprehensive, slightly repetitive, and too descriptive SAR, which outlined the Mission, Vision, and Objectives of LiepU. The SAR (p.5) included the University Development Strategy 2016 – 20 (https://www.liepu.lv/uploads/%C4%80SD/ERASMUS%20dokumenti/Liepaja_University_Development _Strategy_Summary_2016-2023_25.01.2021.pdf), which through communications between the Ministry of Science, LiepU Senate on 25.01.21 has extended the Development Plan to December 2023. As far as the RT could evidence, the Development Plan has not been adjusted, developed from the original 2016 version. This presented the RT with a slightly outdated view of the reviewed study programmes in relation to the strategic development of the LiepU.

Notwithstanding this, the RT believes the reviewed study programmes: Academic Bachelor study programme "New Media Art and Design"(43213), Academic Bachelor study programme "Contemporary Performing Arts" (43212), Academic Master study programme "New Media and Audiovisual Art" (45213) (joint with RISEBA University of Applied Sciences), Doctoral study programme "Media Art and Creative Technologies" (51213) (joint with RISEBA University of Applied Sciences) have been developed in response to (SAR point 2.1., pp.16-34):
Priority 4 of the Smart Specialisation Strategy – 'Development of modern and up-to-date ICT systems in the private and public sectors;
Education Development Guidelines 2021-27;
Latvian Sustainable Development 2030;
Liepaja Sustainable Development Strategy 2030;
Liepaja 2027, European Capital of Culture (ECC) programme;
NDP 2027;
STEM programmes.

During the assessment visit, representatives informed the RT of the employers, the professional organisations, and the alumni they met that the BA & MA programmes are current and meet the changing needs of the professional world, and the high value of the LiepU and the programmes to the communities of Liepaja and the region.

1.1.2.

The SAR (point 2.1.2., pp. 23-28) included a SWOT analysis of the study field and identified strengths the RT agrees with, including the uniqueness of the programmes; ability to bring in current trends in European education, the potential to consolidate resources with the joint programmes; close collaboration with the professional organisations; good IT resources and technical support. The RT concurs with most of the weaknesses/threats the SWOT exercise identified and has made recommendations in this section of the report to help address them. A number of the weaknesses relate to or heavily rely on funding, and it will be up to LiepU and the Faculty to strategize and prioritise these issues. Those related to the new partner institution, RISEBA, must be addressed to make the collaboration work.

The RT received clear evidence (see annex 111 for joint programmes Academic Masters programme "New Media and Audiovisual Art" (45213) and annex 111 3.1.5. DR Doctoral study programme "Media Art and Creative Technologies" (51213) describing the joint QMS procedures for these two awards.

The RT entirely agrees with the SWOT that there is a need to improve the Virtual Learning Environment (hereinafter referred to as VLE) Moodle as it is not very developed and frequently not used by students and teachers; it is currently more used as a storage/database, not a proper

learning environment. The RT found that two other VLE platforms (Luis & Forum) were being used by different programmes and found very good practice (more interactive, good inter-dialogue) in the Forum platform by the MA New Media & Audio-visual Art programme (meeting with students, alumni and Learning Management presentation of Moodle). The RT also prioritises the need for more designated studio/creative production spaces to support individual and collaborative/interdisciplinary practices and increase the professionalisation of the practice (SAR, meetings with students and alumni, RT tour of the resources). The students of the joint Academic Masters programme "New Media and Audiovisual Art" (45213) identified logistical (e.g., accommodation) and academic issues that the RT believes need to be addressed.

LiepU has mostly successfully and efficiently integrated the information addressed in the SWOT analysis into the development planning documents. However the degree of this varies again in respect of the programme. Integrating and addressing the SWOT analysis is not very efficient in regard to the joint doctoral programmed and the Contemporary Performing arts program as those programmes would benefit from a closer and non-routine assessment.

1.1.3.

The implementation of the study programme is mainly ensured by the Faculty of Humanities and Arts (FHA) of LiepU Dean and the head of the study programme, the senior secretary, the records secretary, the information officer, the programme heads and the staff of the Art Research Laboratory (MPLab), where the practical lessons take place about which RT was able to verify during the visit to LiepU.

The management of the field of study is carried out in accordance with the documents approved by the LiepU Senate, which regulate the relations between the management, academic staff, and students, based on democratic principles, for example:
Regulations on Undergraduate and Postgraduate Studies.
LiepU Code of Academic Integrity.
Regulations on Final Examinations, National Examinations, and National Final Examinations. 4. Regulations on the Duties and Rights of Teaching Staff and Students.
Regulations on Course/Module Examinations.
LiepU Internal Regulations for Students.
LiepU Internal Regulations for Staff.
LiepU Quality Management System (hereinafter referred to as QMS) includes procedures about the study process, which clearly define the relationships between administrative, academic staff, and students (SAR, point 2.1.3., pp. 28-30)

The SAR and the Quality Manual outline the management structure of the study field. Through discussions with the Faculty Management, the Programme Directors, and the teaching staff, it was apparent to the RT that there are clear lines of communication to support the study programmes. This was also endorsed through the meeting with administrative and technical staff.

The support provided by the administrative and technical staff ensures all the needs of the study programs corresponding to the study field as it was observed by the RT during the meetings with students and staff.

Although the RT identified the need for more precise direction from the LiepU and FAHC senior management, the team experienced strong cohesion and management between the Study Field Director, the Programme Directors, and the teaching staff. The RT received clear evidence through

the meetings with students, alumni, and teachers that the administrative and technical staff ensures all the needs of the study programmes corresponding to the study field.

1.1.4.

The admission rules for Bachelor, Masters and Doctoral degrees and the admission of students with professional experience and prior formal and non-formal education are clearly to be found on the LiepU website, with application forms also to be found on the website.

The LiepU QMS includes a description of the admission process for new students and defines the responsibilities and actions of the applicants and the administrative staff (https://www.liepu.lv/uploads/dokumenti/zinojumi/Studiju%20virziens_Makslas_2020._2021.st.g._ML.pdf SAR (point 1.9, pp. 40-46) The students and alumni at their meetings with the RT, were clear and unanimous that the process and procedures were fair and rigorous. The QMS also sets clear guidelines for recognising prior learning (both formal and non-formal) and the transfer of students from another university.

Both BAs: "New Media Art and Design"(43213) and "Contemporary Performing Arts" (43212), are distinct, multi-disciplinary programmes that require advanced digital skills; the RT suggests the leaders consider introducing a comprehensive screening of candidates' skills at application for the programmes. This would help identify the courses students would need to attend early in their study period and help avoid student frustration expressed at the meeting with them at taking courses they already have the skills for.

1.1.5.

Descriptions of study modules and courses with requirements are published on Moodle and in personal profiles in the LAIS database. Descriptions of the study courses and modules included in the LiepU field of study "Art" are available in point 3.2.1 (pp. 97-98) of the self-assessment reports according to study programmes – (Appendix "Description of the study courses/modules").
The regulations of the commission for the recognition of competencies acquired outside formal education or through professional experience and study results achieved in prior education of the LiepU are available in electronic format at: https://www.liepu.lv/uploads/dokumenti/Nolikums%20par%20ieprieks.izglit._vai_profes.pieredze_sas niegtu_studiju_rezultatu_atzisanu.pdf

The RT found that the methods, modes, and principles of assessment are clearly defined. The expected learning outcomes are clearly stated in the module course descriptors and are at the appropriate level for the courses. The RT also found both BA "New Media Art and Design"(43213) and MA "New Media and Audiovisual Art" (45213) students unanimously agreed they fully understood the learning outcomes/competencies they were developing across the modules of their programmes (meetings with students and alumni).

All BA & MA students fully understood the assessment criteria for the modules they studied, accepted their achievement level, and received regular support and oral feedback from lecturers (meetings with students and alumni).
At the Ph.D. Doctoral level, this is a new programme and the RT only met directly with and questioned one student. At the meeting with the Director and teachers of the Doctoral programme, they presented a clear outline of the assessment process and the defence of the final thesis, which is focused solely on the written thesis. It would be helpful for the Doctoral team to clarify the process

and required outcomes of the doctoral "practice-led" study as the student the RT met believed his practice would be presented and form an essential element of his 'defence.' It is necessary to define what "practice-led" means in relation to more usual "practice-based" doctoral programmes and establish a clear student awareness of the results, competences and tasks mandatory for successful graduation.

The relevance of assessment methods and procedures for achieving the aims of study programmes and the needs of students is generally well developed and is applied across all four programmes. However, because of different nature and degrees of programmes the assessment methods and procedure do not have the same effect in all instances. While they are appropriate and well functioning they show certain weaknesses in the case of joint programmes and the Contemporary Performing Arts programme that is undergoing cardinal changes.

1.1.6.

LiepU states in the SAR (2.1.6, pp. 33-34), "Labakas parvaldibas nodrosinasana Liepajas Universitate"/"Provision of Better Management at LiepU" (SAM Nr. 8.2.3.0/18/A/017) new regulations and procedures are being developed about academic honesty and ethical principles to be included in higher education. LiepU has commenced cooperation with the Ministry of Science and Education, Latvia University (LU), and other universities to create a common platform for cooperation on academic honesty. A Code of Academic Integrity at LiepU is available on its website https://www.liepu.lv/uploads/dokumenti/LiepU%20Akademiska%20godiguma%20kodekss.pdf

LiepU is currently using the plagiarism control system used by LU. Although this is a work in progress, LiepU Senate has approved Regulations on the Ethics Commission, which is available on their website. All final study papers are scrutinised using the inter-university plagiarism control system.

Conclusions on this set of criteria, by specifying strengths and weaknesses

Conclusions.

The management should be congratulated on the high student and teacher satisfaction with the LiepU and the programmes. Still, it is now essential that the faculty programmes managers and the staff take this opportunity to carefully monitor and evaluate their development. Three are new programmes introducing new dimensions (e.g., design), new collaborations, and a fourth programme that hasn't been recruited for five years. Student profiles and expectations are changing, as is the student demographic; student completion levels/dropout has been relatively high, and recruitment to some programmes has been consistently low. (SAR SWOT p.24) Studying joint courses with two institutions so far apart also creates its own logistical (e.g., accommodation) and academic issues; students commented on the significant shift in the learning experience, progressing from a BA to a joint Master' programme and the subsequent loss of the intense learning environment and the issues they were experiencing in accommodation in two cities. This period, especially with the shift in learning experience due to the pandemic, has placed additional pressure on the students academically and in areas of well-being. The RT, in discussion with the students, was made aware that there was no specialist staff to refer to concerning health, finance, or psychological issues, as they usually went to their tutor. The RT recommends the institution/faculty management address this issue.

Strengths.

1. LiepU applies a student-centred approach to learning.

2. The management has developed programmes that produce Intelligent and articulate students that are of an international standard and teachers across all BA, MA, and Doctoral level programmes, who were very positive and constructive in critically evaluating their programmes and communicating with the RT.

3. A strong link/collaboration with the professional world and the employers (meeting with the employers).

4. A strong learning environment – a 'family' community, particularly in the BA programmes, (meetings with students, alumni & teachers from BA & MA programmes).

5. The management and teaching staff have nurtured a well-developed collaborative nature of working; (meetings with students, alumni & teachers from BA & MA programmes).

6. All students from the BA & MA programmes believe they have received the broad range of skills to equip them for the workplace, including collaborative/team, interdisciplinary, and transferable ('can do') skills; (meetings with students, alumni from BA & MA programmes and the employers).

7. The BA & MA programmes are current and meet the changing needs of professional work, especially in the 'new media fields, reflected in the employment of the graduates in high-profile international companies across Europe (meetings with students & alumni from BA & MA programmes and the employers).

Weaknesses.

1. The internal QMS lacks clear guidance and procedures for staff and students.

2. Lack of designated studio/creative production spaces to support individual and collaborative/interdisciplinary practices and increase the professionalisation of the practice.

3. The VLE Moodle is not very developed and rarely used by students and teachers; it is currently more used as a storage/database, not an actual learning environment.

4. LiepU is not fully aware of and therefore has not solved the logistical (e.g., student accommodation) problem.

5. Staff with inappropriate qualifications and experience to support students and staff with well-being, financial, etc. issues.

6. Human Resources' lack of involvement in issues raised by the staff and student questionnaires.

1.2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System

Analysis

1.2.1.

The Quality Policy of LiepU is to "provide acquisition opportunities of qualitative and competitive on Latvia and international scale higher professional, academic education and life-long education based on research and necessary for the region, promoting development of Latvia national economy based on knowledge and professional competences and strengthening of creative , culture orientated society, taking into account the European standards and guidelines for quality assurance in European higher education space (ESG-2015)" (https://www.liepu.lv/uploads/ĀSD/ERASMUS%20dokumenti/Quality%20Manual.pdf). This policy is based on LiepU's Strategic Plan.

LiepU has developed and uses an internal QMS to ensure the quality of its programmes and the development of a quality culture (SAR, point 1.3., pp. 12-14). In support of this LiepU has produced a Quality Manual (mentioned above), the version which was presented to the RT runs to just over one

A4 page.

Responsibility.

LiepU management has made commitments to provide the necessary resources needed for the QMS's efficient activity and its improvement.

LiepU approves academic integrity and freedom, stands against academic fraud; supervises any intolerance and students or staff's discrimination.

All LiepU employees are responsible for implementation, support and development of the Quality Policy, procedures and improvement, they are responsible for the quality and get involved in quality provision.

Formulations of employees' responsibilities, rights and duties are written in job descriptions and procedures for all work functions affecting the quality of work.

Planning of QMS.

The order, in which the changes in processes and documentation are introduced, is stated in the Recordkeeping Instruction. Mechanisms for implementation of an efficient QMS provision;

analysis of outcomes of students and graduates' regular surveys;

compilation and analysis of employers and other social partners' opinions and suggestions,

Management Report considered in the Constitutional Assembly, o problem analysis in structural units.

Through its meetings with the key stakeholders and reading the SAR and Annexes provided, the RT found there was (a) a lack of currency in the material provided, (b) a lack of clarity in the description/objectives of the programmes to be reviewed, (c) lack of clarity in how the internal quality assurance process operates and who is responsible for managing, reviewing and developing it.

(a) nearly all the annexes provided for the RT were extensions of documents that have passed their operational date, with little or no future development policy, strategy added e.g. the LiepU Development Strategy 2016-20 [extended to 2023]; LiepU Research Activity Strategy 2015-20 [extended to 2023]; Action Plan of LiepU Academic Staff Development 2018-22; the Training Plan of LiepU Management Staff 2018-21

(b) in talking with the programme directors, students, and teachers there was agreement that there could be greater clarity in the objectives of the programmes, to help student understanding and the recruitment of future students,

(c) it is clear to the RT that the faculty and programmes have developed the QMS and the elements that form part of this procedure, but in reading the SAR on the Management Structure (SAR, points 1.2., 1.3. pp.7-13) and the terms of reference of the senior Committees/Boards Quality Assurance isn't mentioned. The only clear reference to the responsibility for quality is (SAR, point 1.3, pp.12-13) which states "All LiepU employees are responsible for implementation, support and development of the quality policy, procedure and management system and they take responsibility for the quality and get involved in quality provision." The SAR also states (p.16) "LiepU Council of Study Direction monitors the study direction and is responsible for the content and quality of the study programmes' study direction. In this Council it is compulsory to have a representative of the employers. Council of Study Direction is responsible for: "(i) to organise and monitor the development of study programmes, to submit study programmes in the Faculty Council; (ii) to coordinate and promote interdisciplinarity and cooperation with employers; (iii) to promote research-based studies; (iv) to supervise the implementation of study programmes; (v) to review and accept the self-assessment report of the study direction and submit it to the Faculty Council; (vi) to evaluate problems of the study process and to prepare proposals for the problem solving". But in the SAR (point 2.1.3., pp.28-29) it doesn't explicitly mention quality as a responsibility of the Faculty Council.

It would have been invaluable in endorsing the internal quality process if the RT had received

translated copies of these reports.

The RT believes the LiepU Senior Management team of the faculty could give more clear guidance to the programme staff and the students through publishing a more comprehensive Quality Manual, outlining the policy, expectations, specific requirements and the process, to the Programme Directors, teaching staff, students and employers on the faculty internal quality management practices, process and required levels of achievement (clear qualitative and quantitative metrics).

1.2.2.

LiepU carries out two forms of the questionnaire, one from the University, which is more generic, and the second which is a more frequent course evaluation questionnaire. The University struggles to get the students to answer surveys as the students don't see the value of these (meeting with students). As part of the internal QA process, there is a need expressed by all students to improve the value and effectiveness of the University student questionnaires, asking appropriate questions and better informing students of the outcomes of this process (meetings with students and alumni). On the other hand, the programme leaders, and teachers need to improve the dissemination mechanisms regarding the communication of responses to issues raised in the programme questionnaires and the changes/impact of these results, as the students stated during the meeting that they don't receive formal feedback regarding surveys results or changes that are implemented as a result of completing their questionnaire surveys.

The RT found that although there is a strong link between the programmes and the professional world and employers, this could be strengthened with a more formal (evidenced) process of 'regularly' critically reviewing the programmes (meeting with the employers/professional organisations).

Similarly, the alumni, strongly identified with the LiepU and were very positive about the quality of the programmes they studied. Still, they would welcome increased engagement with them to contribute to the development of them (meeting with the alumni).

The RT believes that a clear and comprehensive QMS process incorporated into a manual would be extremely valuable to all stakeholders (students, alumni, teachers, management, and employers) in helping them understand the value of the quality assurance and enhancement process and their role in the development of a quality culture. This will result in a greater response rate, its effectiveness and strengthen their relationships, but this must be backed up by a more transparent and effective feedback process, demonstrating the impact and value of the process.

1.2.3.

The LiepU Internal Regulations, available online https://www.liepu.lv/uploads/dokumenti/studentiem/LiepU%20ieksejas%20kartibas%20noteikumi%2 0studejosajiem.pdf, establish the student's rights to submit proposals to management on all matters concerning their activities and should receive a response within a fixed time-period. The SAR (point 2.2.3., pp.39-40) cited some examples of responses to student complaints. At the meeting with students, the RT was informed that the Programme Directors work very closely with the students, respond to issues raised through the questionnaires, and feel they could take any issue/problems directly to their tutors.

The RT found that the students at programme level were fully aware of and satisfied with the complaints and suggestions process and found it to be effective.

1.2.4.

LiepU has a regular system of gathering statistical data on the 1st of October each year on the number of students, number of students graduating, and number of teachers 'Arts' field of study: Analysis of student, graduate, and employer survey results (Annex II 2.2.4).

The mechanism for obtaining and providing feedback, including from students, graduates and employers, is in place and focused on the improvement of the study field, however it is not well documented and presented in SAR. The University and programmes analyse the annual surveys of the students, graduates, and employers, presented as a summary of the reporting period (SAR, Annex II 2.2.4). The survey results are more descriptive than statistical, which is helpful for the programmes. Still, the internal quality process would benefit if the analysis could also identify the overall level of satisfaction/issues and identify trends and risks. There is no indication of the response rate, so the percentages presented don't represent a clear picture of the total graduates. The analysis states the programme management conducts an annual graduate survey (since 2010) with 19 responses (below 20%) and then gives statistics on those student occupations, which clearly shows the students' employability. The employer survey lists a broad spectrum of organisations and companies, but quantitative and qualitative data is minimal and could be developed. The process has led to actions being implemented to resolve issues raised by the key stakeholders.

The RT strongly recommends LiepU find ways to increase the response rate of its surveys to be able to present a more representative qualitative and quantitative analysis of its cohorts, and to provide it with more informative material for risk analysis.

1.2.5.

Art Study programmes have gone through significant changes over this evaluation period. "Descriptions of study courses/modules will be entered into the electronic system after the completion of the evaluation/accreditation process of the study course, including changes based on expert recommendations" (SAR, point 2.1.5., p.32). This will need to be completed as early as possible.

All the stakeholders the RT met agreed with the SAR (SWOT analysis, point 2.1.2., pp. 23-28) that there is an urgent need to improve the public-facing online marketing/promotional study field and programme material that is fit for purpose to demonstrate the uniqueness of the programmes, to better describe the objectives of the programmes and study experience for better and increased recruitment of students and appropriate staff (meetings with Field Directors, Programme Directors, students, and alumni).

However, there are discrepancies in the VIIS system, as old programme titles are still featured in the information system. For example, 51213 "Jauno mediju māksla" Lic.no 04043-67 and 43212 "Aktiermāksla" Lic.no 43-L. VIIS administration should be notified about changes in programme titles so that the correct ones are represented in their system. On the webpage, there is no information available for the study programme "Contemporary performing arts." There is also clarification regarding the tuition fee for the doctoral study programme as in SAR 3.3.3 of "Media Arts and Creative Technologies," it is pointed out that the tuition fee is EUR 4240, while at the homepage (https://liepu.lv/lv/doktorantura) tuition fee stated is EUR 3800. While on the English webpage (https://www.liepu.lv/en/111/new-media-art) tuition fee stated is EUR 5300. Also, information about implementation language is misleading - (https://www.liepu.lv/en/121/faculty-of-humanities-and-arts#). Here, it is noted that the doctoral

study programme and masters programme "New Media and Audiovisual Art" are implemented in both Latvian and English, while both study programmes are accredited only for instruction in English.

The RT believes this information must be immediately updated once this review process has been completed to avoid any confusion for existing students and to present an actual learning experience for student recruitment.

Conclusions on this set of criteria, by specifying strengths and weaknesses

Conclusions.

LiepU has adopted a QMS system to ensure the quality of its arts programmes and is committed to their development and improvement. It has integrated key quality assurance elements into the process, such as survey questionnaires for the students and teaching staff, seeking employers and professional organisations (SAR, point 1.3., pp.12-13). The RT found little evidence of the enhancement dimension of the process, the essential findings and the actions taken to address these, and how these responses were fed back to the stakeholders ('closing the loop').

The procedures of good QMS practices are in place, however not all parties involved are sufficiently informed and included in them. Another challenge is the the implementation of the QMS with joint programmes and Contemporary Performing Arts programme that is undergoing radical changes.

The RT believes that a clear and comprehensive QMS process incorporated into a manual would be extremely valuable to all stakeholders (students, alumni, teachers, management, and employers) in helping them understand the value of the quality assurance and enhancement process and their role in the development of a quality culture. This will result in a greater response rate, its effectiveness and strengthen their relationships, but this must be backed up by a more transparent and effective feedback process, demonstrating the impact and value of the process.

Strengths.

1. The adopted QMS system, although not fully described in a manual, ensures the quality of its arts programmes.
2. The evaluation questionnaires/surveys to the key stakeholders (students, teachers, employers).
3. Programme Directors work closely with the students and respond to issues raised through the questionnaires (meetings with students and Programme Directors).

Weaknesses.

1. Lack of clear guidance by the Senior Management team of the FHA through the Quality Manual, (currently one page), not fully presenting the policy, expectations and specific requirements; and the assurance process to the Programme Directors on the faculty internal quality management practice and process and required levels of achievement (clear qualitative and quantitative metrics).
2. The student questionnaires, not asking appropriate questions and better-informing students of the outcomes of this process.
3. The public-facing, marketing/promotional material/website for the study field and programme, that isn't fit for purpose to clearly demonstrate the uniqueness of the programmes, to better describe the objectives of the programmes and the student study experience.

Assessment of the requirement [1]

1   R1 - Pursuant to Section 5, Paragraph 2.1 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions, the higher education institution/ college shall ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study field whilst implementing its internal quality assurance system:

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

LiepU has several mechanisms for study quality improvement, including the Quality Management System (QMS) and the questionnaires/surveys from key stakeholders, procedures for evaluating teaching staff and updating study programmes (SAR, point 1.4., pp.13-16 & Annex II).
However, lack of clear guidance by the Senior Management team of the FHA through the Quality Manual (currently one page), not fully presenting the policy, expectations, and specific requirements; and the assurance process to the Programme Directors on the faculty internal quality management practice and procedure and required levels of achievement (clear qualitative and quantitative metrics), the implementation of the Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) is not fully embedded.

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

LiepU maintains a QMS, supported by a Quality Manual (Annex Quality Manual.pdf) that includes a strategy for quality assurance and development of the study programmes with clearly defined regulations and procedures.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

LiepU has a regular system of gathering statistical data on the 1st October each year, on the number of students, number of students graduating and number of teachers. The LiepU and programmes carry out analysis of the annual surveys of the students, graduates and employers, which was presented as a summary of the reporting period (SAR, Annex II 2.2.4). Although legally compliant, in the RT's opinion the internal quality process would benefit if the analysis could also identify the overall level of satisfaction/issues and identify trends and risks. It would have benefited the RT to have been presented with an example of a translated Programme Annual Report presenting the analysis of the surveys and the response and proposed actions from the Faculty Council.

4   1.3 - The criteria, conditions, and procedures for the evaluation of students' results, which enable reassurance of the achievement of the intended learning outcomes, have been developed and published.

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

LiepU has the management structure, committees/councils and procedures in place to ensure the continuous development and improvement of the study fields, but as recommended by the RT, the Faculty needs to explicitly describe this in the Quality Manual and in the Terms of Reference of the responsible committees/councils.

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

The mechanisms for the development and internal approval of the study programmes, along with monitoring and periodically reviewing them (QMS procedure S-6-I_ENG Development and licensing of study programmes). Although legally compliant, in the RT's opinion the faculty should give more clear guidance, in the form of a more comprehensive Quality Manual, outlining the policy, expectations, specific requirements and the assurance process.

6 1.5 - The higher education institution/ college ensures the collection and analysis of the information on the study achievements of the students, employment of the graduates, satisfaction of the students with the study programme, efficiency of the work of the academic staff, the study funds available and the disbursements thereof, as well as the key performance indicators of the higher education institution/ college.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The evaluation of study results takes place in accordance with the "Rules on examinations of a study course/module" (approved in the Senate meeting on 23rd May 2022, protocol no. 15. This was endorsed by all the BA, MA & PhD students the RT met, who unanimously agreed they fully understood the learning outcomes/competences they were achieving across the modules and fully understood the assessment criteria for the modules they studied and were clear and accepted their level of achievement (meetings with students and alumni).

7 1.6 - The higher education institution/ college ensures continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study field whilst implementing its quality assurance systems.

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

LiepU Human Resources Development Plan 2018-2023 (EU Social Fund project No 8.2.2.0/18/I/003) in which the current situation is assessed, outlines the goals of the human resources management processes, the tasks to be executed, and results achieved are determined. This is complemented by the Action Plan of LiepU Academic Staff Development 2018-2023 (mentioned above), which aims to increase the academic staff's competencies and skills.

1.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Field

Analysis

1.3.1.

LiepU has established a system for determining and redistribution the financial support required for the implementation of the study field as described on page 46 (point 2.3.1., pp. 41-47) of SAR as follows "The finance and HR manager ensures that the people preparing the budget act in accordance with the 'Planning, Execution, and Control of the LiepU Main Budget' guidelines during the budget planning and execution. The budget planning takes place in accordance with QMS procedure A-2-1, 'Main Budget Planning,' and the budget execution and control, in accordance with procedure A-2-2, 'Execution and Control of the Main Budget.' The budget breaks down incoming and outgoing funds by main types of expenses. The funding analysis is carried out annually, and the Council approves it." Additional mechanisms ensuring just and realistic distribution of financial support are thoroughly described in the SAR and contain the necessary measures to determine and redistribute the financial means.

The redistribution is partially based on fixed national tuition and study fees legislation. According to page 44 of SAR (mentioned above), planning expenses are done jointly with the other field of study. It is unclear if this is referred to other faculties or programs in the same study field. According to

page 46 of SAR (mentioned above), a budget commission conducts the distribution among faculties and includes communication and discourse with the programme directors.

Financial support for scientific research and/or artistic creation is governed by several Cabinet Regulations that mostly expire in the year 2022. Academic staff applications are reviewed and approved by the faculty council. According to the Liepāja University Student Research Project Competition Regulations, students have access to funding for scientific and creative activities. The applicant offered a brief report of creative and scientific activity in the form of a table (document 49035) that tracks the activity from 2014 to 2021 and shows a growing trend in the number of creative works and publications of the academic staff. In the conversation with the academic staff, the RT found out that there is sufficient support for their extracurricular research leading to overall satisfaction in this matter that appears to be regulated and conducted effectively.

1.3.2.

Studies in the field of media and arts are notorious for their demanding nature regarding material and technical support and resources. LiepU attempts to shape its programmes as following the newest contemporary trends – this is evident even from the titles of the study programmes. Moreso, it features a doctoral programme focusing on emerging creative technologies. The management of LiepU is well aware of this and has conducted successful efforts to ensure most of the technology is needed while constantly seeking to improve. The art study programme equipment is above average. The students are generally happy with the equipment and material support (RT tour of the resources and meeting with students and alumni). Among the most recent acquisitions are 3D printers and several updates.

The library is well-equipped with academic sources and literature, and the system has been fully automated since 1992. In the Libraries' information system, ALISE automatised librarian processes such as the processing of bibliographic data, acquisition, registration of uSARs, handing out/receiving and ordering/booking information units, remote access to WebPPAC, mobile WebPAC, etc. More than 60% of the informational resources found in the reading room of the Art Research Laboratory of LiepU are in English, providing an informational base for students of higher-level joint study programmes that are realised in English. If there are no necessary information resources at the Library's disposal, there are offered services for Interlibrary Loan (ILL) and International Interlibrary Loan (IILL). Successful cooperation has been established with the document delivery service SUBITO, the National Library of Latvia, etc. Latvian and foreign libraries (SAR, point 2.3.3., pp.51-54).

However, the study of arts and media also requires several non-written media sources – this aspect of material conditions the LiepU should pay special attention to and try to offer students access and curation of as many contemporary media sources as possible, whether those are paid or free. Those can come as subscriptions to online portals, streaming platforms, archives, etc.

The weaker aspect of material resources presents the spaces for art practice studies (SAR SWOT analysis, point 2.1.2., pp.23-28 and discussion with students and alumni)) that, in some parts, require sufficient space or privacy. The average space size for art students is no different than that of other, spatially less demanding fields, – 7 square metres per student. Staff and students mention this shortcoming while being aware the management is doing what is possible in given circumstances. Providing art students with studios that are accessible beyond conventional working hours is, however, of the highest importance as students rarely privately possess such spaces. While being aware of the demanding nature of acquiring new spaces, the RT recognises a clear possibility for improvement in this aspect.

1.3.3.

A unified system and procedures have been established to improve and purchase material, methodological, informative, etc. provisions.

The library's collection is acquired in accordance with the necessities of study programmes, in cooperation with the teaching staff and students. In accordance with LiepU QAS procedure "A-10-II Acquisition of the Library's collection", the teaching staff shall fill out the "Request for the collection acquisition to the Department of Acquisition and Processing of LiepU Library."

The staff responsible for support, maintenance, and acquisition reported overall satisfaction with management's understanding and support in acquisitions, describing them as open to suggestions and proactive. Their past efforts are proven by obtaining several external funding sources such as EEA/Norway grant. LiepU will do so also in the future and already contemplates their connection and opportunities with the future event of Liepāja ECC 2027.

The expenses for purchasing books, periodicals, and subscriptions to electronic databases are included in the overall main budget of LiepU. All study programmes are provided with study and research resources at the LiepU library. Overall, the cost structure is optimal and aligned with the development strategy. Yearly EUR 9000 (nine thousand euros) are allocated to obtaining new books for the LiepU library. The exact amount is allocated for obtaining periodicals, etc. Although the library resources can be described as well-equipped for a higher education institution of their scale, according to the information provided on the library tour during the on-site visit on January 24, 2023, less than 5 (five) % of the materials in the LiepU library are devoted to the specific field of study - i.e., arts, design, new media, etc. Although this form of resource is slowly declining and being replaced with digitally accessible resources, the staff admits that turning the available space into a browsing space can be viewed as another form of making the resources more interactive.

1.3.4.

The latest information and communication technologies are used for the implementation of the study programmes of the study field "Arts" - mobile video conference rooms, computer graphics rooms, computer classes, multimedia, Internet, e-learning environment Moodle, library, study subject methodology classrooms, laboratories with access to video conferencing equipment, interactive whiteboards, data projectors, document cameras, graphic projectors, and visual materials, internet connection are provided on p. 54 of SAR (point 2.3.3., pp.51-54). LiepU has done an excellent job adapting to Covid measures and assuring e-learning is facilitated productively.

LiepU uses three information systems – Alise library information system, E-learning environment Moodle and Latvian University Information System, LAIS. Despite this sounding redundant and confusing, the staff is assuring mirroring of the information that offers a choice of usage. The students reported this accurately and did not complain about how LiepU communicates with them via their information systems. Despite that, this is a suboptimal setup as it requires unnecessary bureaucratic engagement and workload for the academic and technical staff that could be used for more productive tasks.

In addition to using two systems, students reported the usage of their private email addresses for communication with the faculty. They testified they have no objection or problem with this; however, it should be mentioned that it is not the best practice as it can cause several privacy and safety issues.

1.3.5.

The selection of the teaching staff in the implementation of the study programmes is based on the Criteria for the Assessment of the Compliance of the Professional Qualification of the Academic Staff with the Taught Courses (Approved by the LiepU Study Council on 13.06.2005). The Faculty Council assesses the professional qualification of the academic staff, and the procedure is described

thoroughly in SAR (point 2.3.5., pp. 55-57).

How LiepU attracts competent and attractive academic staff is described in the document https://www.liepu.lv/lv/181/darba-iespejas (Only in Latvian)

If applicable at the given moment, the listing of vacancies on the above site states the requirements and competencies for the candidates, determined in accordance with the LiepU Regulations. The salary, application process, and deadlines are clearly listed, and more information is available with the Human Resources and Document Management Unit.

The requirements set for the teaching staff-applicant are determined in accordance with the LiepU Regulations on Elections in Academic Positions, where the person has a doctoral or master's degree in a relevant or related field of science, has research / creative work experience, has publications / creative work in a relevant or related field of science, the person has experience in developing or improving teaching materials, the person uses innovative teaching methods in the study process, the person has a good knowledge of English (at least at B1, B2, C1 level according to the Europass Self-assessment table), and the ability to use language skills in studies and methodological work; the person has good digital skills according to the Europass self-assessment table, as well as knowledge of new technologies.

The requirements for selecting foreign teaching staff and participation in the implementation of the study programme are specified in the LiepU Academic Staff Development Action Plan for 2018-2022. SAR p. 78 (point 2.5.3., pp.78-79) states that " (..) following mechanisms are used to attract foreign partners - the international relations department attracts new foreign organisations (universities, companies, etc.) by participating in international education exhibitions, international events abroad. Art teachers and staff actively use Erasmus+ mobility opportunities, which effectively attract new foreign organisations. LiepU actively uses Erasmus+ mobility grants, inviting foreign lecturers, artists, etc., representatives of the "Arts" field of study."

In discussion with academic staff, the RT found out they were delighted with the financial reimbursement and overall attitude toward them, making it an attractive work environment despite being of the national educational centre – Riga. However, the management of the study field feels there is not enough systematic motivation for hiring leading researchers in the field of arts and the formation of research working groups.

The RT is aware that motivation is often related to financial means; however, in the light of the absence of an updated Scientific Activity Strategy since 2020, we feel there is room for improvement in looking for a new strategy that will attempt to attract leading academic and artistic staff with means available or creative solutions suggested by the management and academic staff of the study field.

1.3.6.

The faculty organises the work of the study programme heads, and the faculty council is also heavily involved in its control and evaluation. The faculty council approves licensing and accreditation documents, annual study plans, study programme self-assessment reports, final thesis topics, supervisors, reviewers, etc. According to the SAR, some of these topics are discussed in the preparatory phase with different groups of academics (instructors in the field of study, instructors involved in the specific study programme, and groups of disciplines/sub-disciplines). The meetings of the faculty council and the teaching staff are recorded, and the recommendations made during the meetings form the basis for the decisions taken by the faculty council.

In 2018, 3 (three) medium-term planning documents were developed and aimed at the development of LiepU human resources to improve the quality of scientific and pedagogical activities of the teaching staff.

LiepU Human Resources Development Plan for 2018–2023 assesses the current situation, specific human resources management process goals, tasks to be performed, and results to be achieved.

LiepU Academic Staff Development Action Plan for 2018–2022 is a staff development and attraction action plan, defining and describing the planned academic staff competence improvement, development, and attraction measures.

LiepU Management Staff Training Plan for 2018–2021 defines and describes the planned management staff competence improvement measures. Objectives of the LiepU Management Staff Training Plan: Enhancing the competencies and skills of LiepU management staff for professional administration of management processes, a management team with a vision of a modern, competitive international university that understands global trends, a management team that can inspire students and employees for rapid and ambitious development.

However, the lack of specialists and salaries equivalent to the private sector sometimes makes the implementation difficult.

1.3.7.

The workload of the teaching staff at the LiepU appears to be well-balanced. There is a programme to develop staff members' growth and careers. LiepU appears to support the teaching staff by offering travel and cross-cultural experiences, suitable technical equipment, and extending opportunities and acquiring new knowledge by attending courses, seminars, conferences, congresses, forums, and Erasmus + mobility events, and other experience exchange events.

During the on-site visit at LiepU, one of the teaching staff members shared that the reason for extensive working years can be said to be the productive size and environment at the LiepU – the relatively small group of staff and students, which "...enables continuous conversations – inside (with colleagues and students) and out (society)". The size of the LiepU can be a true privilege as it strengthens the students' and teaching staff's personal attention and individual involvement. However, this can also be a threat due to this very personal aspect where the personality comes before the procedure, thus making such a system vulnerable should the personalities change. This again highlights the necessity for writing the new Development/Strategic Plan from 2023 onwards to more concisely and accurately describe the aims and objectives of the programmes, the internal Quality Assurance policy and process, and clear guidelines and procedures for all levels of staff and students.

1.3.8.

LiepU takes meticulous care to implement student support regarding distance learning and other technical aspects. They provide several advanced solutions, such as offering virtual computers on the workstations, an online booking system for equipment, student software licences, and other usual provisions (SAR, point 2.3.2., pp. 47-51).

LiepU offers students opportunities to apply for various scholarships and grants them access to legal advisors. LiepU also has a psychological support centre that provides psychological assistance and helps students with a disability; LiepU is well aware of students with disabilities and took care to install special ramps, wheelchairs, and braille instructions (SAR, point 2.3.8., pp. 63-64).

Students from abroad are primarily concerned with the MA and Ph.D. programmes as other programmes are conducted in the Latvian language, thus not easily accessible to foreign students and researchers who attempt to integrate their expertise in the theoretical courses primarily at the MA without language skills.

"Data on the frequency of student support cases are not registered in LiepU. With a certain regularity, students are supported by the dean of the faculty and programme directors." (SAR, p. 64); however, "once a semester, the dean of the faculty meets with students in the direction to discuss questions about the study process, news in university, changes in regulations, and students can turn to the dean with complaints.".

The students reported satisfaction with student support and provisions regarding distance learning, online study aids, etc. However, the leadership could benefit by establishing a faculty-level method of documenting the collection and assessing student suggestions regarding the study process and complaints.

Conclusions on this set of criteria, by specifying strengths and weaknesses

Conclusions.

1. LiepU has established a system for redistributing financial support according to national standards, the number of students, tuition, and the nature of the study field that requires sufficient technical and material support.
2. Resources and provisions of the study field are adequate and cover all aspects of students' needs, from technical means regarding artistic processes, library and media resources to support for students with disability and tools for online study processes and distance learning. The duality of online systems is perhaps redundant; however, the students and staff report the ease of using both, seeing some advantages in the national system over Moodle.
3. The teaching staff is supported with several actions and means of professional development, including realistic material support such as travel grants; however, evaluating the results and effectiveness of the implemented measures are not documented and are only informal.
4. Lists of current openings and vacancies for academic and administrative staff are published but not in an easily accessible manner on the web page. There are no systematic measures for attracting qualified teaching staff. This might be suitable as long as the LiepU operates confined to the local dimensions of the institution. However, as reported by the management, LiepU has ambitions of reaching over the national borders, in which case this should be addressed and given more attention.
5. The teaching staff's academic, research, and administrative workload is balanced, and the staff reported a pleasant and good work culture.

Strengths.

1. Good awareness and ambitious policies regarding the technical needs and aspects of the study;
2. Good implementation of processes to assure external financing for the acquisition of new material and technical provisions;
3. Good and direct communication among the management, students, and other participants regarding provisions and assistance in related matters;
4. The needs of professional and didactic development of the teaching staff are addressed well;
5. Good and satisfying workplace culture.

Weaknesses.

1. Lack of faculty-level documented, methodical, and publicly available method of collecting student feedback and data about students' complaints and suggestions;
2. Absence of creative strategies to attract skillful academic staff;
3. The medium-term planning documents aimed at the development of LiepU human resources are expired;
4. No easily accessible public listing or employment vacancies.
5. Use several information systems, requiring unnecessary bureaucratic engagement and workload for the academic and technical staff.

1.4. Scientific Research and Artistic Creation

Analysis

1.4.1.

"Arts," one of the eight fields of study of LiepU, is one of the most successful fields of study at this institution due to its unique focus on contemporary art and its technologies. This applies to compliance with LiepU's development goals and the arts sector. The research and artistic creativity of the "Arts'' field of study are often engaged with each other. As a result, scientific-artistic activities have a pronounced inter-, trans- or meta-disciplinary orientation, mainly forming the unique identity of Arts. This identity is also fostered by the fact that almost all faculties of LiepU are involved in broad, interconnected approaches. The scientific research of the "Arts" field of study should be evaluated in the context of the scientific assessment problem of LiepU, which according to the latest Field-Weight Citation Impact /FWCI/ Research Metrics, is critically low: 0.54. Furthermore, the scientific capacity of LiepU compiles only 2% of Latvia's most significant scientific universities. This means that LiepU urgently needs to improve its research quality and exponentially increase the number of publications and doctoral degree holders. To a greater or lesser extent, this also affects the "Arts" field of study, albeit within the limits of available scientific, financial, and technical possibilities. ("LiepU Development Strategy 2016–2020," which was prolonged until 31st December 2023 by a decision of LiepU Senate on 25.01.2021 (tables 1, 5, 9))
LiepU has developed a strategy for developing scientific and artistic creativity. This is based on the following documents:
- "Research and creative activity of the teaching staff of LiepU through the aims and deliverables set out in the Scientific Activity Strategy 2016–2020," which was prolonged until 31st December 2023 by a decision of the LiepU Senate on 25.01.2021.
- Equally according to point 2 of "The development plan for the "Arts" field of study from 2022 to 2027" and the point I (sub-points 1.,2.,5.,7.,8.,9.) and
- Point II (sub-points 2., 3.) of "Review of implementation of recommendations received in the previous course of study accreditation or study programme licensing."
- "Recommendations for improving the joint academic doctoral study programme "Media Art and Creative Technologies" (51213).

One of the most significant shortcomings in the organisation of humanities and art sciences in Latvia is funding for research, which directly affects the opportunities for faculty members to attend international scientific conferences and the number of internationally cited articles. In the case of LiepU, research, and artistic creation are mainly based on the budgetary possibilities of the university.
The LiepU central budget is used to:
1. Promote the development of scientific activity which aims to increase the number of internationally cited publications and monographs,
2. To support participation in international conferences, especially when researchers or faculty members do not have project funding.
Regarding publications and various scientific-artistic activities, the field of study can already be praised compared to the situation six years ago. However, in terms of attracting foreign teachers and especially students, the results are relatively modest as the attractiveness of the field of study offered for international students is relatively low. (LiepU University's 2020 annual report data on international students was obtained from the report prepared by the Ministry of Education and Science of Latvia on January 10, 2023, and compared with THE rating data of other Latvian universities).
In the basic information about foreign teaching staff involved in implementing the study area, six

foreign lecturers are mentioned (in the statistics for 2020/2021, 7 are mentioned); in turn, three international students are mentioned in the statistics for the year 2020/2021. During the RT visit to LiepU, there was no opportunity to meet with them, so a more profound analysis was impossible.

The main scientific centre and the pinnacle of the scientific-artistic activity of this field of study should be the doctoral programme, which is thematically related to the area of study as a whole and mainly also to the Academic Bachelor study programme "Contemporary Performing Arts," which would be difficult to argue about. The doctoral study programme "Media Art and Creative Technologies" (51213) is implemented by teaching theoretically qualified staff who carry out artistic activities. Since the programme has been licensed for only two years (licensed on 17.03.2021, licence number 2021/01K), its expansion and first fruits cannot yet be assessed. The doctoral study programme "Media Art and Creative Technologies" (51213) will be further analysed in the section on the RT team report dedicated to the doctoral programme.

The directions of scientific research and/or applied research and/or artistic creation are described in detail in the SAR (point 2.4., pp.64-74) and are well organised and structured at the university level. LiepU Science Council also coordinates the publication of scientific and teaching literature produced by all faculties and scientific institutes through the publishing house LiePA. As stated on page 65 of SAR (mentioned below), the research and creative activity take place to the aims and deliverables set out in the Scientific Activity Strategy 2016–2020.

LiepU has interdisciplinary research groups solving complex scientific problems in cooperation with Latvian and foreign universities and businesses, obtaining funds from national and international projects. The most relevant research connections for the study field of arts are LiepU Art Research Laboratory (MPLab), LiepU Kurzeme Humanities Institute (KHI), and the cooperation with RISEBA University of Applied Sciences in the implementation of the joint doctoral programme 'Media Art and Creative Technologies.

The RT, unfortunately, could not access the new Scientific Activity Strategy as the provided one expired in 2020. Despite being aware of strategic changes awaiting LiepU, we believe such strategic documents are necessary for the university's operation and to present clear aims, goals, and mission to the institutions LiepU is merging with.

The directions and management of scientific research and artistic creation are well organised and interconnected, achieving interdisciplinarity characterising the programmes. International creative workshop weeks, research projects, creative projects, exhibitions, and other events related to the Faculty's artistic orientation, representing the creative and research activities of the study field "Arts" in Latvia and abroad, are carried out by Art Research laboratory MPLab. During its visit to the LiepU, RT was pleasantly surprised by the selflessness and enthusiasm of the Faculty's teaching staff and students in organising various artistic activities. However, the study field of Arts does not have an independent body governing research and creative activity due to two factors: First, the Art Research Laboratory MPLab is a structural unit of the Faculty of Humanitarian Sciences and Arts of LiepU,Secondly, the Art Research Laboratory MPLab is headed by the dean; in the same way, all employees of it are the teaching staff of the study field. Despite the positive features mentioned above, such a scientific and artistic organisation practice has one major drawback, which may hinder the creative activity and its promotion among the public and prospective students. The problem lies in the fact that the Art Research Laboratory MPLab, as by no means an independent institution, is difficult to occupy an objective, critical position necessary in developing any scientific and artistic activity.

1.4.2.

The connection between scientific research and artistic creation of the study field and the study process is logical and justified as the academic staff comprises many practicing artists and level of study - in the Academic Master study programme "New Media and Audiovisual Art" (45213).

Scientific-artistic activities such as exhibitions or other hard-to-categorize contemporary art projects often result from cooperation between professors and students in the master's study programme. (During RT's visit to Liepāja, it was possible to verify the cooperation of teaching staff and students at the Arts House, where a small exhibition was created under LiepU lecturer Maija Demitere. The cooperation strategy between the professorship and students within the Art Research Laboratory is mentioned in SAR (2.4. point 1.1, p.66.) examples of exhibitions can be found on the following website: http://rixc.org/lv/center/galerija/)

The Academic Bachelor study programme "Contemporary Performing Arts (43212)" can be realised by exposing the study process to the actualities of the Liepāja theatre and involving students in the theatre's artistic and creative activities as part of the essential components of the training of actors. Similarly, but according to the specifics of the programme, the same can also be said about the second Academic Bachelor study programme, "New Media Art and Design" (43213), in which, according to interests and motivation, students choose specialisation modules either in media art techniques or in developing new media products and digital graphic design. These can be realised only with the active participation of students in creative activities. The scientific and artistic cooperation among those working and studying in the doctoral programme can already be evaluated as the work of equal partners. If successful, the results of this cooperation can be assessed in terms of quality indicators at both national and international levels. ((The cooperation strategy between the professorship and students within the Art Research Laboratory is mentioned in SAR 2.4. point 1.1, p.66), examples of exhibitions can be found on the following website: http://rixc.org/lv/center/galerija/)

1.4.3.

One of the most problematic aspects of LiepU, and therefore the aspect that needs to be developed first, is the promotion of international cooperation due to the small number of international students and lecturers and the lack of large international projects automatically associated with more limited funding. Point 6 of the" Development plan for the "Arts" study field from 2022 to 2027"(Appendix II 1.2.) provides a set of measures for international cooperation in scientific research and artistic creation, as well as their connection with the study process.RT did not have the opportunity to meet or speak with any international students during its visit to LiepU, so we cannot express any more far-reaching conclusions about the real motivation of international students from Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, or Turkey to study at LiepU or about their knowledge. Based on the documents submitted for the university's accreditation, one to three students from the abovementioned countries are admitted to Liepa annually. Consequently, the planned recruitment of at least five international students every year until 2027 is still more at the level of wishes.Nor would we dare to assert that the university has succeeded in developing interesting strategies that would promote the international recognition and enticement of LiepU in captivating and attracting academic staff from foreign countries.The task of achieving ten to fifteen outbound mobility of LiepU staff in foreign countries, set in point 6 of the LiepU Study Direction "Art" development plan for 2022-2027 (Appendix II 1.2.), has been fulfilled.

More has been achieved with practice-based creative and research projects of academic staff and linking these with study programmes. The dependence of these projects on the enthusiasm and scientific or creative interests of the teaching staff is striking. Thus, subsections 2.4.1. and 2.4.3. of SAR (Accordingly, pp. 64-67 and pp. 69-71) mention LiepU Art Research Laboratory, created by two professors of the highest study level, that organises International Weeks, when artists and researchers from different countries gather at MPLab to discuss various topics in media art and collaborate in research and creative projects with leading European art, etc.

A LiepU professor is leading a project administered by IES and the Baltic-German University Cooperation Office, promoting cooperation among doctoral students, young researchers, and

entrepreneurs. LiepU has also appeared in foreign projects, in cooperation with Norway and with the financial support of Norway's project NFI/IC/VIAA/2020/2, which is working to create digital content for educational installations about nature in the Liepāja Nature House. Several projects were created informally, primarily with artists and researchers from the Baltic States, which means that the teaching staff themselves seek and provide funding for activities in these projects. To a greater or lesser extent, students of the "Arts" study field are involved in all projects. Both existing and planned international collaboration allows us to conclude that the "Arts" study field is among the leading positions at LiepU in international scientific and artistic collaboration.

The international cooperation projects described in SAR are numerous, relevant, and vital. They are facilitated by the academic staff that implements their own experiences and connection to the study programme in an unselfish and dedicated manner that demonstrates their dedication to the institution. International cooperation in the field is ensured and established with partners listed in SAR on page 69 (point 2.4.3., pp. 69-71). Among those are Faboratory of Hangar (Spain), Art in Society Research group of Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences (Norway), Ars Longa (France), Baltan Laboratories (Netherlands) in the Creative Europe project 'Renewable Futures,' etc.

1.4.4.

The involvement of LiepU teaching staff in scientific or applied research and artistic creativity is based on the mechanism of financial motivation - as can be concluded from SAR subsection 2.4.4. (pp. 71-72) and from conversations with the management of the university during the visit by the RT to LiepU. There is a system of allocating funding implemented at LiepU, compensating conference and publication expenses and considering the scientific results achieved, as well as involvement in project activities and the offer of contract work, which cannot be considered a sufficient instrument for achieving the desired result. To a large extent, teaching staff in the study field are motivated by creative ambitions, recognition on a national and international scale, and creative cooperation with foreign researchers and artists. This often forces them to look for cooperation opportunities and funding outside LiepU and on their own.

1.4.5.

The idea of student involvement in scientific-artistic activities was formed for the RT mainly from familiarisation with the documents submitted for accreditation, which affirmed that in their preparation, "all heads were put together," especially after a visit to the Arts House in Liepāja, Kūrmāju prospekts 13, which was full of students who were either studying or working on larger and smaller projects, both independently and with their tutors or simply enjoying each other's company in creative conversation. A highly creative and different atmosphere was distinct from the rest of the LiepU. So it can be said that a mechanism for the cooperation of the teaching staff in implementing the study programme has been established in an informal but undocumented way. This has both optimistic and less positive features.

As described on page 72 of SAR (point 2.4.5. pp. 72-73), the students are artistically and scientifically involved at all levels of programmes in various projects according to the level and nature of the study. As the number of students fluctuates widely from the BA courses over much less populated MA courses and even less attended doctoral study programme, the mechanisms of promotion are adequate and seem to work across the faculty's programmes, mainly carried out by the academic staff spontaneously and without any strategic or systematic programming.

This could present a slight shortcoming; however, given the most significant number of students attending the Academic Bachelor study programme "New Media Art and Design"(43213), this is adequate as long as the staff enthusiasm can keep this promotion at the present level. Despite that,

implementing a remote and rational system that will not be vulnerable to exposure to staff enthusiasm would be highly beneficial for the future of the study field.

1.4.6.

To be productive, the study field that orients to contemporary art in all its manifestations should cultivate innovative teaching methods or involve students in LiepU's scientific and creative activities. The said factor impacts the study process, and the development of students as personalities, which graduates at different study levels noted.

In the SAR (point 2.4.6., p.74), LiepU writes: "The programmes of the 'Art' field of study, especially in the field of new media arts and creative technologies, are innovative by nature." This may be true. However, this does not mean the methods applied to products, processes, marketing, and organisational innovation are innovative. The artistic and scientific research involves many contemporary and innovative topics seeking connections with national and international partners. However, this favorable process is not inventive by itself. LiepU organises extracurricular, online, and hybrid workshops corresponding to the pandemic and the push for international presence. Despite no visible vital innovation in the study field study process, this is not a shortcoming, as forced innovation does not always mean progress. It appears the study processes work very well regardless of the level of innovation.

The RT cannot overlook the lack of activity in marketing and promoting study field and student works and activities. The online presence limited to the scarce website of the university is modest at best. It does not reflect the nature of the study that ironically deals with media and arts. Considering the university's aim at internationalisation this shortcoming becomes hard to understand as it is the most prominent way to inform and convince prospective students from Latvia and abroad. This urgent matter needs to be addressed for the benefit of the students, the study field, and LiepU itself.

Conclusions on this set of criteria, by specifying strengths and weaknesses

Conclusions.

LiepU's "Arts" study field is characterised mainly by two indicators: an orientation toward contemporary art in its various manifestations and practice-based approaches. Even though all programmes are academic, nevertheless organisation of studies and the content of study programmes have a distinctly applied orientation, which is mainly to be welcomed, as it offers some confidence that students will find jobs after completing their studies.

Given its focus on contemporary art, various performative practices, media art, and creative technologies, "Arts" at LiepU should be evaluated as a guarantor of its unique orientation and identity among similar study fields at Latvian art universities. This directly affects the specifics of this field's creative and theoretical activity.

The international cooperation projects described in SAR are numerous, relevant, and vital. They are facilitated by the academic staff that implements their own experiences and connection to the study programme in an unselfish and dedicated manner that demonstrates their dedication to the institution.

Strengths.

1. Unique focus on contemporary art, its combination, various performative practices, and creative technologies.
2. Pronounced interdisciplinary orientation, which is fostered by almost all faculties of LiepU participating in broad, interconnected approaches to Arts.

Weaknesses.

1. The publications focus is mainly national; the low volume of internationally cited and included publications in the databases (Web of Science, SCOPUS) significantly limits the overall impact on the scientific discipline.
2. No defined and harnessed collaboration between partner universities and LiepU regarding research and lack of new contracts with foreign universities.
3. Fragmented research landscape driven by divergent individual interests, thus weak coherence of the new research.
4. Financing of scientific and artistic activities is mainly based on the LiepU central budget, which impacts the amplitude of scientific and creative activities.

Assessment of the requirement [2]

1 R2 - Compliance of scientific research and artistic creation with the level of development of scientific research and artistic creation (if applicable)

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The research and artistic activities of LiepU's "Arts" study field are highly commendable. True, they are primarily the result of the enthusiasm of the teaching staff and students. If evaluated from the point of view of the overall strategy of LiepU, then it is desirable to strive for higher goals such as increasing the international importance of the study field, for example, by preparing research papers for internationally cited publications, trying to cooperate more closely with foreign universities, from which a lot can be gained in the field of art as Tallinn University, Aalto University, etc.
Despite the shortcomings mentioned in the analysis, RT believes that the "Arts" field of study meets the requirements for universities regarding scientific activity and creativity. The directions of scientific and applied research and artistic creation of the study field correspond to the development goals of LiepU. They are relevant for the study field and industry.

1.5. Cooperation and Internationalisation

Analysis

1.5.1.

The cooperation partners are selected given the specific features of the study field and the relevant study programmes. LiepU's main criteria (SAR, point 2.4.6., p.74) for choosing partners among businesses are:
- Sector represented;
- Organisational structure that provides for the employment of workers;
- Duration of business;
Previous cooperation experience, presence of graduates in the company/organisation, relevance of the issues to the student.
Cooperation is enhanced through formal cooperation agreements and informal links with employers interested and loyal to the programme and research. Employers are involved in the assessment process of the study programmes, international scientific assessment, etc. During the Faculty of Humanities and Arts international weeks, conferences and seminars held by MPLab frequently include discussions with employers—representatives of the city's cultural sector and creative industry companies.
The faculty is in very close cooperation with non-governmental organisations and is also realised in

the "Arts" study field, especially with the association ASTE, [Art, Science, Technology, Education] (Liepāja), and the electronic art and media centre E-LAB (Riga). and many international networks of media art organisations and educational institutions, such as "Renewable Futures," which researches and develops sustainable art practices. [SAR, point 2.5. 1, pp.75-77].

According to the SAR (mentioned above, pp.75), very good cooperation has also been established with Liepāja municipality, which provides funding for the implementation of programmes in the study field of "Art" – study programmes in the field of media art and design help implement STEM education in the municipality. In contrast, "Contemporary performing arts" ("Acting") prepare the professionals looked for in the municipality's cultural institutions.

A cooperation agreement has also been signed with "Liepāja Theater" for the preparation of young professionals, involving them in professional creative activities already during their studies.

Both the professional contacts of teaching staff and researchers of the department and active search for partners in databases are used to attract cooperation organizations, for example, search databases for partner organizations of various project funding open calls.

1.5.2.

According to SAR (2.5.1., pp. 75-77), international cooperation and internationalisation of studies are pursued in accordance with the 'Plan for the Internationalisation of Studies' developed by LiepU in 2016, as well as other strategic development documents (LiepU Development Strategy 2016–2020, LiepU Scientific Activity Strategy 2016–2020) and the Action Plan for Implementation of the LiepU Strategy. Internationalisation is essential to LiepU institutional cooperation: it enables the development of study programmes and processes in accordance with the quality criteria accepted by international practice, makes it possible for teaching staff to expand international cooperation by participating in international study and research projects or programmes, and to attract foreign teaching staff. The aim of the LiepU internationalisation plan is to define the tasks for the internationalisation of the university, which include implementing international study programmes, attracting and selecting foreign students, pursuing international mobility, building international cooperation, and providing an international study environment.

The cooperation partners are selected given the specific features of the study field and the relevant study programmes.

LiepU has developed many international collaborative research/creative practice projects including Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences (Norway), Ars Longa (France), Baltan Laboratories (Netherlands) in the Creative Europe project 'Renewable Futures,' Aalto University Media Lab, Zavod Projekt ATOL in Slovenia and many more. [SAR, mentioned above]

The international cooperation projects described in SAR are numerous, relevant, and vital. They are initiated and facilitated by the academic staff that implements their research/practice and knowledge to the study programme in an unselfish and dedicated manner that demonstrates their dedication to the institution. International cooperation in the field is ensured and established with partners listed in the SAR (point 2.4.3.,p.69), including Faboratory of Hangar (Spain) and the Art in Society Research group of Oslo.

All these activities contribute to the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme.

1.5.3.

According to the SAR (point 2.5.2, pp.77-78) of LiepU, the "Arts" study field in collaboration with the International Relations Division, the following mechanisms are used to attract foreign partners - by participating in international education exhibitions, international events abroad. Art teachers and staff actively use Erasmus+ mobility opportunities, which effectively attract new foreign organisations. LiepU actively uses Erasmus+ mobility grants, inviting foreign lecturers, artists, etc.,

representatives of the "Art" field of study.

According to the "LIEPAJA UNIVERSITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN OF ACADEMIC STAFF 2018 – 2022," approved on May 17, 2018 (mentioned above), numerous supportive and informative activities exist in effect to enforce the arrangement of open competition. These activities include advertisements in the official publication "Latvijas Vēstnesis," EC portal "Euraxess," the NCE website, and the LiepU website (www.liepu.lv). Moreover, informative and publicity activities are planned to support work and individual situational solutions. For example, for the foreign teachers' accommodation, a flat for teachers in the LiepU students' halls of residence is provided. Foreign teachers cooperate closely with the employees of the faculty (managers of the study programmes, other teachers of the same module, MPLab employees), arranging the daily study plans and the necessary materially technical base for the classes to promote efficient collaboration with students, which is the primary goal of the foreign teachers' visit in Liepāja. Extra support for foreign teachers – access to public transport provided, support in daily communication (providing there are no language barriers at work, neither with students or other teachers nor in daily life).

In the MPLab, the foreign teachers are provided access to the laboratory rooms (photo laboratory, sound studio, computer room, 3D printer, basic exhibition facilities, etc.), office facilities, multi-media library (for the branch and scientific literature), and materially technical base If necessary; the foreign teachers are also provided with a work computer.

That the Academic Master study programme"New Media and Audiovisual Art" (45213) and the Doctoral study programme "Media Art and Creative Technologies" (51213) are delivered in English, should have a substantial impact on attracting international students and academic staff and the collaboration with RISEBA, which has a relatively high percentage of international teaching staff. The many contemporary and innovative artistic and scientific research projects also help develop connections with national and international partners.

However, as previously stated in this report, the RT strongly believes for the arts faculty to fully achieve its aim for stronger internationalisation and increase the number of international students and teachers, it must develop its marketing and promotional material as it is the most prominent way to inform and convince prospective students from Latvia and abroad. The currently existing initiatives and activities are of assistance rather than serve as an attraction when the prospective students and faculty members outweigh the pros and cons in favour of the LiepU.

Conclusions on this set of criteria, by specifying strengths and weaknesses

Conclusions.

Cooperation with LiepU is enhanced through formal cooperation agreements and informal links with employers interested in the programme and research. The faculty also collaborates closely with non-governmental organisations with projects realised in the "Arts" study field. LiepU has developed many international collaborative research/creative practice projects initiated and facilitated by the academic staff that complements their research/practice and expands their knowledge to enhance the study programme in an unselfish and dedicated manner that demonstrates their dedication to the institution.

Strengths.

1. Joint programme delivered with RISEBA University of Applied Sciences.
2. Master and Doctoral Programmes delivered in English.
3. Participation in the ERASMUS+ mobility, including postgraduate internships abroad.

Weaknesses.

1. The marketing and promotional material as the most prominent way to inform and convince prospective students from Latvia and abroad is not developed;
2. The international dimension of the curriculum/content to diversify the global reference points is not developed;
3. Low number of Masters' and Doctoral students make mobility at those programmes hard to access and implement.

Assessment of the requirement [3]

1 R3 - The cooperation implemented within the study field with various Latvian and foreign organizations ensures the achievement of the aims of the study field.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Clear evidence is mentioned in the SAR (points 2.5.1. and 2.5.2., pp.75-78). Through the meetings the RT had with the Programme Directors, the alumni, and the employers, there is a strong motivation and push by the Faculty and programmes to develop and build upon the national and international links with the world of work and the cultural sector.
The cooperation is in place and strongly and continuously supports the development of the field by participating in international education exhibitions and international events abroad. Art teachers and staff actively use Erasmus+ mobility opportunities, which effectively attract new foreign organisations. LiepU actively uses Erasmus+ mobility grants, inviting foreign lecturers, artists, etc., and representatives of the "Arts" field of study.

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

Analysis

During the reporting period, not all recommendations of the previous accreditation and licensing procedures have been fully achieved, but the university's contribution to fulfilling these recommendations is visible. During the previous (2013) accreditation procedure, 18 recommendations (similar recommendations were grouped) were prepared for the study field. As for individual study programmes - 3 recommendations were provided for an Academic Bachelor study programme "Acting" 43212 (changed title to "Contemporary Performing Arts" (43212)) during licensing procedure in 2017. Ten recommendations were prepared for the Academic Master study programme"New Media and Audiovisual Art" (45213) (joint with RISEBA University of Applied Sciences) as part of licensing procedure in 2017, and 9 recommendations were prepared for the Doctoral study programme "Media Art and Creative Technologies" (51213) (joint with RISEBA University of Applied Sciences) as part of licensing procedure in 2021.

Recommendations for the study field were the following:
1. Multitudes of similar [design] study programmes.
Currently, there is no overlap regarding study programmes within the study field. Each of the study programmes corresponds to a different level and topic. In the academic year 2022/2023, the Academic Bachelor study programme "New Media Art and Design" integrated study programme "Design." The recommendation can be considered fulfilled.
2. Poor cooperation with other HEI of Latvia; regional position needs cooperation on the national level.
LiepU has developed two joint study programmes in cooperation with RISEBA University of Applied Sciences: The academic Master programme "New Media and Audiovisual Arts" and the Doctoral study programme "Media Arts and Creative Technologies." The recommendation can be considered

fulfilled.

The following recommendations are grouped as they consider the qualification and development of staff:

3. Module system is unclear, curricula are loosely composed, and no persons are responsible for it, as it depends entirely on guest lecturers who arrive occasionally;

4. Lack of qualified teaching staff on some design-related subjects;

5. Artist-experts with contemporary artistic experience;

6. The academic staff development policy must be planned;

7. The academic staff is involved in scientific research/creative work - must be creative and move to contemporary art.

LiepU has implemented significant improvements regarding staff development. LiepU has elected lecturers in such specialisations as Interactive arts and multimedia systems - sound art, 3D modeling/animation, video art, and similar (SAR, point 3.4.2., p.109). Modules are interlinked with thematic blocks for each semester (SAR, point 3.1.1., p. 87). The lecturers, professors, and assistant professors elected to the faculty have considerable artistic output (See annex. II.2.4.A "List of teachers' publications, patents, works of artistic creation_05_12.docx"). The recommendation can be considered fulfilled.

8. Foreign language skills of the academic staff are poor and should be improved.

Currently, there are no indications that language skills are an issue. The recommendation can be considered fulfilled.

9. The study methods are modern but must be contemporary;

LiepU indicates that some lecturers have enriched their pedagogical skills by attending pedagogical courses or internships in creative industries (SAR 2.3.6., pp. 58-61). However, available development and improvement opportunities are pretty limited, and LiepU should provide staff with more options for professional development, especially regarding the specifics of the field. Given the fact that, at this moment, there were no issues identified with employed teaching methods, recommendations can be considered fulfilled.

10. Pedagogy module should be introduced so graduates can work as pedagogues

LiepU notes that implementing this recommendation is not planned, as there is a national programme for full teacher qualification and available life-long learning courses (so-called 72h pedagogy basics course) at other institutions. According to the RT, this decision is justified, and a recommendation can be considered complete.

11. Workplaces for design prototypes are in cellars or tiny premises; they all need improvement

The current lab in the context of a creative environment is in good order. However, students and staff members noted that the premises are too small and are a limiting factor regarding the study process and creative work. In addition – according to information gained during an on-site visit recently, LiepU has changed its access policy so that labs are no longer accessible by students 24/7, limiting premises even more. Students should be encouraged to use and collaborate in creative spaces provided by LiepU. The recommendation is not fulfilled, and action is required.

12. Student exchange and travel should be encouraged for a regional university.

Student outgoing mobility is at reasonable levels. Excluding the COVID restriction period, there were 10 outgoing mobility students on average. Incoming students are 1-2. LiepU acknowledges that the mobility of students is at a satisfactory level, but the mobility of teaching staff to more distant countries should be encouraged (SAR, point 2.5.3., pp. 78-79). The recommendation can be considered fulfilled.

13. Should be organised courses, practical training, workshops in foreign languages.

LiepU points out that international workshop weeks "UPDATE" and "SOUND DAYS" (https://sound.mplab.lv/) are regularly organised in cooperation with non-governmental arts organisations and partner universities. The recommendation can be considered fulfilled.

14. Teaching staff and students must be included together in creative projects.

As the RT can evaluate only upon the information presented, RT can give an example of the implementation of this recommendation the fact that in 2019 prof. Rasa Šmite's audiovisual collaboration with the assistant prof. Krista Dintere and bachelor students were included in the programme "Art" of the Lithuanian Pavilion of the Venice Architecture Biennale. In RT's opinion, recent COVID restrictions can be a reasonable justification for why there are no more recent examples. Recommendation demands continuous ongoing action; however, it can be considered fulfilled.

15. Maintenance for the [expensive] programme future must be worked on when the Norwegian grant ends. Project funding is sporadic, but funds are raised to meet the basic needs of the programme. Liepaja City Council Co-funding is used for attracting guest lecturers. LiepU acknowledges that the recommendation is partially completed, as there is an ongoing need to secure additional funding for programme development and implementation.

16. More international publications, practically.

LiepU management notes that there is still room for improvement regarding publication levels (See annex II 2.6.2 "A Report on the implementation of recommendations for the study field Arts (1.docx"). The faculty regularly participates in international conferences and publishes articles in the Faculty of Humanities and Arts journal "Scriptus Manet," which is included in EBSCO databases for international access. Art faculty members regularly publish reproductions of their visual artworks in catalogs abroad. The recommendation can be considered partially completed.

17. Insufficient foreign literature on contemporary art and a complete lack of fine art periodicals in English and German.

A complete analysis of available informative resources can be found in Joint Opinion chapter 1.3.3 as far as a recommendation goes in the context of 1.6. criteria, a recommendation can be considered complete.

For the Academic Bachelor study programme "Contemporary Performing Arts"(43212) following recommendations were prepared during licensing procedure:

1. Long-term: Recommendation for the Liepaja Municipality to maintain and strengthen the relationship with Liepaja University and Liepaja Theatre, knowing that without the municipality's involvement, such a study programme would not be possible.

LiepU affirms that Liepāja municipality supported the acting study process financially and with marketing activities. This can be corroborated by the publicly available fact that the class successfully integrated into Liepāja Theatre (See https://liepajasteatris.lv/makslinieki/). The recommendation can be considered fulfilled.

2. Long term: To ensure the integrity of studies, and the smooth rhythm of classes, to unite the student body as a troupe.

The university indicates that students had 24-hour access to study and rehearsal spaces. However, currently, this is not the case. The recommendation can be considered partially fulfilled.

3. Long-term: An experienced manager supervising a talented, enthusiastic junior manager (Herbert Laukstein - Dmitry Petrenko)

Herberts Laukšteins was involved in the study process and as an employer (SAR, point 3.4.1., pp. 106-109). The recommendation can be considered fulfilled.

For the Doctoral study programme "Media Art and Creative Technologies" (51213) (joint with RISEBA University of Applied Sciences) following recommendations were prepared during licensing procedure:

1. Long-term: Encourage participating lecturers to update module descriptions with the latest literature and encourage the libraries of both universities to acquire the latest literature.

Since licensing in 2017, there have been considerable improvements regarding digitalisation and development of digital platforms given the COVID-mandated distance learning period, including the

expansion of digitally available resources. However, the description update process should be ongoing. The recommendation can be considered complete.

2. Long-term: Develop recommendations for collaboration between lecturers within modules, thus facilitating the integration of the content and coherence of the outcomes of the courses included in the module and the relevance to the aims and objectives of the programme.

LiepU highlights that module teachers design and develops their part of the module in close collaboration with other teachers, coordinating assignments and an assessment system. Regular communication between the teaching staff and the study programme administration takes place. There is an annual faculty meeting as well. According to the information obtained during an on-site visit, there seems to be good communication between some select staff members. Yet, coordination and exchange of experiences and best practices could be facilitated at a broader level. The recommendation can be considered partially completed.

3. Long-term: For each study module, set the requirements for entry.

Provided course descriptions feature information on necessary previous knowledge requirements for starting a study module/course. The recommendation is fully completed.

4. Long term: To clarify the conditions for Master's theses and promote cooperation between the two universities in defending Master's theses, organising it as a single process regardless of the student's chosen specialisation and the responsible HEI.

According to the information obtained during on-site visitation, staff from RISEBA is accessible to students. Students have to prepare a thesis following LiepU and RISEBA requirements (SAR, point 3.2.2., p. 98), however, featured regulation on thesis defence (See https://www.liepu.lv/uploads/dokumenti/studentiem/HMZF_zin%C4%81tnisko_%20darbu_noteikumi2020.pdf) does not reflect on cooperation between RISEBA and LiepU regarding defence process. The recommendation is partially completed.

5. Long term: Revise and improve the content of the Creative Industries module, with a greater focus on strengthening competencies in production, marketing, and entrepreneurship, and the module title should be clarified accordingly

LiepU notes module content has been revised, and changes were made accordingly (Annex II 2.6.2 "A Report on the implementation of Recommendations for the study field Arts"). During the document review process and on-site visitation, the RT did not receive indications of any issues with the study module. The recommendation can be considered fulfilled.

6. Long term: In the future, consider the possibility of balancing the programme requirements depending on the previous education - RISEBA's professional bachelor programme, which students study for 4 years, and LiepU's academic programme, which students study for 3 years, and consider the possibility of organising an additional module for those students who have completed their bachelor education in programmes unrelated to new media and audiovisual arts.

LiepU has changed the curriculum, including extra attention to research methodology in arts. However, it must be noted that the RISEBA programme is for bachelor. At the same time, LiepU is academic, which presents some unavoidable discrepancies in credit point balance, as a professional programme is required to have internships and different topics covered as mandated by state standards of 2nd-level professional education. LiepU decided not to pursue a 4-year option, and this decision, in the opinion of the RT, justified. The recommendation can be considered complete.

7. Long-term: Clarify the distance learning options mentioned in the description and plan for the future

The study programme was licensed in 2017, and since then, there have been considerable investments and developments in e-learning. Online provisions are in good standing, and methods for distance learning have been approved. The recommendation is completed.

8. Long term: To increase research capacity and the efficiency of cooperation, form research groups, including lecturers from both universities in the study programme. It is recommended to involve more LiepU faculty members in the editorial board of RISEBA's "ADAM Art" journal

LiepU admits that the recommendation is implemented only partially (See annex "II 2.6.2 A Report on the implementation of recommendations for the study field Arts (1).docx"). There have been discussions, and two research groups have been set up. There is still room for deeper cooperation between involved parties. The recommendation is partially completed and requires some additional attention.

9. Long-term: Before the accreditation of the Arts study programme, both universities will conduct a study on the employment prospects of graduates and ensure greater employer involvement in the development of the study programme

LiepU points out that the recommendation is partially completed, as surveying has been conducted, but results have not been analysed yet. During the on-site visit, LiepU management confirmed that they expect the development of a new strategy and possible cooperation regarding this question with the newly established LiepU Council. The recommendation is partially completed.

10. Long-term: Clarify the requirements for the programme entrance exams for the portfolio of creative work when setting the admission requirements for both universities. The licensing documents require the demonstration of 3 completed new media artworks or projects. Still, they may also include works or projects in audiovisual media, depending on the specificities of the study programme.

Admission requirements and criteria have been updated right after the licensing procedure. The recommendation is completed.

For Academic Doctoral Programme "Media Arts and Creative Technologies" (51213) (joint with RISEBA University of Applied Sciences) following recommendations were prepared during licencing procedure in 2021:

1. Long-term: Develop a long-term plan to attract international students to increase student dynamics.

LiepU indicates that it is taking some action regarding attracting international students (SAR, point 2.5.2., pp. 77-78). Yet, there are still results to be seen, as the study programme is relatively new and data is insufficient to properly analyse results. Therefore activities should be expanded over larger timeframes. The recommendation can be considered partially completed and still stands.

2. Long-term: Promote close cooperation with employers and industry among students to identify topical research subjects and keep abreast of current labour market trends.

There is one example of cooperation with an external partner, in cooperation with the Liepaja Municipality project where a doctoral student develops the aquaponics system within her sustainable design and slow media art research (Annex II 2.6.2 "A Report on the implementation of recommendations for the study field Arts"). The university plans to expand its cooperation with industry in the upcoming years. The recommendation is partially completed.

3. Long term: To settle the right to confer a doctoral degree (doctoral dissertation), referring to Article 11(3) of the Law on Scientific Activities - that an opinion on the delegation from the LZP and, accordingly, amendments to Cabinet Regulation No. 1000 are required.

There is an agreement with the Academy of Arts, as LiepU and RISEBA don't have a Promotional Council in the arts, ensuring that doctoral candidates can defend dissertations. The university plans to increase elected staff in the "Arts" study field with the status of LFA expert till 2027. The recommendation is not completed.

4. Long-term: Establish a document that more clearly defines the scope and responsibilities of the Joint Quality Assurance Board.

There has been drafted regulation defining and setting out activities of the Council; as of now, there are two bodies – the Scientific Council and the Programme Council (Annex II 2.6.2 "A Report on the implementation of recommendations for the study field Arts"). The recommendation can be considered fulfilled.

5. Long term: Given that the programme is in English only, to ensure a high-quality flow of

information between teacher and student, to enhance the English language skills of the teaching staff to levels C1 and C2.

Currently, there were no indications of possible issues regarding English language skills. LiepU points out that several of the teaching staff involved in the programme have received C1 English language certificates as part of the project SAM 8.2.2 activity. The recommendation can be considered fulfilled.

6. Long-term: Diversify funding sources through national or international research programmes, promoting student participation in national or international research.

LiepU has set its goal for researchers and doctoral students to be involved in at least one international and one national research programme. During the on-site visit, the RT received an indication that doctoral students indeed are involved in project activities, but it still must be highlighted that the doctoral study programme is still in the approbation phase, and any meaningful data regarding the overall involvement of students in projects, funding sources and project results cannot be extrapolated. The recommendation is partially completed and still stands.

7. Long term: To create a uniform, specialised library collection, selecting information resources is focused on the specifics of a given study programme.

Detailed analysis of informative provision can be found in Joint Opinion chapters 1.3 and 2.3 of respective study programmes. Recommendations regarding criteria on implementation of previous recommendations can be considered fulfilled.

8. Long-term: To develop a baseline of competencies in IT, new media, and/or the arts as a basic basket to successfully implement the study programme for its relevant objectives.

LiepU calls attention to the fact that it has developed a list of competencies in the framework of project No. SAM 8.3.1.1/16/I/002 is to be included in admission information starting with 2023 (SAR, point 3.1.2., pp. 167-172). It has to be approved by the Scientific Council of Study programme. The recommendation can be considered complete.

9. Long-term: To expand the faculty with science and technology lecturers for broader field coverage.

At this moment, recruitment of necessary competencies from other fields is done on an ad hoc basis. The potential source for expertise is the LiepU Faculty of Natural Sciences and Engineering (Annex II 2.6.2 "A Report on the Implementation of Recommendations for the study field Arts"). LiepU shows that there was once a particular case when experts from other fields were involved - an example involves scientific supervision in other fields regarding individual research projects within the Letonika framework - however, this example dates from a previous doctoral programme. The recommendation still stands as there is no data regarding implementation in the current doctoral programme.

Conclusions on this set of criteria, by specifying strengths and weaknesses

Conclusions.

To summarise, activities carried out by the LiepU and the management of the study field in order to take into account the recommendations provided in the previous accreditation and licensing procedures are clearly visible. Some of the recommendations have been taken into account fully, but in some cases, despite the activities already carried out, the study field did not manage to fully implement the recommendations or provided recommendations that cannot be considered a singular event that can be implemented once, but demands continuous and ongoing action.

It must be highlighted that the doctoral programme still undergoes approbation, as it is quite new and as of now there are only 4 students in total – 3 in the 1st year and 1 in the 2nd year. Therefore almost all long term recommendations still stand and will be included in this report as well. However, the LiepU demonstrates that it is keen on improving studies and seeks out ways to implement

recommendations accordingly.

Strengths.

1. There is sufficient evidence that LiepU systematically approaches and implements previous recommendations.
2. Good awareness and ambitious policies regarding the technical needs and aspects of study.
3. Good implementation of processes to assure external financing for the acquisition of new material and technical provisions.
4. Good and direct communication among the management, students and other participants regarding provisions and assistance in related matters.
5. The needs of professional and didactic development of the teaching staff are addressed well.
6. Good and satisfying workplace culture.

Weaknesses.

1. Strengthening the doctoral study programme remains an essential priority.
2. Cooperation between LiepU and RISEBA could be deepened further.
3. Lack of faculty level documented, methodical and publicly available method of collecting student feedback and data about students' complaints and suggestions.
4. Absence of creative strategies to attract skillful academic staff.
5. The medium-term planning documents aimed at the development of LiepU human resources are expired.
6. No easily accessible public listing or employment vacancies.

Assessment of the requirement [4]

1 R4 - Elimination of deficiencies and shortcomings identified in the previous assessment of the study field, if any, or implementation of the recommendations provided.

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Activities carried out by the LiepU and the management of the study field in order to take into account the recommendations provided in the previous accreditation and licensing procedures are clearly visible. Some of the recommendations have been taken into account fully, but in some cases, despite the activities already carried out, the study field did not manage to fully implement the recommendations or provided recommendations that cannot be considered a singular event that can be implemented once, but demands continuous and ongoing action.

1.7. Recommendations for the Study Field

Short-term recommendations

1. Urgently take the opportunity of writing the new "Arts" study field development plan for 2022-2027" to more concisely and accurately describe the aims and objectives of the programmes, the internal Quality Assurance policy and process, and clear guidelines and procedures for all levels of staff and students.
2. The Arts Faculty should conduct a risk assessment of the programmes and identify clear targets (financial, student numbers, employability, graduation, etc.) for each programme.
3. The need for more designated studio/creative production spaces to support individual and collaborative/interdisciplinary practices and increase the professionalisation of the practice.

4. To improve the public-facing, marketing/promotional material/website for the study field and programme, that is fit for purpose to demonstrate the uniqueness of the programmes, to describe better the objectives of the programmes and the student study experience.

5. The Senior Management team of the faculty should give more clear guidance in the form of a more comprehensive Quality Manual, outlining the policy, expectations, specific requirements, and assurance process to the Programme Directors on the faculty's internal quality management practice and process and required levels of achievement with clear qualitative and quantitative metrics.

6. To improve the value and effectiveness of the student questionnaires, asking appropriate questions and better-informing students of the outcomes of this process.

7. Elaborate faculty-level documented, methodical, and publicly available methods of collecting student feedback and data about students' complaints and suggestions.

8. The programmes must develop the international dimension of the curriculum/content to diversify the global reference points.

9. Publishing job openings and positions more prominently and easily accessible online.

10. Enforcing online presence and publishing students' achievements and works as a part of PR and communication strategy.

11. Establishing a closed circle of quality assessment for each study programme. The internal quality process would benefit if the analysis could also identify the overall level of satisfaction/issues and identify trends and risks for each programme. The SWOT analysis (point 2.1.2., pp.23-28) was mainly for the study field, but it would be very beneficial if it also addressed the specific programmes.

12. Establishing documented feedback and statistics of student complaints.

13. Information on the webpage and relevant information systems should be updated with correct information regarding study parameters, information, and tuition fees.

14.Revise the possibility to use only one updated information system, in the study process, so it reduces the workload of teaching staff.

Long-term recommendations

1. Preparation of strategic documents and conceptual development plans especially for the Academic Master study programme"New Media and Audiovisual Art" (45213) (joint with RISEBA University of Applied Sciences), and Doctoral study programme "Media Art and Creative Technologies" (51213) (joint with RISEBA University of Applied Sciences), and Academic Bachelor study programme"Contemporary Performing Arts" (43212).

2. Establish 24/7 student access to workshop premises.

3. Expand available space for lab and workshop purposes.

4. Promote cooperation between the RISEBA and LiepU in the process of defending Master's theses, organising it as a single process regardless of the student's chosen specialisation and the responsible HEI.

5. Promote collaboration between partner universities and LiepU regarding research and develop new contracts with foreign universities, thus promoting the internationalisation of research.
6. Conduct a study on the employment prospects of graduates and ensure greater employer involvement in the development of the study programme.
7. Develop a long-term plan to attract international students to increase the overall student number.
8. Promote close cooperation with employers and industry among students to identify topical research subjects.
9. A funding diversification strategy as far as implementing internationally competitive projects must be developed.
10. Focusing the research areas on those that have the highest potential and building strong teams around such research.
11. Target and support publishing in high-impact journals.
12. A formal mechanism should be implemented for cooperation among the teaching staff in implementing the study programme strategy, programme coordination, and the final control mechanism of the research direction.
13. Develop a more vital link with the professional world and the employers, with a more formal (evidenced) process of 'regularly' critically reviewing the programmes.

II - "Contemporary Performing Arts" ASSESSMENT

II - "Contemporary Performing Arts" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1.

The Academic Bachelor study programme 'Contemporary Performing Arts' (43212) was formerly called 'Acting'. On 26 July 2017, with Licensing Commission decision No 43-L, the bachelor study programme 'Acting' (43212) was licensed and included in the 'Arts' study field (SAR, point 3.1.1., pp. 144-145). The programme was formed upon the decision of Liepāja City Council decision of 19 January 2017, and it opted for cofinancing "for a bachelor study programme in acting to be implemented at Liepāja University in order to achieve the expansion of the acting company SIA 'Liepājas teātris' created by Liepāja City Council and the balancing of its age groups" (SAR, mentioned above).

As described in SAR on page 144, "The licensed programme provided for the training of actors at LiepU at intervals of approximately six years, depending on the job market requirements, supplementing the programme with the current specialisation or study fields". LiepU stated that in 2021, 10 actors graduated from the study programme and were employed as actors at the Liepāja Theatre and Liepāja Puppet Theatre that same year. The RT therefore concludes that the first cycle of the programme scheduled for each 6 years is completed.

Meanwhile, LiepU changed the programme based upon an unnamed market research with justification explained in SAR on page 144 and 145 as "it was concluded that the city and regional

performing arts institutions had a foreseeable need for additional actors in their staff (in Liepāja Theatre, starting from 2027; in Liepāja Puppet Theatre, after the accreditation of the Art field of study), and there was a need to provide the diversity and interdisciplinarity of cultural life in the city of Liepāja and Kurzeme region with skilled specialists, as part of the implementation of the Liepāja: European Capital of Culture 2027 projects and their subsequent development, and as part of cooperation with other Liepāja cultural institutions, such as the Lielais Dzintars concert hall (after the accreditation of the "Arts" study field)." Additionally, the change in programming is being justified buy another unnamed research as "the latest research into the development of performing arts has led to the conclusion that contemporary performing arts are no longer limited to the traditional rigid division of forms of expression into acting or puppetry, object theatre, performance, dance, musical theatre, event management, creation of stage texts, etc., but are manifesting themselves in interdisciplinary, hybrid forms, requiring, in addition, project development and management skills." (SAR, p. 145, mentioned above). This led to further changes such as the title, degree and study plan and map of courses of the programme.

Due to many fundamental changes proposed for this programme, the RT faces a difficult task, as it cannot evaluate it upon its past characteristics nor testimonies. Accessing this programme is rather like assessing a new programme applying for accreditation. Despite this, the RT concludes the study programme is largely compliant with the study field; however, we can observe a few traps and challenges it is facing as it underwent the transformation from an acting programme to the present programme named "Contemporary Performing Arts". The programme is very closely linked to local needs for performing artists – and was developed and is implemented in conjunction with Liepāja Theatre. In 2021, 10 actors graduated from the old study programme "Acting" and were employed as actors at the Liepāja Theatre and Liepāja Puppet Theatre that same year.

The rationale behind change of the programme is concisely explained and states several plausible factors. This however doesn't remedy the outcome that it is a proposed programme that features slightly weaker compliance with the study field of performing arts, as those represent a very wide and plural spectrum of arts, usually covered by a whole faculty or even academy with several independent programmes. Performing arts are too large an umbrella term to be fulfilled by a single BA programme, especially when it largely rests on a former acting programme.

In the light of strategic changes of joining with other universities, such a programme can be exposed to vulnerabilities and justified criticism regarding its composition and motivation. The RT doesn't want to address local customs and circumstances – those are not subject to our assessment, yet it is hard to understand what place such a programme can occupy in the Latvian higher education for performing artists that is traditionally divided between drama, music and film schools or faculties.

2.1.2.

The title of the assessed programme was changed from 'Acting' to, as described in SAR on page 145 (point 3.1.2., pp.145-148) "with a title that is in line with the dynamic changes in contemporary art: Contemporary Performing Arts, encompassing the diverse fields and expressions of contemporary performing arts: acting, dance, music, text, movement, performance art, audiovisual communication, and related skills."

The Classification code (IKK) of the Academic Bachelor study programme "Contemporary Performing Arts" is 43212. Following this code 212 corresponds to the ISCED field of "Arts" subsection "Music and performing arts". 43 corresponds to LQF/EQF sixth level, the study programme outcomes are formulated in accordance with the levels. The degree to be obtained when successfully fulfilling all requirements is Bachelor in Humanitarian Sciences in Music and Performing Arts.

The learning outcomes of the programme are described in SAR (p.147, mentioned above) as following; "to work professionally and regularly increase mastery in various forms of performing arts – acting, music, the art of movement and gesture, writing, dance, performance art, and audiovisual communication; participate in the development of the professional field of performing arts."

The relation of the title, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are bearing the marks of the somewhat forcefully change of the programme already assessed under point 2.1.1 of SAR (pp.16-23). Upon studying the documents Map of courses of the study programme and COURSE DESCRIPTIPONS_LSM_30_11 it is clear that this programme remains heavily biassed toward acting. For instance, it is hard to be assured a degree in music can be supported by a programme with one practical and one theoretical course dedicated to music. This amount of music training is typical for drama actors that can possibly venture into the realm of musical or voice performance, but surely not in the realm of Opera or any other, more demanding singing forms.

It is also disputable the programme can be qualified as scientific as usually theory is not the main focus on programmes training performing art practitioners but rather in the realm of humanities or liberal arts. In conclusion, the degree, aims, and learning outcomes are related, however not as tightly as they used to be before the proposed programme change. The competencies and learning outcomes declared for this programme are typically addressed via independent programmes of performing art studies. As already mentioned, this is a consequence of attempting to cover an artistic and academic territory that cannot be addressed within one BA programme.

The duration and scope of the study programme implementation are reasonable for the study of acting or perhaps drama theatre derivatives of performing arts. To obtain mastery in all proposed competencies such as music, dance or writing, the programme would need to implement a far more flexible and bigger structure with several branches of the study in later stages, thus a far more complex implementation of subjects.

The programme, as it is usual for the study of traditional drama, is based upon the national language. This, however, is not the norm with music, dance, and other non-verbal performing arts programmes. In the light of the changes of the programme and proposed outcomes, limiting it to Latvian language presents a weakness, especially considering the non-existing data about the enrolment interest for such a new and unorthodox programme.

2.1.3.

As described in detail in SAR (point 3.1.1., pp.144-145), the programme was fundamentally changed in the year 2017 in accordance with several legislative and strategic documents at national and university level. The analysis for the reason for the changes is present, however the data is anecdotal and bases on anonymous opinions and is not referenced with any empirical support.
The first (and only) admissions took place in the 2017/2018 academic year. 16 students were admitted with the aim of joining the Liepāja Theatre acting company after graduation. In 2021 – a very specific reason. Due to the unusual nature of this programme, we can not access any corrections made to the programme because we are effectively looking at one generation of students.
However, the hybrid nature of the programme would benefit from exactly that – meticulous and in-depth analysis of the programme outcomes and feasibility in larger Latvian and international space. That is, if the programme aims to equip students for more than being employed by a local theatre troupe. This was a nominal priority of the programme as described in SAR on page 142 (description of the basic indicators of the programme), however one that expired.

Changes in this programme have little support in documented analysis and research, not surveys or discussion, hinting at an internal closed circle of quality assessment regarding this programme. In the light of strategic changes to the whole LiepU, this might present a vulnerability, since this proposal is almost as proposing a programme for its inaugural accreditation. While this is worrying, the same exotic long interval of programme dormancy gives a lot of time to implement assessment and corrections before the next generation of students will enrol in the programme. It is a situation truly hard to assess by the standard and implemented mechanisms of strategic planning and quality control.

2.1.4.

As stated in SAR (p. 144, mentioned above), the 16 students were admitted with the aim of joining the Liepāja Theatre acting company after graduation. In 2021, 10 actors graduated and were employed as actors at the Liepāja Theatre and Liepāja Puppet Theatre that same year.

The social justification of the past programme is not disputable. It rests on existing local need for performing artists and performing arts support, as in the Great Amber Concert Hall case, and future predictions. Among general positive projections in development of the cultural sector is also hosting the European Capital of Culture.

However, this economic justification is very unusual to assess, as the programme is aimed at equipping a limited number of students / generation with the goal of direct employment in local theatre houses (SAR, point 3.1.3., pp. 148-149). As the majority of the generation is already employed, we could conclude the economic justification is excellent. This however contains a potential severe exposure to future problems regardless if assessing the old or new programme. The next generation of students will not be able to find employment in the same institutions, as those are probably mostly filled up for a decade or more. How economically just this programme is beyond this direct employment concept is very questionable and impossible to assess upon the scarce data collected and referenced.

2.1.5.

N/A

Conclusions on this set of criteria, by specifying strengths and weaknesses

Conclusions:
Compliance of the study programme with the study field of the programme is largely established, featuring certain qualities, especially in the field of course preparation and composition. However, the programme faces challenges trying to expand out of the field of acting and thus chooses to face a task that might not be achievable in its present scope and structure.

The identity and name of the programme should be strategically reconsidered, especially in the light of its unusual execution intervals and motivations for its establishment. Without careful revaluation and strategic plan this programme will easily steer out of compliance with the study field as it is trying to establish a field that, rightfully, doesn't exist in educational processes - contemporary performing arts. At the same time, the programme is not distributing its foci equally among various fields of performing arts such as drama, music, dance, writing, etc.

Strengths:

1. Excellently prepared single courses.
2. Potential for interdisciplinarity and further studies.

Weaknesses:
1. Unusual intervals of the execution of the programme.
2. No constant internal quality assessment based on factual finding and surveys.
3. Uncertainty of economic justification beyond the first generation of students.
4. The programme is not equally addressing the whole range of outcomes in performing arts, as it is expected from its title.

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1.

The programme complies with national regulations or professional qualification requirements as it's developed in accordance with several local, national, international, and internal acts and strategies as described in SAR (point.3.2.1.pp.144-147).

The total study scope and duration are defined within 160 CP full-time 8 semesters with 10 CP dedicated to bachelor thesis (theoretical, written part, and performative part) and 2CP dedicated to preparation and defence of the thesis. The study programme consists of a compulsory part of 63 CP, a limited elective part of 83 CP, and a free elective part of 2 CP. Thematically, the study programme can be divided into three significant fields - principles and methodology of performing arts featuring such courses as Drama Theory and Analysis, Acting, and Performance Art Theory, Stage Speech Methodology, Stage Speech, Stage Gesture, Movement and Performance, and such (124 CP in total). The history and contemporary practices of stage art and arts generally feature such courses as History of Latvian Theatre, History of World Literature, Culture and Theatre, History of Art, and similar (14 CP in total). The interdisciplinary courses focus on contemporary performing arts featuring courses like Performing Arts Project Management, Developing a Performing Arts Project, Narrative Forms and Creation of Texts for Stage, and similar (22 CP in total). As we can see, the study programme features a strong emphasis on practical and in-depth studies of stagecraft and related topics; the fact can exemplify this that some of the courses feature a large number of CPs, e.g., Acting and Performance Art Practice: I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VII, 28 credits; Stage Dance and Performance: I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, 14 credits, Vocal Skills: I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, 12 credits and so on. The study programme features mandatory State, Civil, and Environmental Protection courses for those who have not previously finished this course. The study programme does comply with state education standards regarding academic education, given the lack of a C part.

The content of the study programme is topical. However, it bears the characteristics mentioned in section 3.2.1. The content of the study courses is interconnected and complementary in a wider sense of performing arts occupations, with a remaining clear emphasis on acting for drama. The descriptions of the courses and academic staff of the course are excellent and provide a very sound foundation for this exciting venture. However, the RT believes that the programme would need to be executed in shorter intervals to receive feedback and change according to constant monitoring and evaluation of the results.

The content of the programme has a few incoherences regarding the objectives of the programme and learning outcomes. The first on page 142 of SAR is described as follows: "to work professionally and regularly increase mastery in performing arts – acting, music, the art of movement and gesture,

writing, dance, performance art, and audiovisual communication; participate in developing the professional field of performing arts." Mastery of music, the art of movement, writing, dance, and audiovisual communication is not an obtainable study outcome regarding the course descriptions of the programme. One can claim the programmer's outcome is fundamental skills of those fields, but not mastery. There are study programmes fully dedicated to all those fields, and even they can produce a study outcome of mastery only on the higher level of courses. The only mastery this programme can objectively produce is acting for stage and performative arts.

There could also be a more suitable title for this hybrid programme. As we understand, the structure of the course might be an attempt on a contemporary course – it is still a course of mostly traditionally performing arts while the term "contemporary" alludes to a programme covering non-traditional performing arts. The term "contemporary performing art" by itself is rather ambiguous and hard to define. In the programme it appears to be addressed by a heavily weighted course "Acting and Performance Art Theory": I, II, III, IV, V, VI – a course paralleled in weight only by "Stage Speech Methodology": I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII. Both courses are of a theoretical nature. While theory is important in the foundational drama courses, it seems the emphasis in this course is rather heavy and would usually be found either in the programmes of dramaturgy or theoretical theatre studies. As mentioned before, contemporary performing arts are a very narrow segment at best. The RT is not aware of any course that would focus solely on contemporary performing arts such as endurance art, avatar and proxy performances, installation, body art, VR performance etc. Needless to say, all those innovations are based on traditional skills, as does this programme.

The programme has met the needs of the industry, labour market in the past as it was closely linked to employment in the local theatres that are co-founders of the programme. In the meeting with regional employers, the RT has seen great satisfaction with the programme and conviction the programme serves the local needs of performing art graduates on several levels. This is a very favourable situation that, however, does not prove the feasibility of the programme in a wider sense.

As already mentioned in section 3.2.1, it is hard to measure how the needs would be met if the renewed programme were executed every year and without the sponsorship of the partnership theatre. There is a general upward trend in the regional performing arts sector; however, no statistical or empirical information would support these vernacular conclusions.

However – all written above is observation from the angle of traditional performing arts courses that focus on one of the skills or theory. As the RT met with students of the expired acting programme, there is no way to assess student satisfaction with the proposed programme. This makes passing evaluations of the programmes harder again. The RT believes LiepU has ventured into a complicated and slippery territory with this course that needs to be closely monitored, evaluated and constantly adapted to discover a new hybrid form that works. This is hardly possible as the course is conducted at intervals of six years. Accessing this study field is not entirely possible with the usual standards for reaccreditation as the RT is accessing either the defunct study or the changed one that has never been performed.

The RT believes this study programme needs fresh licensing and not an extension of accreditation.

2.2.2.
N/A

2.2.3.

The study implementation methods contribute to the aims and outcomes of the programme. They are well-structured and executed traditional and more contemporary methods as described in the SAR (point 3.4.2., p.154). Despite the promise of "contemporary" in the programme's title, RT must admit that classical methods are used to educate actors by implementing the programme. The students and alumni reported satisfaction with teaching principles and methods contributing to two desired learning outcomes. However, those students have been a part of a programme that expired due to the proposed renewed programme the RT is assessing.

The aims and learning outcomes of the new programme are very broad. They would require a more comprehensive range and study customisation via limited elective courses or even branches of the programme.

The progression of skills is described as following in SAR on page 151 (point 3.2.1., pp. 150-155); "/.../ a gradual progression from the study of general humanities and arts courses /.../ to the study of the theoretical and practical aspects of professional specialisation in the field of contemporary performing arts (Acting and Performance Art Theory: /.../ Acting and Performance Art Practice/.../ Stage Speech Methodology /.../ Stage Speech /.../ Performing Arts Project Management; Vocal Skills /.../ Stage Gesture, Movement, and Performance /.../ Stage Dance and Performance /.../ Developing a Performing Arts Project; Study Assignment)". This is a primarily achievable outcome when related to the expired programme or "Acting." It, however, only begins to cover the whole range of performing arts.

If the whole range of performing arts were addressed, a further assessment of implementing new methods and strengthening student-centred learning would need to be introduced.

2.2.4.
N/A

2.2.5.
N/A

2.2.6.
The topics of students' BA thesis in theory and practice correspond to the study programme and reflect upon practical projects conducted in the expired programme "Acting," such as described on page 156 of SAR (point 3.2.6., p. 156):

- Creating the role of Ņikita in Dmitrijs Petrenko's production 'Cietsirdīgās spēles.'
- Ērika in the diploma show 'Cietsirdīgās spēles,' and Lūcija in the diploma show 'Diagnoze jaunība.' Development of roles and theoretical background.
- Development of roles for the diploma show 'Harolds un Pīle' at the Liepāja Puppet Theatre. Development of the role of Kai in the diploma show 'Cietsirdīgās spēles' and its theoretical basis.
- Preparation for the role of Junkers in Dmitrijs Petrenko's 'Cietsirdīgās spēles'.
- Role of Daisy in the bachelor play 'Diagnoze — jaunība' and its theoretical basis. Development of the role of Frēders in the show 'Diagnoze — jaunība' and its theoretical basis. Working on the roles of Junkers and Ēriks in the diploma show 'Cietsirdīgās spēles'.
- Role of Neļa in the diploma show 'Cietsirdīgās spēles' and its theoretical basis.
- Development of the role of Marija in 'Diagnoze — jaunība' by Māra Ķimele.

Conclusions on this set of criteria, by specifying strengths and weaknesses

Conclusion:

The content of the study programme is topical in a wider sense of the performing arts and the well planned courses and modules are interconnected, complementary and correspond to the partially unclear or too broad objectives of the programme. The programme ensures the achievement of the fundamental learning outcomes, while it sets its ambitions too high in regard to supporting and complementary skills and competencies. Those do add a certain multidisciplinary shoulder to the programme, however such weighting of the courses doesn't support claim mastery in all branches of performing arts.

The original programme was tailored to meet the needs of the industry and especially the limited local labour market created mainly by three venues in Liepaja. While this is understandable, it raises the vulnerability of the new programme, as the local labour market is too small to create a sustainable demand for new graduates. This puts the programme into a precarious and exotic execution in lengthy intervals. These intervals might prevent the programme from developing, changing and adapting to new circumstances and would require a special and inventive solution to reshaping the programme for each generation.

The proposed new programme displays a reasonable and justified attempt to expand beyond "acting" and approaches this aim via the vague and undefined category of "contemporary performing arts". The RT finds this an attempt to widen the academic and practical art field without presenting additional costs and organisational challenges to the LiepU. Perhaps this can be a start and lead to a new programme, however the RT would expect a more detailed strategic plan with more support in documented research and self assessment as it would be with an inaugural accreditation of a new programme.

Strengths:
1. Compliance with several local, national, international and organisational strategic documents.
2. Relevant objectives of the course for regional job market and social needs.
3. Exactly described and constructed courses.

Weaknesses:
1. Instances of unobtainable programme outcomes regarding course structure and description of the programme.
2. No analysis and lack of collected data for self assessment of the programme, which could be a foundation for introducing changes to the next generation of the programme.

Assessment of the requirement [5] (applicable only to master's or doctoral study programmes)

1 R5 - The study programme for obtaining a master's or doctoral degree is based on the achievements and findings of the respective field of science or field of artistic creation.

 Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

 N/A

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1.

The study provisions are described in SAR (point 3.3.1., p.157) and demonstrate good material conditions for studying this programme. The spaces include an assembly hall with a stage (200 seats) for professional specialisation classes (acting and performing arts, vocal lessons, and stage speech classes). Other auxiliary premises serve the specifics of a programme, including physical activities, which are shared on the university level.

SAR on page 157 claims that "In the development plan of the LiepU, it is planned to restore and arrange the building Kr. Valdemāra Street 4, which will expand the availability of premises, incl. for learning performing arts". The development plan to support this claim is not presented in the documents delivered to RT; however, that would consolidate the space for the programme that is notorious for considerable demands on space, especially in the field of dance and stage movement. This is especially important for the students to establish early contact with audiences and perform for them as often as possible.
Without doubting the claims from SAR, the RT wonders if such significant investments are plausible and will be realised in light of such an impermanent and rarely executed programme.

In general, crosschecking of literature units added in course descriptions with the LiepU library catalogue (https://alise.liepu.lv/Alise/lv/home.aspx) points out that most literature is available to students in the library. During the on-site visit, the experts' panel can confirm that the library indeed features quite a considerable collection regarding pedagogy, arts, theatre, and the history of arts. There are no indications that there could be literature availability issues with theoretical study courses. However, it must be noted that some study courses feature unjustifiably extensive lists of compulsory literature (in some cases, more than 20), suggesting that the actual literature used is more minor, as there is no realistic possibility that students are required to read all of the compulsory literature. In addition, the study programme is highly practical; therefore, any nominal shortcomings of library collection can be fixed by providing scanned excerpts for necessary course readings, as it is common practice in this institution.

2.3.2.
N/A

2.3.3.

Funding is addressed in SAR (point 3.3.3., p.158) and characterised by programme's uniqueness in Latvia and Kurzeme's region, thus, its financing can be made up of students' personal funding. If it is impossible to complete the minimum number of students in the group (14), students' matriculation to the programme does not occur, thus, no costs appear.
The municipality cofinanced the implementation of the previous study programme "Acting": at 67,176 euros per year. Based on the labour market requirements of the Liepāja and Kurzeme region, before the planned admission to the programme "Contemporary Performing Arts," a cooperation agreement on the amount of co-financing will be concluded with the municipality.
This model appears feasible in its uniqueness, as it adapts to the actual interest for the study and the unusual schedule of the programme execution. However, this model can become vulnerable if the programme sets goals for being executed more regularly, admitting students that do not necessarily keep affiliation to local institutions after graduation. This is one of the many questions that should be addressed, discussing and charting the future of this programme.

Conclusions on this set of criteria, by specifying strengths and weaknesses

Conclusions:

The study and informative provisions, material, and technical conditions comply with the study field and provide elementary but satisfactory and not limiting circumstances for the study. Ambitious investment plans are welcoming but slightly unconvincing and infeasible regarding the long intervals of programme execution and uncertain future.

Financial provisions are regulated and comply with specific features and conditions for implementing the study programme.

However, it must be noted that the financing of the study programme is not straightforward. The primary financial basis for implementing this study programme is state funding; however, given the specific scope of this programme, additional funding is needed, as indicated by LiepU representatives during the on-site meeting. The last iteration of programme was co-funded by the state municipality (through the framework of supporting the Liepāja Theatre). However, it is unclear to what extent this support can be continued, as the study programme previously depended on additional funding from the local municipality. There is no clear vision from the LiepU side as well regarding the timeframe of the implementation of the programme, as LiepU management and study programme management provided conflicting information on when the study programme will enroll students. Therefore funding of programme can be considered a work-in-progress as there are still unknown factors involved (e.g., possibility and scope of Theatre and Municipality support- however, during on-site visits, representatives mentioned readiness to support the programme in some capacity).

Strengths:
1. Solid material conditions.
2. Unusual but available funding regarding the uniqueness of the programme initiated by local performing arts institutions.
3. Ambition to consolidate the study programme in a newly created and expanded concept.

Weaknesses:
1. Financing strategies may fail or become insufficient with the costs of the new facility.
2. Financing strategies may fail in case of the more normal execution of the programme and enrolment of students without premeditated affiliations with local art institutions.
3. Financial provisions might fall if the Liepāja Theatre and Liepāja Puppet Theatre fill their openings.
4. Vulnerable and questionable investment aspirations for such an impermanent and rarely executed programme.

Assessment of the requirement [6]

1 R6 - Compliance of the study provision, science provision (if applicable), informative provision (including library), material and technical provision and financial provision with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and ensuring the achievement of learning outcomes

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The study and informative provisions, material and technical conditions are compliant with the study field and provide elementary but satisfactory and not limiting circumstances for the study. Ambitious investment plans are welcoming, but slightly unconvincing and infeasible regarding the long intervals of programme execution and uncertain future. Financial provisions are regulated and comply with specific features and the conditions for the implementation of the study programme.

This is the assessment of the programme "Acting" as the only one the RT can assess. The

proposed new programme, however, is hard to evaluate beyond the present national framework of study financing.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1.

The qualification of teaching staff implementing the study programme can be evaluated using quantitative and qualitative indicators.

Based on Section 33 2) of Chapter IV of the Law on Higher Education Institutions and Appendix II 3.7. of the package of documents submitted for accreditation of LiepU, "Evaluation of the qualifications of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programme," can provide orienting guidance on compliance of the qualifications of the teaching staff involved in implementing the study programme with the requirements of regulatory acts. The total number of teaching staff involved in the programme is twenty-four, of whom fourteen are lecturers elected to academic positions at LiepU. Three of LiepU's elected lecturers have a master's degree, and eleven – have a doctoral degree, which makes up nearly 80% of the total number of lecturers and is a high-quality indicator. Supposing all the lecturers involved in the programme implementation were evaluated according to the mentioned criterion, then in that case, even though the programme is artistically and practically oriented, lecturers with doctoral degrees make up 60% of the entire teaching staff. Considering that the programme is not being implemented at the moment, the mentioned teaching staff plan to be involved in implementing the programme in the future.

The qualification of the teaching staff involved is adequate and enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes on the theoretical and practical levels.

The leadership is aware of the importance of engaging art practitioners to ensure the acquisition of specific skills, particularly in puppetry, object theatre, creative writing, etc., as workshop instructors, on a temporary basis. The tight connection of the programme with Liepāja Theatre "potentially enables the hiring of foreign specialists who work as guest directors at Liepāja Theatre." (SAR, point 3.4., pp.158-161). While this is true and favorable as an extracurricular activity, it can not present the basis of the planned curriculum of practical training as the base of this course. The SAR mentions, "a cooperation agreement for the training of actors was concluded with Klaipėda University, so potentially Lithuanian performing arts specialists could also be used as guest instructors."

The programme has a solid academic staff in theory and history but struggles a bit more with practical courses assembled in the so-called part B of the programme. This also is a consequence of the exotic scheduling of programme execution and needs to be addressed in future strategic plans.

2.4.2.

Based on the goal set in point 1 of the "Study field "Art" development plan for 2022-2027" namely to stabilise and balance the quantitative and qualitative indicators of the academic staff, supporting the performance of scientific activities (including successful doctoral studies) as far as possible, raising the qualifications of academic and management staff and attracting professionals, as well as specific measures to achieve this goal, as well as evaluating Appendix II 3.7. of the package of documents submitted for accreditation of LiepU, "Evaluation of the qualifications of the teaching

staff involved in the implementation of the study program," RT can conclude that the university is taking purposeful and planned measures that improve study in the event of a change in the composition of the teaching staff, the quality of the programme implementation, and the compliance of the study programme with the requirements. Discussions with alums showed no shortcomings or negative comments regarding the teaching staff composition.

2.4.3.
N/A

2.4.4.

Although the "Contemporary Performing Art" academic study programme has a more practical orientation, significant academic potential with a doctorate is involved in its realisation. Evaluating Chapter II 2.4.4._2. of the appendix "List of publications, patents, creative artistic works of teaching staff for the reporting period" of the package of documents submitted for accreditation of LiepU, it can be concluded that, in general, the scientific and artistic performance of the teaching staff during the last six years corresponds to the provisions of Article 34 (5) of the Law on Higher Education Institutions. The number of works included in peer-reviewed editions of publications in the programme, including SCOPUS and other databases, is proportionally higher for professors and associate professors, especially in linguistics and philology. The aspect of applicability dominates the publications of industry practitioners. These can be evaluated more nationally, while creative work is not so easily quantifiable, nor can any criteria of mutual comparability be applied. The quantitative indicators provided by the law have been met regarding creative work.

2.4.5.

"During the development and study of the programme, there was intensive cooperation among the academic staff: regular communication took place, aligning the course objectives and study outcomes with the overall goals and outcomes of the programme." (SAR, point 3.4.5., p.161). A mechanism for the cooperation of the teaching staff in implementing the study programme has been established in an informal and not documented way.

While this kind of communication and mechanism is a hallmark of many art programmes, it does not entirely fit the purpose. It is not a case of good practice, especially regarding programmes that are exotic and hybrid. In the light of the macro changes LiepU is facing, the future of this programme especially needs the strong cooperation of several entities involved (students, staff, representatives of professional environment etc.) to explore and forge changes that will fully correspond to the challenge. As the programme is not running this may be done via a symposia or a similar, documented event.

Conclusions on this set of criteria, by indicating strengths and weaknesses

Conclusions:
The programme's teaching staff fully meets the requirements set forth in the laws and regulations and the needs of programme implementation. This assessment is however limited by the fact that the past executed program is not the same as the proposed programme. The RT assessment capability is therefore limited.

Strengths:

1. The programme has excellent academic staff in the area of general education and theoretical subjects; this potential could be used at higher levels of study.

Weaknesses:
1. No formal mechanism for the cooperation of the teaching staff in implementing the study programme.
2. The unclear and not yet fully stabilised structure of the programme sometimes prevents the use of the full potential of the teaching staff involved in it.

Assessment of the requirement [7]

1 R7 - Compliance of the qualification of the academic staff and visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting docents, visiting lecturers and visiting assistants with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements set out in the respective regulatory enactments.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The programme's teaching staff is competent and perfectly suitable to deliver practical, artistic and theoreticals competencies to the students and has prepared impeccable structured courses. It included many established practitioners that meet the need for the specific learning methods and implementation of the programme.

2.5. Assessment of the Compliance

Requirements

1 1 - The study programme complies with the State Academic Education Standard or the Professional Higher Education Standard

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Attached document ("Compliance with the study programme with the State Education Standard.docx") confirms that the study programme complies with Cabinet regulation No. 240 "Noteikumi par valsts akadēmiskās izglītības standartu"

2 2 - The study programme complies with a valid professional standard or the requirements for the professional qualification (if there is no professional standard required for the relevant occupation) provided if the completion of the study programme leads to a professional qualification (if applicable)

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

3 3 - The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in all languages in which the study programme is implemented, and they comply with the requirements set forth in Section 561 , Paragraph two and Section 562 , Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Attached study course descriptions ("ENG Studiju kursu apraksti_LSM_30_11 .pdf") are prepared in Latvian. Descriptions complies with regulations set forth in Law on Higher Education Institutions.

4 4 - The sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme complies with the procedure according to which state recognised documents of higher education are issued.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The provided Diploma sample complies with the procedure by which state recognized documents of higher education are issued according to MK No. 202 "Kārtība, kādā izsniedz valsts atzītus augstāko izglītību apliecinošus dokumentus".

5 5 - The academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements set forth in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

In A and B parts are involved in total 6 professors and 3 associated professors. This is confirmed by LiepU letter "Certification of "Arts" Academic Staff Compliance with Requirements" and other documents.

6 6 - Academic study programmes provided for less than 250 full-time students may be implemented and less than five professors and associated professors of the higher education institution may be involved in the implementation of the mandatory and limited elective part of these study programmes provided that the relevant opinion of the Council for Higher Education has been received in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

7 7 - At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of an academic doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field of science. At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a professional doctoral study programme in arts (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

8 8 - The teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme are proficient in the official language in accordance with the regulations on the level of the official language knowledge and the procedures for testing official language proficiency for performing professional duties and office duties.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Confirmation letter ("27.09.2022_1.-1.6._378.edoc") and attached resumes verifies that state language proficiency is compliant with Cabinet regulations No. 733 "Noteikumi par valsts valodas zināšanu apjomu, valsts valodas prasmes pārbaudes kārtību un valsts nodevu par valsts valodas prasmes pārbaudi".

9 9 - The teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language, if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

10 10 - The sample of the study agreement complies with the mandatory provisions to be included in the study agreement.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The sample of the attached study agreement complies with Cabinet regulations No 70, "Studiju līgumā obligāti ietveramie noteikumi".

11 11 - The higher education institution / college has provided confirmation that students will be provided with opportunities to continue their education in another study programme or another higher education institution or college (agreement with another accredited higher education institution or college) if the implementation of the study programme is terminated.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Attached contract Nr. 1.-2017/65 with Latvian Academy of Culture confirms that institution provides possibility to continue studies in Academic Bachelor study programme "Dramatic Theatre Acting".

12 12 - The higher education institution / college has provided confirmation that students are guaranteed compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the study programme's license is revoked due to the actions (actions or omissions) of the higher education institution or college and the student does not wish to continue studies in another study programme.

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

LiepU confirmation letter No1.-1.6./367 states, that students are guaranteed compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the college (actions or failure to act) and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme. However, in the study agreement there is "2.1.6. To provide a possibility to continue studies in another study programme or another educational institution, if the implementation of the study programme in LiepU, mentioned in the clause 1.1. of the Agreement, is terminated. If the Student does not agree with opportunities for study continuation offered by LiepU, LiepU reimburses to the Student the paid study fee for the last semester of studies in accordance with clause 3.1." The current version of the study agreement is only partially compliant with requirements, as compensation should be guaranteed in full, not partially. The ability to complete a study programme in full and the possibility to receive a degree in chosen institution constitutes the main right of enrolled students. If the study programme licence is revoked or the study programme is not accredited due to actions of LiepU, student financial status in regard to tuition fees must be returned to the position before the infringement of rights as students in their good faith have believed in the ability to fully finish study programmes in chosen institutions.

13 13 - The joint study programmes comply with the requirements prescribed in Section 55.(1), Paragraphs one, two, and seven of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (if applicable)

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

14 14 - Compliance with the requirements specified in other regulatory enactments that apply to the study programme being assessed (if applicable)

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Assessment of the requirement [8]

1 R8 - Compliance of the study programme with the requirements set forth in the Law on Higher Education Institutions and other regulatory enactments.

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Study programme generally complies with regulatory enactments, however compensation in case of closure should be guaranteed in full.

General conclusions about the study programme, indicating the most important strengths and weaknesses of the study programme

Conclusions:
The programme is fully compliant, despite its too ambitious and slightly misleading naming. The

compliance of the programme is challenged by the unusual intervals between programme's execution that cast a handful of irregular changes on its execution, implementation, and quality assessment. The programme needs strategic planning for the future regarding its feasibility and mission in the Latvian education landscape. Because of the irregularity of the execution, the RT can't assess and foresee the future editions of the programme.

As of now study programme enjoys the benefit of the doubt of the RT, given other available factual indicators. The title change from "Acting" to "Contemporary Performing Arts" casts new -broader - dimensions on the programme that might not necessarily align with the requirements of the previous study programme intended to prepare actors for Liepāja Theatre. Therefore there is no factual basis on which the updated study programme can be evaluated.

Strengths:

1. Excellently described and prepared single courses.
2. Potential for interdisciplinarity and further studies.
3. Compliance with several local, national, international, and organisational strategic documents.
4. Relevant course objectives for the regional job market and social needs.
5. Solid material conditions.
6. Unusual but functional funding regarding the uniqueness of the programme.
7. Ambitions for consolidating the study programme at a new dedicated facility.
8. The programme has excellent academic staff that possesses the needed flexibility to reflect the contemporary aspect in the area of general education, art practices, and theoretical subjects; this potential could be used at higher levels of study.

Weaknesses:

1. Unusual intervals of the execution of the programme.
2. No constant internal quality assessment based on factual findings and surveys.
3. Uncertainty of economic justification beyond the first generation of students.
4. Instances of unobtainable programme outcomes regarding course structure and description of the (new) programme.
5. No analysis and lack of collected data for self-assessment of the programme that could be a foundation for introducing changes to the next generation of students.
6. Questionable and impermanent demand of limited local labour market.
7. Financing strategies may fail or become insufficient with the costs of the new facility.
8. Financing strategies may fail in case of more regular execution of the programme and enrollment of students without a strategic plan, including partnering institutions.
9. Lack of documented and in-depth analysis, including all participants as the basis for the proposed changes in the new programme.

Evaluation of the study programme "Contemporary Performing Arts"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Average

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Contemporary Performing Arts"

Short-term recommendations

Addressing the future strategy of the programme with the management of LiepU or the management of the newly established joint institution in regard to present very specific local motivation, structure, and schedule of execution.

Establishing a more traditional and predictable schedule of the programme executions.
Defining the programme's strategic aim either focusing it on acting or expanding it and introducing modular study offering dedicated modules to writing, directing, musical theatre, dance, etc.
Preparing a data supported assessment of the long term feasibility of the programme in the region and Latvia.
A formal mechanism for the cooperation of the teaching staff in implementing the study programme strategy should be implemented.
The RT believes this program would need fresh licensing not reaccreditation as too many changes are being introduced and the frequency of execution is not clear. Additionally the architecture of the programme is very unusual and would require a strong academic evaluation and assessment backed up by statistics and measurable information.

Long-term recommendations

Conceptually reevaluate the new study programme model that leaves the traditional performing arts architecture so it will fit long-term usability and evaluate its goals and the results to be obtained.
Assess the costs and economic feasibility of the new programme and the interest of current supporters for the new programme.

II - "New Media Art and Design" ASSESSMENT

II - "New Media Art and Design" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1.

Academic Bachelor study programme "New Media Art and Design"(43213) corresponding to audiovisual and media arts, is part of the full-cycle studies in new media arts and creative technologies, offering further studies in the Academic Master study programme"New Media and Audiovisual Art" (45213) (joint with RISEBA University of Applied Sciences) and the Doctoral study programme "Media Art and Creative Technologies" (51213) (joint with RISEBA University of Applied Sciences) which LiepU implements in the "Arts" study field is the framework of the programme as described in SAR, (point 3.1.2.,pp.116-119). It prides itself in providing a unique education in the Latvian context, combining digital competencies, knowledge of art and media theories and forms of visual art and design expression.

The programme's conception is extremely wide – an apparent trait of all programmes in the "Arts" study field at LiepU, and focuses on the use of modern tools of creation and channels of distribution. While the term new media originates in the ancient 90s, it is not clear what exactly the new programme aim is. Despite the misnomer in the name of the programme, it is structured as a BA media communication course with emphasis on electronic media.

The programme is compliant with the study field, despite a few discrepancies RT will mention below.

2.1.2.

The Classification code (IKK) of the Academic Bachelor study programme "New Media Art and Design" is 43213. Following this code, 213 corresponds to the ISCED field of "Arts" subsection "Audiovisual Art and Media Art". 43 corresponds to LQF/EQF sixth level, the study programme outcomes are formulated in accordance with the levels. The degree to obtained when successfully fulfilling all requirements is Bachelor of Arts in Audiovisual Arts and Media Arts.

The title of the programme is interrelated with the programme; however not entirely precise as the course is not focused only on "new media" (VR and immersive technologies) – it hosts classes in printmaking, illustration, cinema, photography, etc. This is now a weakness of the course that provides a perfect entry into the field of media content creation, just a misnomer that perhaps isn't of grave importance.

Regarding the learning outcomes, once again we encountered an overly light usage of the term "mastery" as used in the SAR (description of the study programme form and results, p. 113) when describing the results as: "regularly increase mastery in various forms of new media art – audiovisual media and sound art, immersive and interactive media art, multimedia performance art, animation, digital graphic design, interactive digital product and service design." This is perhaps again only a clumsy translation or an unimportant detail.

The duration and scope of the study programme is reasonable and justified. The language of the programme is Latvian, which is in contradiction with LiepU's aim of attracting international students. This is however, a common challenge for universities operating in countries with non widely spoken languages.

2.1.3.

"The most significant changes in the programme parameters are related to the consolidation of the programmes in line with the higher education reform and resource optimisation initiated by the Ministry of Education and Science, integrating the competences of the teaching staff of the Professional Bachelor study programme " Design" into the Academic Bachelor study programme " New Media Arts" , expanding it in line with the interests expressed by graduates and employers, and creating two study directions - new media arts and new media design." (SAR, point 3.1.1., pp.114-116). The programme is undergoing a major programmatic shift, consolidating two programmes and abandoning programmes that experienced low student interest – interior design and product design.

These changes appear rational and are executed well. They also explain the name of the new programme that, however, doesn't need to compile the names of programmes it is merging. The programme's conception is extremely wide – an apparent trait of all programmes in the "Arts" study field at LiepU, and focuses on the use of modern tools of creation and channels of distribution. While the term new media originates in the ancient 90s, it is not clear what exactly the new programme aim is. Despite the misnomer in the name of the programme, it is structured as a BA media communication course with emphasis on electronic media.

Because of those changes, the applicant also appeals to the Accreditation Committee on page 114 of SAR "to allow the 3rd year students (9 people) of the current professional bachelor programme

"Design" to graduate from the professional study programme "Design" also in the academic year 2023/2024 and in June 2024." This appeal is justified, and RT supports a positive committee ruling.

In the light of such big structural changes, it is rather hard to assess the smaller corrections established programmes are subjected to. It is more like assessing a newly accredited programme.

2.1.4.

The number of enrolled students is described in SAR on page 122 (point 3.2.1., pp.122-124) as: "The three-year Bachelor's degree programme "New Media Art" currently has 50 students, but if combined with the Bachelor's degree programme "Design", the programme would have over 90 students. The enrolments for 2021 and 2022 saw an increase in first-year students – 29 students in 2021 and 22 students in 2022, respectively." The regional cultural and media development and the testimonies of most alumni justify the existence of this programme fully. The programme is exceptionally well frequented and enjoys local and regional popularity and praise from local employers.

Growing cultural industries in the region as depicted in SAR (point 3.1.3., pp.119-121) support the economic feasibility of the programme.

2.1.5.
N/A

Conclusions on this set of criteria, by specifying strengths and weaknesses

Conclusions:

The Academic Bachelor study programme "New Media Art and Design"(43213) is the first stage of LiepU's "Arts" study field, which is united by the paramount orientation towards contemporary art and new technologies. It is followed by related studies in master's and doctoral programmes. Despite the endlessly wide range of study courses, which is evidenced not only by the many course names but also by the number of teaching staff involved in the studies (it exceeds the number of students) and somewhat misleading title, overall the programme has succeeded, and its structure is convincing. Despite this, the programme would benefit from more detailed description of learning outcomes in regards to its interdisciplinary composition.

Growing cultural industries in the region, as mentioned above, support the economic feasibility of the programme and present good ground for further development of the study field across all three levels of education.

Strengths:
1. Multidisciplinary programme with wide field coverage and focused on upcoming technologies.
2. Dedicated leadership, academic staff and students community.
3. Strong popularity and enrolment.
4. Growing cultural industries in the region support the economic feasibility of the programme.

Weaknesses:
1. Slight misnomer in the naming of the programme regarding the expression "new" media.
2. Lack of documentations, surveys and empirical internal quality assessment across the study field.

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1.

The academic Bachelor study programme "New Media Art and Design"(43213) is an original art view application focused on thematising contemporary art issues, various performative practices, media arts, and creative technologies.

The goals and objectives of the programme are based on Latvia's National Development Plan 2021-2027, which includes comprehensive changes in all sectors, "putting human-technology interaction at the centre" (SAR, point 3.2.1., pp.122-124), and other national strategic documents and guidelines that are well charted and ambitious, however often disregards the contemplation about methods of actual implementations.

The total study scope and duration are defined within 120 CP full-time six semesters with 12 CP dedicated to the bachelor thesis and its preparation (theoretical and performative part). The programme comprises a compulsory part of 60 CP limited elective part of 40 CP. The study programme does not feature a free elective (C) study part - LiepU documentation provides information that there is a (C) part in the amount of 8CP; however, it features a limited list of courses. The study plan should be designed to allow students the flexibility to choose any LiepU course as part of their C component. This freedom of course selection should be reflected in the study plan. The study programme features mandatory State, Civil, and Environmental Protection courses. The study programme is organised in 4 large thematic blocks - guidelines, principles, and methodology in the field of science featuring courses such as Introduction to New Media Studies, Art and Design Research Methodology, Modelling for New Media, and similar (total of 26 CP). History of and current issues in the new media field -featuring courses like History and Development Trends in Media Art and Design, Cultural Theory and Philosophy, and similar (total 12 CP). Interdisciplinary courses relating to the field of new media - Art and Design Project Management, Sound Art: History, Theory, Practice, Video: History, Theory, Practice, Photography: History, Theory, Practice, Audiovisual Narrative: History, Theory, Practice and similar (in total 22 CP) and professional specialisation courses such as Basics of Graphic Design for New Media, Social Art and Design Projects, Sound art and Generative Sound Production, Stage Culture and Performative Multimedia Arts (40 CP in total). In general, those thematic blocks are coherent; however, it is not clear how, for example, interdisciplinary block courses "Sound Art: History, Theory, Practice or "Video: History, Theory, Practice" differs from specialisation courses such as "Video Art and Experimental Cinema" or "Sound art and Generative Sound Production." Therefore suggestion would be to supplement interdisciplinary block courses with relevant curriculum or to move study courses to specialisation block as they are pretty similar. Following the incomplete development of the C part mentioned above, the study programme does not fully comply with the academic education standards.

The content of this programme does a perfect job of constructing a solid foundation for the strategic goals and outcomes it pursues. However, a few challenges typically appear in formative BA programmes trying to cover a vast spectrum of contemporary media. The BA programme at LiepU is attempting this by offering an equivalent 180 ECTS workload study – the usual minimum for a BA study. Spanning numerous ambitious theoretical and practical modules (well-defined and planned by themselves), this amount of credit points can hardly create the outcome the applicant aspires to. "Its study content ensures the achievement of study outcomes that include the acquisition of in-depth theoretical knowledge and the development of research skills and competencies in the chosen scientific or artistic field."

Again, superlative terms such as "in-depth" and "mastery" are used lightly and can be misleading. The 120 Latvian credit points programme can realistically achieve solid foundation outcomes in the artistic territory from 3D design using Blender to silk printing. The same goes for the theoretical dimension of the study, ranging from cultural theory to video history.

There are a few unusual characteristics in the structure of the programmes schedule, such as placing Video: history, theory, practice in the first semester and Photography: history, theory, practice into the second, despite the latter being a foundation of the first in many technical and artistic aspects. When looking at the mentioned Video course, we can see further signs of basic learning outcomes of some courses based on the hours dedicated to specific topics e.g., 60-second video short film: shooting plan, script, location selection, cast selection is conducted only in 4 hours (S-7-2, 08.09.2022., Version 6, Page 46 from 308).

This by itself isn't so much a shortcoming of the content of the study programme, but rather too generous and ambitious descriptors of study outcomes.

Some students in the group the RT met mentioned they had too many courses in basic skills (they already possessed), while others wished to have more of such classes as they lacked previous education in these skills. This is another challenge of such broad programmes and higher education by itself. Many students possess basic skills in specific techniques before enrolling in LiepU programmes. This is not a shortcoming of this programme, but a general occurrence that needs to be addressed systematically by introducing skills assessment at enrolment and perhaps introducing elective courses in techniques right from the start of the programme.

2.2.2.
N/A

2.2.3.

The study programme spans numerous ambitious theoretical and practical modules. When trying to classify the acquired skills in a simplified way, they can be divided into two groups – 1) a student can participate in a discussion about something, and 2) a student can create something with his own hands. As an added value, some courses advise how to sell the product (project management). All kinds of history represent the first group – art, music, literature, cinema, photo, etc., while the second – transfers from one art form to another (or another sing system), practical learning of montage methods, video post-processing, video image, and sound techniques, sounds types of design, creative photo modes, learning the basic principles of composition of different styles and different arts, drawing basics, developing design projects, photomontage, shaping of spatial objects, layout, creation of spatial things (basics of sculpture), use of 3D animation technologies in creating audiovisual works, experience in programme library applications for connections of various actuators (LEDs, LED strings, DC and stepper motors, etc.).

The study implementation methods contribute to the achievement of the aim. They are student-centred, mainly in part C of the programme which focuses on creative practices under academic staff supervision and guidance.

The students report close and satisfactory attention from the academic staff, which presents one of the strong suits of this programme.

2.2.4.

N/A

2.2.5.
N/A

2.2.6.

The topics of students' final theses are fully compliant with the field of the study programme and are listed in SAR (point 3.2.6., pp.127-131); The titles and abstracts of students' theses are closely related and relevant to the field of arts and contemporary creative technologies.

Sustainable energy for sound installation,
Archiving,
Real-time data visualisation,
Creating Imaginary Spaces in a Sound Walk,
Sustainable Office Art,
Theremin as a performance instrument,
Applications of the television electromagnetic wave spectrum in the arts,
An experiment – generative sculptures,
Artwork as social commentary: interpreting mixed ethnic identities in Art 2013/2014,
Electromagnetic waves as a medium in art,
Computer games as an art form.

Conclusions on this set of criteria, by specifying strengths and weaknesses

Conclusion:
The study programme, which at the first moment surprised RT with the abundance of courses, makes a positive impression when studying it. After reviewing the mandatory optional modules, students become familiar with the knowledge necessary for the field of new media and the guidelines of the field of art sciences, as a result of which they develop a deeper understanding of the context and the history and theory of art in the 20th and the 21st century. In parallel with the theoretical courses, they learn a vast spectrum of practical skills (some of them mentioned in the Assessment, point 2.2.3). The programme is very positive in terms of its balance, and abilities. In any case, the knowledge gained in the programme is highly commendable.

The study programme spans numerous ambitious theoretical and practical modules, which promises an exciting time at the university, where every day brings something new. Still, it is hard to believe that a student with such an abundance of courses can learn it all deeply enough. At least as deep as described in generous and ambitious descriptors of study outcomes. Despite the scepticism mentioned above, the programme is implemented in a balanced and well-thought-out manner; the modules are coordinated and fully meet the goals set in the programme.

It should be noted that this broadness would significantly benefit from a student-centred MA programme, enabling the deepening of skills and competencies in a connected higher-level course.

Strengths:
1. Close attention to individual student creative practices from the academic staff.
2. Meticulously structured and planned modules with concrete tasks descriptions.
3. The study programme is planned so that, when learning several subjects, it is necessary to perform collective work, as a result of which students learn to work in a group.

Weaknesses:
1. Exaggerations in the descriptions of learning outcomes and competencies
2. Acquired knowledge, skills, and abilities do not derive in any way from the frequently modest course description.

Assessment of the requirement [5] (applicable only to master's or doctoral study programmes)

1 R5 - The study programme for obtaining a master's or doctoral degree is based on the achievements and findings of the respective field of science or field of artistic creation.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

This criterion does not apply to the Academic Bachelor study programme "New Media Art and Design" (43213).

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1.

The RT found the resources provided for the Academic Bachelor study programme "New Media Art and Design"(43213) are, in the main, very good. The IT resources (equipment, workshops, and teaching spaces) are very good and fit for purpose with the latest software, and there is a good library/learning resource with appropriate books, journals, examples of theses, etc. (meeting with students, RT tour of sources and Library presentation).

During the on-site visit of the RT, the students shared that the provided equipment is of an extremely high level. Still, the space is the biggest issue, i.e., bigger designated studio/creative production spaces are needed. As there are more students than there used to be, students feel they are fighting over the limited space resources. This is especially highlighted in the wintertime when students want to film inside. There used to be 24/7 access to the MPLab, but currently – only during the hours (limited access due to the energy crisis). There is a lack of space for lab work (i.e., the number of students on m2) and workshops where to build prototypes (for multimedia installations, etc.). Also, in new media arts, the equipment becomes outdated very quickly – there is a need for continuous updating and improvement.

Studies feature strong collaborative nature – staff and students refer to themselves as "family" or "community." This is exemplified by the study process being organized around MPLab laboratory and workshop. In this informal learning space, classes are being conducted, and equipment is being kept. Students develop their projects or do independent study. Also, the topicality of the study curriculum is centred around the development of art projects which often are collaborative - not only in a direct sense but indirect as well - by seeking and providing support to colleagues and receiving informal guidance from instructors or staff members that are tasked with the upkeep of laboratory and equipment.

However, the disadvantages must also be recognized. The Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Moodle urgently needs development; it is currently undervalued and mainly used as a database, not as an interactive learning environment. The Faculty/Programmes should research to look for models of best practice nationally and internationally. The RT found that two other VLE platforms (Luis & Forum) were being used by different programmes and found very good practice (more interactive, good inter-dialogue) in the Forum platform by the MA New Media & Audio-visual Art programme (meeting with students, alumni and Learning Management presentation of Moodle).

As recognised in the SWOT (SAR, point 2.1.2., pp.23-28) analysis in the SAR and at meetings with

the students and alumni, there is an urgent need for more designated studio/creative production spaces to support individual and collaborative/interdisciplinary practices and increase the professionalisation of the practice.

2.3.2.
N/A

2.3.3.

This is a difficult question for the RT to answer as the SAR (point 2.3.1., pp.41-47) gives precise figures on the income from students at each level and the allocation of funds. Still, it doesn't present a risk analysis of the financial viability of the programme. Namely, the total annual budget of LiepU consists of a cash flow budget comprising incoming and outgoing funds for the planned calendar year. Financial resources for the study process of the LiepU consist mainly of transfers from the main national budget intended for higher education;
funds received from the paid services provided by LiepU, including tuition fees;
deductions from projects to cover centralised expenditures at LiepU;
donations and gifts;
revenue earmarked for particular purposes;
other own sources of income;
European Union Structural Fund financing;
the balance of funds on the primary budget bank account from the previous calendar year.

The RT didn't hear of any significant issues or problems about providing the appropriate resources to ensure the full implementation of the study process from its meetings with the students, teachers, and alumni.

Conclusions on this set of criteria, by specifying strengths and weaknesses

Conclusions:

The RT found the resources provided for the Academic Bachelor study programme "New Media Art and Design"(43213) are essentially very good, with high-quality IT resources (equipment, workshops, and teaching spaces). There is a good library/learning resource with appropriate books, journals, examples of theses, etc. The resource issue raised in the SAR and by students and alumni is the lack of adequate, designated studio/creative production space. The RT believes this directly impacts the quality of the individual's and collaborative creative practice. The other central area needing development is the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Moodle, which is currently undervalued and mainly used as a database, not an interactive learning environment.

However, given the highly technical nature of the study programme, it is mandatory to ensure the continuous success of the programme by constantly updating, upkeeping, and renewing available equipment. It can be concluded that the available kit is enough to ensure the implementation of programme; however, the field is in constant development, and there were indications from students that some pieces of equipment they would be interested in are lacking. This is not a shortcoming, as this indicates that student interests exceed offered technical capabilities. Therefore technical needs inevitably put financial constraints on the study programme especially when the need arises for new equipment. The soft recommendation is to continue to seek external funding (e.g., projects, grants, municipal support) to strengthen technical provision and enable students to new learning opportunities and seek out potential collaboration with external partners that provide

access or loan out necessary equipment or provide it with lowered rental costs.

Strengths:
1. Excellent equipment and good learning resources, i.e., very well-equipped for a higher education institution of their scale.
2. Encouraging the environment as a much treasured and valued resource.
3. Collaborative nature – often called "family" or "community."

Weaknesses:
1. Insufficient designated studio/creative production spaces to support individual and collaborative practices and their growth and development.
2. As the informative provisions increasingly lean toward purely digital, the need for the browsing space escalates.
3. Need to update the equipment continuously.
4. The Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Moodle urgently needs development; it is currently undervalued and mainly used as a database, not as an interactive learning environment.

Assessment of the requirement [6]

1 R6 - Compliance of the study provision, science provision (if applicable), informative provision (including library), material and technical provision and financial provision with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and ensuring the achievement of learning outcomes

   Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

   There is a full compliance of the study provision, informative provision, material and technical provision with the conditions implementing and achieving the outcomes.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1.

The qualifications of the teaching staff delivering the programme are appropriate for the level of study and enable the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes on the theoretical and practical levels.

The University applies the regulation for the process of attracting and/or employment of teaching staff: https://www.liepu.lv/lv/181/darba-iespejas (Only in Latvian)

LiepU applies several criteria for selecting teachers to ensure that study courses are taught by qualified, scientifically and methodically prepared lecturers, specialists of the specified field of study, using modern approaches and technologies in their work. The mandatory criteria include the following;
compliance of the qualification of the teaching staff with the requirements specified in the laws and regulations;
the field/interests of scientific research correspond to the content of the study programme /course;
adequate knowledge of the state language and foreign languages.

The qualification of teaching staff implementing the study programme can be evaluated using quantitative and qualitative indicators.

Based on Section 33 2) of Chapter IV of the Law on Higher Education Institutions and Appendix II 3.7. an of the package of documents submitted for accreditation of LiepU, "Evaluation of the qualifications of the teaching staff involved in implementing the study programme" can provide orienting guidance on compliance of the qualifications of the teaching staff involved in implementing the study programme with the requirements of regulatory acts. The total number of teaching staff involved in the programme is forty-one, twenty-one lecturers elected to academic positions at LiepU. Eleven of LiepU's elected lecturers have a master's degree, and ten – have a doctoral degree, which makes up 48% of the total number of lecturers and is an average indicator. However, it should be noted that this is only an indicative indicator, as only one programme is considered. All the lecturers involved in programme implementation were evaluated according to the mentioned criterion. In that case, since the programme is artistically and practically oriented, the lecturers with doctoral degrees make up 34% of the entire teaching staff. (Annex II.3.7. A)

It should be added that seven Ph.D. degree applicants are involved in the programme's implementation, which leads to the hope that new doctors will supplement the teaching staff very soon. True, the programme leader should promote two so-called eternal doctoral students to complete their doctoral theses in the foreseeable future, increasing the teaching staff's quality indicators.

Evaluating the qualitative indicators of the lecturers' activity – participation in exhibitions, creative projects, as well as creative pedagogical activity, it is necessary to recognise the complete compliance of the qualifications of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programme with the conditions of performance of the study programme. (Annex II.3.7. B)

2.4.2.

LiepU Arts Faculty and the Academic Bachelor study programme "New Media Art and Design"(43213) have taken steps to make sure the staffing expertise has developed to meet the demands of the new developments in the programme, with the introduction of design. The LiepU Human Resources Development Plan is also used to promote the development of existing academic staff. The changes in the composition and skills of teaching staff are also affected by the feedback it receives from the students and employers, and the RT found clear examples of the impact of this feedback.

Based on the goal set in point 1 of the "Arts" study field development plan for 2022-2027," namely to stabilise and balance the quantitative and qualitative indicators of the academic staff, supporting performance of scientific activities (including successful doctoral studies) as far as possible, raising the qualifications of academic and management staff and attracting professionals, as well as specific measures to achieve this goal, as well as evaluating Appendix II 3.7. of the package of documents submitted for accreditation of LiepU, "Evaluation of the qualifications of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programme", RT can conclude that the university is taking purposeful and planned measures that improve study in the event of a change in the composition of the teaching staff, the quality of the programme implementation, and the compliance of the study programme with the requirements. Discussions with alums showed no shortcomings or negative comments regarding the teaching staff composition.

2.4.3.
N/A

2.4.4.

There is good evidence of academic staff engagement in scientific research and creative practice, with examples in the SAR (points 2.4.1.-2.4.3., pp.64-71) and available at https://www.liepu.lv/lv/263/petniecibas-parskati as well as in the Annex II.2.4. A.

Compared to other study programmes in the"Arts" study field, the Academic Bachelor study programme "New Media Art and Design"(43213) has a more practical and creative orientation. The mentioned circumstances also determine the creative activity of the teaching forces of the programme in the last six years.

Evaluating Chapter II 2.4.4._2. of the appendix "List of publications, patents, creative artistic works of teaching staff for the reporting period" of the package of documents submitted for accreditation of LiepU, it can be concluded that, in general, the scientific and artistic performance of the teaching staff during the last six years corresponds to the provisions of Article 34 (5) of the Law on Higher Education Institutions. The number of works included in peer-reviewed editions of publications in the programme, including SCOPUS and other databases, is proportionally higher for professors and associate professors, especially in contemporary arts. All teaching staff is characterised by a solid artistic orientation in various manifestations – from contemporary art exhibitions and performance projects, participation in international art symposia, and recent music concerts in computer electronics to the latest experiments with photography technologies.

2.4.5.

The RT were not made aware of any formal mechanism for the cooperation of the teaching staff in implementing the study programme. But in its meetings with the teaching staff and the Programme Directors, it was evident that they shared a common goal and there is a solid student-centred learning culture. The students also believe there could be better communication between teachers, to gain a better overview of the student's development, and some areas of study could be better supported by specialist teachers. The RT, after it meets with the students and teaching staff, agrees with the SWOT (point 2.1.2., pp. 23-28) analysis that there is a need to improve the VLE Moodle as it is not very developed and frequently not used by students and teachers, it is currently more used as a storage/database, not an actual learning environment. This is the shared learning tool to support cooperation of students and teaching staff to ensure the achievement of the aims of the study programme and the interconnection of study courses.

Although the documentation available to the RT does not show direct indications of the creation of a mutual coordination mechanism among the teaching staff in implementing the study programme, close cooperation among all those involved in performing the study programme was observed during the RT visit to the Faculty of Humanities and Arts of LiepU.

Conclusions on this set of criteria, by indicating strengths and weaknesses

Conclusions:
The programme's teaching staff fully meets the requirements outlined in the laws and regulations and the needs of programme implementation. Mostly, the teaching staff has very good English skills, which can be helpful in the case of international students.

Strengths:
1. Well-motivated and committed teaching staff who identify strongly with the requirements specified in the laws and regulations. All teaching staff is characterised by a solid artistic orientation in various manifestations – from contemporary art exhibitions and performance projects,

participation in international art symposia, and recent music concerts in computer electronics to the latest experiments with photography technologies.

2. Faculty and University, which helped the programme creators manage to design a relatively well-structured and established programme.

3. Students were happy with the quality of their teachers and the knowledge and skills they possess (meetings with students and alumni).

Weaknesses:

1. A formal process for the cooperation of the teaching staff in implementing the study programme should be implemented.

2. The students believe there could be better communication between teachers to gain a better overview of the student's development.

3. The VLE Moodle is not very developed and frequently not used by students and teachers; it is currently more used as a storage/database, not a proper learning environment.

Assessment of the requirement [7]

1 R7 - Compliance of the qualification of the academic staff and visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting docents, visiting lecturers and visiting assistants with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements set out in the respective regulatory enactments.

   Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

   The RT are satisfied that the academic staff and visiting teachers met the required qualifications and expertise as specified by the LiepU regulations, to teach and deliver the Bachelor programme at the required level.

2.5. Assessment of the Compliance

Requirements

1 1 - The study programme complies with the State Academic Education Standard or the Professional Higher Education Standard

   Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

   Attached document ("06.12. Academic bachelors study programme New Media Arts compliance with the national academic education standard.docx") confirms that the study programme mostly complies with Cabinet Regulation No. 240 "Noteikumi par valsts akadēmiskās izglītības standartu". The free elective (C) study part is limited to a narrow scope of courses. By definition, the free elective study part means that a student has the opportunity to choose any courses as per Law of Higher Education Institutions Section 6 (2).

2 2 - The study programme complies with a valid professional standard or the requirements for the professional qualification (if there is no professional standard required for the relevant occupation) provided if the completion of the study programme leads to a professional qualification (if applicable)

   Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

   N/A

3 3 - The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in all languages in which the study programme is implemented, and they comply with the requirements set forth in Section 561 , Paragraph two and Section 562 , Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Attached study course descriptions ("New Media Arts and Design (43213)_Modules _EN 6.doc") are prepared in Latvian. Descriptions complies with regulations set forth in Law on Higher Education Institutions.

4   4 - The sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme complies with the procedure according to which state recognised documents of higher education are issued.

   Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

   The provided Diploma sample complies with the procedure by which state-recognised documents of higher education are issued according to MK No. 202 "Kārtība, kādā izsniedz valsts atzītus augstāko izglītību apliecinošus dokumentus".

5   5 - The academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements set forth in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

   Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

   Attached confirmation letter ("Certificate_JMMD_EN.pdf")indicates that there is 5 elected professors involved in the implementation of the study programme.

6   6 - Academic study programmes provided for less than 250 full-time students may be implemented and less than five professors and associated professors of the higher education institution may be involved in the implementation of the mandatory and limited elective part of these study programmes provided that the relevant opinion of the Council for Higher Education has been received in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

   Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

   N/A

7   7 - At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of an academic doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field of science. At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a professional doctoral study programme in arts (if applicable).

   Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

   N/A

8   8 - The teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme are proficient in the official language in accordance with the regulations on the level of the official language knowledge and the procedures for testing official language proficiency for performing professional duties and office duties.

   Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

   Confirmation letter ("27.09.2022_1.-1.6._378.edoc") and attached resumes verifies that state language proficiency is compliant with Cabinet regulations No 733 "Noteikumi par valsts valodas zināšanu apjomu, valsts valodas prasmes pārbaudes kārtību un valsts nodevu par valsts valodas prasmes pārbaudi".

9   9 - The teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language, if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language (if applicable).

   Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

10 10 - The sample of the study agreement complies with the mandatory provisions to be included in the study agreement.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Sample of attached study agreement (Sample_Study_Agreement_study_field_Arts can be found in the documents attached to accreditation in Section II 2.1. "Management of the study field.") complies with MK. Nr. 70 "Studiju līgumā obligāti ietveramie noteikumi".

11 11 - The higher education institution / college has provided confirmation that students will be provided with opportunities to continue their education in another study programme or another higher education institution or college (agreement with another accredited higher education institution or college) if the implementation of the study programme is terminated.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Attached contract Nr. 1.-2009/48 with Latvian Academy of Culture confirms that institution provides possibility to continue studies in academic bachelor study programme "Arts" sub programme "Audiovisual Culture". However, contract still features old programme title and should be updated.

12 12 - The higher education institution / college has provided confirmation that students are guaranteed compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the study programme's license is revoked due to the actions (actions or omissions) of the higher education institution or college and the student does not wish to continue studies in another study programme.

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

LiepU confirmation letter No1.-1.6./367 states, that students are guaranteed compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the college (actions or failure to act) and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme. However, in the study agreement there is the following line "2.1.6. To provide a possibility to continue studies in another study programme or another educational institution, if the implementation of the study programme in LiepU, mentioned in the clause 1.1. of the Agreement, is terminated. If the Student does not agree with opportunities for study continuation offered by LiepU, LiepU reimburses to the Student the paid study fee for the last semester of studies in accordance with clause 3.1." The current version of the study agreement is only partially compliant with requirements, as compensation should be guaranteed in full, not partially. The ability to complete a study programme in full and possibility to receive a degree in chosen institution constitutes the main right of enrolled students. If the study programme licence is revoked or the study programme is not accredited due to actions of HEI, student financial status in regard to tuition fees must be returned to the position before the infringement of rights as students in their good faith have believed in the ability to fully finish study programmes in chosen institutions.

13 13 - The joint study programmes comply with the requirements prescribed in Section 55.(1), Paragraphs one, two, and seven of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (if applicable)

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

N/A

14 14 - Compliance with the requirements specified in other regulatory enactments that apply to the study programme being assessed (if applicable)

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

NA

Assessment of the requirement [8]

1 R8 - Compliance of the study programme with the requirements set forth in the Law on Higher Education Institutions and other regulatory enactments.

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Study programme generally complies with regulatory enactments. Contracts should be updated with the new programme title. Compensation in case of study programme closure should be guaranteed in full. The study programme does not feature a true free elective (C) part as mandated by Law on Institutions of Higher Education 6. 4) and 55. 2) c). and Regulation of Academic Education Standard 7.

General conclusions about the study programme, indicating the most important strengths and weaknesses of the study programme

Conclusions:
Compliance of the study programme with the study field is established fully and in all aspects of this popular and well-structured programme in the field of audiovisual media creation. The degree to be obtained and competencies are fully compatible with the learning outcomes and competencies and equip students very well in all areas of the study field.

Despite a slight misnomer of the programme, its aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and admission requirements are interrelated and lead to general student and staff satisfaction, resulting in significant interconnections and professional outcomes.

Strengths:
1. The study programme complies with regulatory enactments.
2. Overall student and staff satisfaction that results in valuable interconnections and professional outcomes.
3. Multidisciplinary programme with wide field coverage and focused on upcoming technologies.
4. Dedicated leadership, academic staff and students' community that identifies strongly with the programme.
5. Close attention to individual student creative practices from the academic staff.
6. Meticulously structured and planned modules with concrete tasks descriptions.
7. The study programme is planned so that, when learning several subjects, it is necessary to perform collective work, as a result of which students learn to work in a group.
8. Excellent equipment and good learning resources, i.e. very well-equipped for a higher education institution of their scale
9. Encouraging climate is a much treasured and valued resource.
10. Collaborative nature – often referred to as "family" or "community".
11. Faculty and University, which helped the programme creators manage to design a relatively well-structured and established programme.
12. Student and alumni satisfaction with the quality of their teachers and the knowledge and skills they possess.

Weaknesses:
1. The success of the programme is largely based on the sole enthusiasm and selflessness of the staff, rather than the strength of the strategy.
2. Slight misnomer in the naming of the programme regarding the expression "new" media.

3. Exaggerations in the descriptions of learning outcomes and competencies; typically acquired knowledge, skills, and abilities do not derive in any way from the frequently modest course description.

4. Insufficient designated studio/creative production spaces to support individual and collaborative practices and their growth and development.

5. As the informative provisions are more and more leaning toward being purely digital, the need for the browsing space escalates.

6. The Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Moodle, is in urgent need of development, it currently is undervalued and used largely as a database not as an interactive learning environment.

7. There is a lack of formal process for the cooperation of the teaching staff in the implementation of the study programme.

Evaluation of the study programme "New Media Art and Design"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "New Media Art and Design"

Short-term recommendations

Evaluate students' skills at acceptance exams and tailor the study according to their prior knowledge and skills of artistic practices, thus enabling them to focus on acquiring new skills and competences.
Establish a more prominent and media rich web and media presence and prominently display and publishing students' works and achievements.
Adjust the competences and outcomes names to the BA level of depth.
Assess internal reserves, which allow its creators to solve the courses' content deficiencies and slightly reschedule the time allocated for teaching different subjects.
Develop a built-in mechanism that facilitates access to funding for projects. The administration could be an active part of such a mechanism because everything in the programme cannot be based solely on the enthusiasm and selflessness of the teaching staff.
Develop Moodle as an interactive, virtual learning environment utilised by all teaching staff and students.

Long-term recommendations

Assurie additional space needed to fully support practical work on the premises.

II - "New Media and Audiovisual Art" ASSESSMENT

II - "New Media and Audiovisual Art" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1.

The academic Master study programme"New Media and Audiovisual Art" (45213) (joint with RISEBA University of Applied Sciences) is an integral part of the faculty striving to offer education in the study field on all three qualification levels – BA, MA, and a Ph.D. This programme is, therefore, principally aimed at continuing the study within the concept of faculty – "The study programme is implemented in a modular system of 80 CP. The choice of the programme was determined by the previous level of education at the LiepU, which amounted to 120 CP". (SAR, point 3.1.2., pp. 87- 90) points at the strong connection to the BA programme, which is an understandable and rational approach.

2.1.2.

As described on page 88 of SAR (mentioned above), "The specific objective of the programme is to train competitive, research-oriented professionals - artists who have a comprehensive knowledge of new technologies, audio-visual arts, and digital cultural processes, as well as specific skills in the creation of works of art and innovative media products, scientific research and the implementation of creative projects, and who are competent in the art, innovation technology and creative industries labour market."

The Classification code (IKK) of the academic master's study programme "New Media and Audiovisual Art" is 45213. Following this code, 213 corresponds to the ISCED field of "Humanities and Arts" subsection "Audiovisual Art and Media Art." 45 corresponds to LQF/EQF 7th level. The study programme outcomes are formulated in accordance with the levels. The degree to obtained when successfully fulfilling all requirements is a Master's degree in Humanitarian Sciences in Audiovisual and Media Arts.

However, there are discrepancies within the defined study results - one of them features "The student understands copyright law, data ethics, and cyber security issues." Cybersecurity in study programme mapping features only in mandatory "PUBLIC, CIVIL AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION" study course, which is way too limited in scope to sufficiently cover the topic of cyber security in a way that it is justified to be included in study programme results. This could indicate that more in-depth analysis of learning outcomes should be done. The study programme is organised in 3 main blocks - 24CP - for modules on theoretical and research subtopics, 20 CP for specialisation, 20 CP for thesis. There 4 specialisations in total (See Annex "NEW MEDIA AND AUDIOVISUAL ART (45213)study programme plan.xlsx"):
Module (20 KRP) AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA ART (administered by RISEBA);
Module (20 KRP) MULTIMEDIA STAGE ARTS (administered by RISEBA);
Module (20 KRP) SOUND DESIGN AND ACOUSTIC ARTS (administered by LiepU);
Module (20 KRP) ART AND RESEARCH IN DIGITAL ENVIRONMENTS (administered by LiepU).
Study length is two years full time, 80 CP. The implementation language is English.
The admission requirement for the study programme is a bachelor's degree in Humanities or 2nd level of professional higher education in Humanities, Social Sciences, Arts, Education, or other disciplines and a minimum level of B2 in English language and entrance examinations. The entrance examination consists of a master's thesis application - a creative research project in one of the specialisations offered by the programme: audiovisual media, multimedia performances, digital art, and sound art/electronic music. Also, there is an entrance test consisting of a creative activity portfolio - showcasing 3-5 works, projects, prototypes, commissions, or research projects in new media art, audiovisual art, and sound art.
The study field aims mainly at attracting foreign students being executed in English, increasing the justification. The joint programme is fully compliant with the study field of Arts.
Admission requirements are justified. The title, code, degree, and obtainable qualification generally are interrelated and coherent and fall within the scope of the general aims of the study programme;

however, there are still some issues that need to be addressed.

2.1.3.

University notes in SAR (point 3.1.1., p.87) that awarded degree has been changed to a Master's degree of Humanitarian Sciences in Arts in Audiovisual and Media Arts; also, there have been changes to study programme results - including one about cybersecurity (It is explained in depth in Assessment's point 2.1.2.). In general, changes are to be supported; however, critical reassessment of study results could be beneficial to fully ensure that listed competencies are accounted for sufficiently in the curriculum of the programme.

In SAR, on page 87, the implemented changes to study results are described; however, there is no detailed description of what these changes should achieve nor how they are implemented via the study plan. Additionally, the listed changes are descriptive and somewhat generic, which prevents the RT from assessing them in depth. While the RT supports the implementation of changes, it must base upon a closed and documented circle of assessment stretching from analysis of why the changes are implemented, the aim of the changes, and the concrete action taken. The changes and corrections regarding the study field are supported; however, the RT is not presented with a documented rationale.

LiepU describes the rationale of this, again broad and hybrid programme "Although there are separate programmes in multimedia, visual communication, computer graphics, design, etc. in Latvia, this Master's programme has a unique setting, covering both art and research in digital environments - with an emphasis on data visualisation and cultural analytics - and audiovisual media and multimedia performance production skills - with an emphasis on interactive narratology, 360-degree video, and virtual reality."

2.1.4.

Currently, there are ten students in the programme across two years. Of them, 5 are international students. The student number is consistent with a slight tendency to increase. Since the program's start, two students have dropped out each year while, on average, 8-10 enroll. In SAR (point 3.1.3, pp.91-92), LiepU states that "Until now, the new media and audiovisual art professionals who have graduated from the study programme work as self-employed creatives, educators, the teaching staff at universities, also in the field of social entrepreneurship, creating exhibition works, books, compositions, etc." The broad scope of offered specialisations ensures valuable addition to the local and national creative industry. The study programme is socially and economically justified. Student numbers are pretty low and, with additional action, could be increased.

2.1.5.

The justification for developing the joint study programme was "to create a high-standard study process by jointly implementing RISEBA Master's study programme "Audiovisual Media Art" and LiepU Master's study programme "New Media Art" to reduce competition," SAR (point 3.1.5., pp.94-97), while at the same time pool together competencies and infrastructure to make the joint programme more competitive against outside programmes. It is essential to highlight that the joint programme was built on existing programmes. The initial goal for both institutions was to develop a programme that both reflects the specificities of the audio-visual and new media fields and, as successfully as possible, incorporates new specialisations that will enrich the programme. QMS is based on existing systems implemented by respective institutions while expanding them to their parts of the study programme. However, there is no sufficient proof that a joint quality system

exists. Development and initiative of joint study programmes are justified, and quality generally is ensured, as there are no indications of noticeable misalignments or issues (apart from chapter 2.1. mentioned issue with commute) within study experience (as indicated by students during on-site visit) regarding implementation of the study programme. Currently, the lack of formal joint QMS structures is offset by motivated staff keen on direct communication between involved parties to resolve issues with direct and personal communication. However, there is a risk that in case of staff change, the culture of quality can be put at risk considering formal shortcomings (e.g., lack of joint QMS structures).

Partner institutions approach the joint programme by splitting modules (2 for each partner) and thus define their contribution to the programme according to their strengths and previous programmes held. Albeit basic, such division is justified and presents a good foundation for further synergy between partners that may focus on assigned modules and competencies according to their previous foci.

However, in the context of the quality study process of the joint programme important issue was raised during an on-site meeting with students - considering that some of the courses are conducted exclusively in RISEBA, students must commute to Riga to attend classes or get access to relevant equipment not available on LiepU premises, putting students in a position where they have to commute for prolonged terms to get access to similar opportunities. It is not clear how this issue can be remedied. Still, it must be highlighted that this aspect was mentioned as one of the main shortcomings in study experience, especially for students with other commitments, like family or employment or other socioeconomic factors limiting this commute.

Conclusions on this set of criteria, by specifying strengths and weaknesses

Conclusions.

The study programme complies with the study field. Admission requirements are justified. The title, code, degree, and obtainable qualification generally are interrelated and coherent and fall within the scope of the general aims of the study programme; however, some issues need to be addressed, such as low student numbers and study continuation from the BA programme, QMS procedures with the partner institution and better alignment of study results.

The justification and approach to dividing responsibilities by splitting modules are in place and enable both institutions to cover a broader artistic, creative, and technological field. This is a beneficial tactic; however, it created challenges that both institutions should address.

Strengths.

1. Modular approach is an excellent approach to organising studies.
2. Justified and meaningful division of modules between both partner institutions.
3. Wide options for specialisation and topics within the module framework.

Weaknesses.

1. Study results are not fully aligned.
2. No research, justification, and implementation of the change in the study programme in SAR.
3. Quite a low student number is given comprehensive specialisation options.
4. Quality assurance systems are implemented separately for each institution part; however, there is

no sufficient proof that there is a joint QMS in place.
5. Challenging logistics for students studying in two remote cities.

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1.

The new joint Masters aimed to create a high-quality study programme, building on two successful, existing Master programmes by combining the RISEBA Master study programme 'Audiovisual Media Art' and the LiepU Master study programme 'New Media Art.' The new programme commenced in the 2017-18 academic year.

The content of the Academic Master study programme"New Media and Audiovisual Art" (45213) (joint with RISEBA University of Applied Sciences) is very current. It builds on the skills and competences the students developed in the Bachelor programme, preferably in the Academic Bachelor study programme "New Media Art and Design"(43213) because these Bachelor's and Master's programmes form a thematic and logical connection and a methodological succession. RT must admit that from the documents submitted for accreditation, it remains unclear which part is performed by LiepU and which by RISEBA.
If a bachelor's education was obtained in another discipline, the question of adapting knowledge to the requirements of the master's programme remains unanswered. However, the students, alumni, and employers/professional organisations the RT met all were very optimistic about the currency and demand for the skills being developed and urgently required in the professional world.

The relevance of the studies to the profession and industry is ensured by the active involvement of the faculty and services of the creative industry, as well as the exchange of experience and opportunities to learn new skills in master classes and discussions with the participation of local and foreign industry experts and creative industry companies, which are created in cooperation with non-governmental art organisations, such as ASTE, Art, Science, Technology, Education and new media culture centre RIXC. (SAR, point 2.2.1., pp. 34-35)

The programme's compliance with its goals and the achievement of learning outcomes must be assessed based on Appendix III 3.2.1.D of the package of documents submitted for accreditation of LiepU. Based on the "MA Module Descriptions," RT concludes that the Master's programme is built on a similar principle as the Bachelor's programme; that is, the content of the programme is organised into ten thematically and logically comprehensive modules, united by the main overarching goal of the programme "to develop an understanding of the interactive multimedia art as a changing genre in the interaction with contemporary cultural and technological achievements."

Within the topic, the modules are presented in several blocks. Part A of the programme consists of the following six modules: Conceptual thinking and practice-based research, Audio culture, Visual culture and new media aesthetics, Creative industries, Interactive art, multimedia performances, and Media theory and research methods. Part B of the programme has four modules -Audiovisual Media Art I and II, Multimedia performing arts I and II, Digital Art I and II, and Sound Art and electronic music I and II. The programme closes with a Master's Thesis.

Precise descriptions of the knowledge and the skills to be acquired are given for each module and course, as well as the criteria for evaluating students' knowledge and skills. The assessment of acquired knowledge and skills is justified.

Specialisation modules, in which the description of acquired knowledge and skills is coordinated with learning them, as stated in the course outline, made a perfect impression on RT. The knowledge and skills to be developed are balanced; they are not exaggerated and therefore do not cause doubts. These modules and courses also have well-developed bibliographies.

On the other hand, the theoretical modules are somewhat dominated by the fascination with the "new," which, from the end of the 20th century, served as a guarantor of the legitimacy of everything called new. As an oppositional term, "new" always needs to be redefined by organising the corresponding "old," therefore the need to describe the "new" about the theoretical modules "Visual culture and aesthetics of new media" and "Media theory and research methodology" can be a bit problematic. RT should also note that the mentioned modules promise knowledge not even indicated in the course descriptions or literature lists. For example, the following is promised for the Media Theory and research methods module: "In-depth study of the history of media technologies, communication theories, and cultural semiotics to develop a qualitative theoretical basis for the Master's thesis." However, the course descriptions and the list of literature do not give the impression that there is at least an insight into the latter discipline.

In general, RT recognizes that in the descriptions of the modules of the Master's programme, a balanced relationship between the acquisition and demonstration of theoretical knowledge and practical skills is given, and also especially wants to praise the involvement of students in LiepU scientific conferences, providing it as one of the conditions of course accomplishment.

2.2.2.

The Masters' degree is awarded on the outcomes of a combination of their thesis and practice, but the assessment primarily focuses on scientific theoretical research. To the RT, there appears to be a dichotomy between the description of the programme which primarily focuses on the practice, and the students are introduced to 'practice-based research' in their first year and the emphasis on the thesis in the final project (meetings with the Programme Director, teaching staff and students).

The topics of the final thesis of the Academic Master programme "New Media and Audiovisual Art" (45213) (joint with RISEBA University of Applied Sciences) as far as can be judged from SAR 3.2.6. (pp. 100-103) given tables are "topical sounding." But since RT neither during its visit to LiepU due to lack of time nor in the electronically available materials, which are indicated on page 103 of the paragraph mentioned above of the SAR in the given links (https://artplus.app/map/?artwork=gutmane-dirty-laundry&location=liepaja; https://artplus.app/map/?artwork=celitane-time-portraits&location=kuldiga), has not been able to get acquainted with any full text of the MA thesis, so expressing more far-reaching conclusions about the quality of MA's work is impossible.

As the RT was meeting alumni, we can conclude that the programme complies with this criteria; however, there should be more emphasis on presenting student achievements, whether theoretical or practical.

2.2.3.

This programme is a two-year joint study Masters' in collaboration with RISEBA, taught in English. The number of students studying this programme is small, with thirteen (including three international) in total in 2020-21, of which six were recruited to the first year. Only five of the seven who completed their 2nd year that year graduated. The statistics didn't say how many successful students were international. Still, it is concerning to the RT that the low and non-completion

numbers are also consistent. This was noted in the SAR SWOT analysis (point 2.1.2., pp.23-28). It suggests that the programme team should look at the expected learning outcomes and the learning and teaching process to see why this is happening.

While the modular structure and the division of second-year courses between the partner universities are justified and enable coverage of a wider artistic and creative terrain, it also requires careful adjustments in implementing the study and academic support. The RT observes that this is not addressed in SER as meticulously as possible. The study processes and methods are likely to be influenced by being split between two somewhat distant locations of the hosts of this joint programme.

As described in SAR (p. 97, 98), "The study process integrates (Part A) modules of 40 CP, Specialisation (Part B) modules with four compulsory options of 20 CP and a Master's thesis of 20 CP. Both integrated (A) and specialisation (B) modules combine theory and practice. Integrated A modules are held for all specialisations together in Riga (75%), and Liepaja (25%), but the tasks are differentiated, adapting the final tasks to the respective specialisation and the topic of the Master's thesis chosen by the student." Despite the description, the division of study modules is addressed in a slightly opaque way, and hard to understand what is taught in Riga and what is in Liepāja. The descriptions of teaching methods in SAR seem to point out that online studies are being employed quite often, especially during and after the experience with COVID-19. "The Master studies occur every week on Thursday and Friday afternoons and Saturday. The first semester of studies is in Riga at the RISEBA School of Business, Art, and Technology. After that, students start to study the Option B modules, and in LiepU- administered courses, studies also occur in Liepāja and/or online, especially during COVID-19 gathering restrictions." (SAR, p. 97, 98). The RT team wished to emphasise that the MA Arts programme must emphasise contact hours and supervised creative work that cannot be conducted primarily online without severe drawbacks to the learning outcomes.

This can result in the opposite effect from the desired as the programme with fewer students may become executed overly remote and singular, resulting in lower academic and student community contact and informal learning. Informal learning and academic community-fostering discourse are essential for all higher levels of creative studies in the field of Arts.

Student-centred learning can be implemented successfully due to the low number of students and sufficient staff. Teaching principles are considered and guaranteed across the programme.

2.2.4.

N/A

2.2.5.

N/A

2.2.6.

RT cannot express a reasonable and deeply based opinion on the conformity of students' qualifications and competencies in practical artwork with the goals of the study programme due to the lack of presentation of students' artworks. The RT can confirm the conformity of the thesis titles and names as a lister in SAR on pages 101 and 102 as they relate to contemporary visual art and creative technologies.

Conclusions on this set of criteria, by specifying strengths and weaknesses

Conclusions.

Through the meetings with the employers, students and alumni the RT are convinced the content of this joint Masters' programme is very current and builds on the skills and competences the students developed in the Bachelor programme. The relevance of the studies to the profession and industry is ensured by the active involvement of the FHA and services of the creative industry. Alumni have shown a high degree of professional involvement into contemporary international artistic and creative endeavours which is the result of a programme fostering a good conjunction of contemporary practices and theoretical approaches.

The academic staff possesses numerous qualities and can comfortably foster a programme conducted in English language, thus opening it to a wider international audience and collaborations with international institutions. Alas the promotion of the programme is not well developed and presents a hindernes at harnessing the programme's full potential for larger enrollment.

The joint nature of the programme is generally justified however it presents a few challenges that are typical for such approaches and range from self assessment and quality control to implementation of certain study methods, student support and logistics. As LiepU and RISEBA are partnering at both higher degree joint programmes, their collaboration will need to shift to a higher and more thought out level of programming.

Strengths.

1.The employers the RT met and the alumni were very positive about the skills the graduates had developed.
2. High alumni satisfaction and engagement in the international art and creative industries.
3. Solid division of roles among the partner institutions.
4. The Academic Master study programme"New Media and Audiovisual Art" (45213) (joint with RISEBA University of Applied Sciences) is an essential part of the "Arts" study field; it is the right-defined, Bachelor's and Doctor's programme unifying axis. (Rephrase suggestion: Meaningful integration into the study field covering all three qualification levels.)

Weaknesses.

1. Relatively high non-completion rate.
2. Low number of students recruited.
3. Expressing a general sympathy and support for the Academic Master study programme "New Media and Audiovisual Art" (45213) (joint with RISEBA University of Applied Sciences) and its usefulness in the LiepU "Arts" study field, RT should, unfortunately, point out to one problem in the description of this study programme and also in its implementation.It's about obviously exaggerated descriptions of acquired skills, knowledge, and abilities in the programme modules, which do not always match the exact modules' contents or the literature list attached. In the modules, especially for theoretical subjects, not all methods to be learned are mentioned; metatheories are not separated from their applied versions and the like. Also, it is unlikely that several comprehensive sciences can be understood in the time allotted for the module. Moreover, it was not even made explicit in the contents of the modules.RT did not have questions about practical and artistic skills-developing courses and their acquisition. However, the same cannot be said about theoretical and academic approaches, so RT should still point to the exaggeration of the study programme's scientific and academic beliefs, which leads to the dichotomy between the description of the programme, which primarily focuses on the practice, and the emphasis on assessment of the thesis

in the final project.

Assessment of the requirement [5] (applicable only to master's or doctoral study programmes)

1 R5 - The study programme for obtaining a master's or doctoral degree is based on the achievements and findings of the respective field of science or field of artistic creation.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The graduates' success in achieving appropriate employment and the positive attitude of the employers and professions of the quality and skills of the students. As observed in the thesis titles and names listed in SAR, they are related to contemporary visual art and creative technologies, thus based on the achievements and findings of the respective field of artistic creation.

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1.

The resources provided for the Academic Master study programme"New Media and Audiovisual Art" (45213) (joint with RISEBA University of Applied Sciences) are largely very good, but it is difficult to be more precise and confirm the resources as the RT didn't receive the opportunity to visit RISEBA University nor talk to their staff.

LiepU MPLab (Liepāja, Kūrmājas pr. 13) is an excellent learning and teaching resource, much appreciated by students and teachers alike, but students would really appreciate it if they could access it as they were able to pre COVID and the energy crisis.

The Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Moodle, is in urgent need of development, it currently is underused and used largely as a data-base not as an interactive learning environment. The Faculty/Programmes should carry out some research to look for models of best practice nationally and internationally. The Review Team (RT) found that two other VLE platforms (Luis & Forum) were being used by different programmes and found very good practice (more interactive, good inter-dialogue) in the Forum platform by the MA New Media & Audio-visual Art programme (meeting with students, alumni and Learning Management presentation of Moodle).

As recognised in the SWOT analysis in the SAR (point 2.1.2., pp.23-28) and at meetings with the students and alumni there is an urgent need for more designated studio/creative production spaces to support individual and collaborative/interdisciplinary practices and increase the professionalisation of the practice.

In general, crosschecking of literature units added in course descriptions with LiepU library catalogue (https://alise.liepu.lv/Alise/lv/home.aspx) points out, that mostly literature is available to students in library, however it must be highlighted, that study programme features its own local information system with literature, chat and forum functions, that is used in parallel to MOODLE environment. It seems that there is practice that mandatory literature, articles and material is shared by instructors digitally. During on-site visit and meeting with students there were no indication that access or availability of neccessary study materials is an issue.

2.3.2.

N/A

2.3.3.

This is a difficult question for the RT to answer as the SAR (point 2.3., pp. 41-58) gives clear figures on the income from students at each level and the allocation of funds, but it doesn't present a risk analysis of the financial viability of the programme.
The RT didn't hear of any significant issues or problems about providing the appropriate resources to ensure the full implementation of the study process from its meetings with the students, teachers and alumni.

Conclusions on this set of criteria, by specifying strengths and weaknesses

Conclusions.

Each and combined resources of RISEBA and LiepU are very good, however there are challenges that each partner faces and challenges resulting from the distance and modular system of the programme. LiepU is, as reported by students, facing limitations of size and accessibility of studio spaces that are necessary for practice based study and practical artistic work. As LiepU hosts four programmes in the field of "Arts" this is an issue that needs to be addressed in the future.
The joint program of dislocated institutions also raises some additional logistic challenges e.g. accommodation and other student support related to provisions in regard to interdisciplinary work that might be logistically harder to conduct.

Strengths.

1. Excellent equipment and good learning resources at the MPLab, i.e. very well-equipped for a higher education institution of their scale (i.e. LiepU).
2. Encouraging the environment as a much treasured and valued resource.
3. Lots of collaborative nature - often referred to as "family" or "community".

Weaknesses.

1. Insufficient designated studio/creative production spaces to support individual and collaborative practices and their growth and development.
2. The imperfection of Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Moodle regarding the interactive learning environment.

Assessment of the requirement [6]

1 R6 - Compliance of the study provision, science provision (if applicable), informative provision (including library), material and technical provision and financial provision with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and ensuring the achievement of learning outcomes

   Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

   In discussion with current students, alumni and teaching staff, and the RT tour of the facilities they were largely satisfied with the resources.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1.

LiepU applies several criteria for the appointment of teachers, to ensure that study courses are taught by qualified, scientifically and methodically prepared lecturers, specialists of the specified field of study, using modern approaches and technologies in their work. The mandatory criteria include:
compliance of the qualification of the teaching staff with the requirements specified in the laws and regulations;
the field/interests of scientific research correspond to the content of the study programme /course;
adequate knowledge of the state language and foreign languages.

The selection is carried out in accordance with the Criteria for the Assessment of the Compliance of the Professional Qualification of the Academic Staff with the Taught Courses (Approved by the LiepU Study Council 06. 2005). The professional qualification of the academic staff is assessed by the Faculty Council, according to the criteria aligned to the course to be taught or a related field and publications in the sub-sector or in the field of artistic creation (SAR, point 2.3.4., pp. 54-55).
The qualification of teaching staff involved in implementing the study programme can be evaluated using quantitative and qualitative indicators.

Based on Section 33 2) of Chapter IV of the Law on Higher Education Institutions and Appendix II 3.7. a of the package of documents submitted for accreditation of LiepU, "Evaluation of the qualifications of the teaching staff involved in implementing the study programme" can provide orienting guidance on compliance of the qualifications of the teaching staff involved in implementing the study programme with the requirements of regulatory acts. The total number of teaching staff involved in the programme is sixteen, of whom eleven are lecturers elected to academic positions at LiepU. There may be a slight inaccuracy here, as one lecturer is also mentioned as an elected member at RISEBA. Six or seven of LiepU's elected lecturers have a master's degree, and nine or ten - have a doctoral degree, which makes up 56.3% or 62.5% of the total number of lecturers and is a good indicator. The inaccuracy of the quality calculation is determined by the fact that there are minor inaccuracies in the documents submitted for accreditation, which the RT, knowing the actual situation, tried to correct.

2.4.2.

Based on the goal set in point 1 of the "Arts" study field development plan for 2022-2027" namely to stabilise and balance the quantitative and qualitative indicators of the academic staff, supporting performance of scientific activities (including successful doctoral studies) as far as possible, raising the qualifications of academic and management staff and attracting professionals, as well as specific measures to achieve this goal, as well as evaluating Appendix II 3.7. of the package of documents submitted for accreditation of LiepU, "Evaluation of the qualifications of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study program", RT can conclude that the university is taking purposeful and planned measures that improve study in the event of a change in the composition of the teaching staff, the quality of the programme implementation, and the compliance of the study programme with the requirements. Discussions with alums did not show any shortcomings or negative comments regarding the teaching staff composition.

2.4.3.

N/A

2.4.4.

There is good evidence of academic staff engagement in scientific research and creative practice, with examples given in the SAR (pp.65-71 and available https://www.liepu.lv/lv/263/petniecibas-parskati (Only in Latvian) and in the Annex II.2.4.A
Although the Academic Master study programme"New Media and Audiovisual Art" (45213) (joint with RISEBA University of Applied Sciences) has a more practical orientation, significant academic potential with a doctorate is involved in its realisation. Evaluating Chapter II 2.4.4._2. of the appendix "List of publications, patents, creative artistic works of teaching staff for the reporting period" of the package of documents submitted for accreditation of LiepU, it can be concluded that, in general, the scientific and artistic performance of the teaching staff during the last six years corresponds to the provisions of Article 34 (5) of the Law on Higher Education Institutions. The number of works included in peer-reviewed editions of publications in the programme, including SCOPUS and other databases, is proportionally higher for professors and associate professors, especially in contemporary arts. It must be recognised that the programme is very similar to the Academic Bachelor study programme "New Media Art and Design"(43213), both in terms of its theoretical and artistic orientation and the composition of the teaching staff, so the scientific and creative performance is also very similar. All teaching staff is characterised by a solid artistic orientation in a range of manifestations - from contemporary art exhibitions and performance projects, participation in international art symposia, and recent music concerts in computer electronics to the latest experiments with photography technologies. The aspect of applicability dominates the publications of industry practitioners.

The teaching staff is characterised by an excellent knowledge of the English language: three lecturers are native speakers, and the rest speak the language at the B2 or C1 level.

2.4.5.

A mechanism for mutual cooperation of the teaching staff in the implementation of the study programme has been established but in an ad hoc/informal way, not in a evidenced/recorded way. Although the documentation available to the RT does not show direct indications of creation of a mutual coordination mechanism among the teaching staff in implementing the study programme, close cooperation among all those involved in performing the study programme was observed during the RT commission's visit to the Faculty of Humanities and Arts of LiepU.

It would be beneficial to establish regular communication channels or meetings that result in documented suggestions and tracked implementation based on staff feedback and discussion.

Conclusions on this set of criteria, by indicating strengths and weaknesses

Conclusions.

The programme's teaching staff fully meets the requirements outlined in the laws and regulations and the needs of programme implementation. Mostly the teaching staff has excellent English skills, which can be helpful in the case of international students. Faculty helps new lecturers to integrate into the learning process by training them to use MOODLE, holding seminars on what's new in the library, organising remote classes, etc. More detailed information, e.g., about the development of study courses and their descriptions, are provided by the director of the study programme.

Strengths.

1. Research-based practices in art & design in the Faculty of Humanities and Arts and its affiliated research institutions – Kurzeme Humanities Institute and the Art Research Laboratory: interdisciplinary new media art practices and digital-age art research.
2. All MA students were happy with the quality of their teachers and the knowledge and skills they possess (meetings with students and alumni);
3. The Arts Research Lab is an excellent model of a learning environment (meetings with students and RT tour of resources);
4. Academic staff comprises many practising artists and researchers fostering a connection between scientific research and the artistic features of the programme.
5. Scientific-artistic activities and contemporary art projects result from cooperation between professors and students in the programme.
6. Active academic staff engaging in contemporary art exhibitions, performance projects, art symposia, and latest experiments with technologies in the Arts field.

Weaknesses.

1. The SAR SWOT (mentioned above) analysis and meetings with the staff and students identified the need to Increase collaboration with partner institution RISEBA in research.
2. Lack of supervisory/advisory staff to work in labs outside contract hours (funding model).

Assessment of the requirement [7]

1 R7 - Compliance of the qualification of the academic staff and visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting docents, visiting lecturers and visiting assistants with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements set out in the respective regulatory enactments.

   Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

   The programme's teaching staff fully meet the requirements set forth in the laws and regulations as well as the needs of programme implementation and there is good evidence of academic staff's engagement in scientific research and creative practice. They are active professionals, fully appreciated and respected by the students and employers.

2.5. Assessment of the Compliance

Requirements

1 1 - The study programme complies with the State Academic Education Standard or the Professional Higher Education Standard

   Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

   Attached document ("New Media and Audiovisual Arts (45213) Compliance with Standard.docx") confirms that the study programme mostly complies with Cabinet regulation No. 240 "Noteikumi par valsts akadēmiskās izglītības standartu". However, there is no free elective study part as mandated by the Law of Higher Education Institutions Section 55 (2).

2 2 - The study programme complies with a valid professional standard or the requirements for the professional qualification (if there is no professional standard required for the relevant occupation) provided if the completion of the study programme leads to a professional qualification (if applicable)

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

N/A

3 3 - The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in all languages in which the study programme is implemented, and they comply with the requirements set forth in Section 561 , Paragraph two and Section 562 , Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Attached study course descriptions ("New Media and Audiovisual Arts (45213) MODULES.docx") are prepared English. Descriptions complies with regulations set forth in Law on Higher Education Institutions.

4 4 - The sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme complies with the procedure according to which state recognised documents of higher education are issued.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The provided Diploma sample complies with the procedure by which state-recognised documents of higher education are issued according to Cabinet regulation No. 202 "Kārtība, kādā izsniedz valsts atzītus augstāko izglītību apliecinošus dokumentus". Diploma is issued by LiepU. In diploma supplement "Appendix for item 4.3" it is mentioned that the study programme is implemented in accordance with agreement between RISEBA and LiepU for joint masters study programme.

5 5 - The academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements set forth in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Attached confirmation letter ("Certificate _JMAVM_EN.pdf") indicates that there is 5 elected professors involved in the implementation of the study programme.

6 6 - Academic study programmes provided for less than 250 full-time students may be implemented and less than five professors and associated professors of the higher education institution may be involved in the implementation of the mandatory and limited elective part of these study programmes provided that the relevant opinion of the Council for Higher Education has been received in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

7 7 - At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of an academic doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field of science. At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a professional doctoral study programme in arts (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

N/A

8 8 - The teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme are proficient in the official language in accordance with the regulations on the level of the official language knowledge and the procedures for testing official language proficiency for performing professional duties and office duties.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Confirmation letter ("27.09.2022_1.-1.6._378.edoc") and attached resumes verifies that state language proficiency is compliant with Cabinet regulation No 733 "Noteikumi par valsts valodas zināšanu apjomu, valsts valodas prasmes pārbaudes kārtību un valsts nodevu par valsts valodas prasmes pārbaudi".

9 9 - The teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language, if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Attached resumes of staff and LiepU confirmation letter ("27.09.2022_1.-1.6._379.edoc") verifies that language proficiency in English is at least B2

10 10 - The sample of the study agreement complies with the mandatory provisions to be included in the study agreement.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Sample of attached study agreement complies with Cabinet regulation No 70 "Studiju līgumā obligāti ietveramie noteikumi".

11 11 - The higher education institution / college has provided confirmation that students will be provided with opportunities to continue their education in another study programme or another higher education institution or college (agreement with another accredited higher education institution or college) if the implementation of the study programme is terminated.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Attached contract Nr. 1.-2016/162 with RISEBA confirms that institution provides possibility to continue studies in paid group and in similar profile programme.
Contract No 01-2010/171 confirms that Latvian Academy of Culture provides possibility to continue studies in Academic Master study programme "Arts" subprogramme "Audiovisual Arts".

12 12 - The higher education institution / college has provided confirmation that students are guaranteed compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the study programme's license is revoked due to the actions (actions or omissions) of the higher education institution or college and the student does not wish to continue studies in another study programme.

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

LiepU confirmation letter No1.-1.6./367 states, that students are guaranteed compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the college (actions or failure to act) and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme. However in study agreement there is "2.1.6. To provide a possibility to continue studies in another study programme or another educational institution, if the implementation of the study programme in LiepU, mentioned in the clause 1.1. of the Agreement, is terminated. If the Student does not agree with opportunities for study continuation offered by LiepU, LiepU reimburses to the Student the paid study fee for the last semester of studies in accordance with clause 3.1." Current version of the study agreement is only partially compliant with requirements as compensation should be guaranteed in full, not partially. Ability to complete a study programme in full and possibility to receive a degree in chosen institution constitutes the main right of enrolled students. If the study programme licence is revoked or the study programme is not accredited due to actions of HEI, student financial status in regard to tuition fees must be returned to the position before the infringement of rights as students in their good faith have believed in the ability to fully finish study

programmes in chosen institutions.

13 13 - The joint study programmes comply with the requirements prescribed in Section 55.(1), Paragraphs one, two, and seven of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (if applicable)

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The joint study programme complies with the requirements set out in the first, second, and seventh parts of the first part of Article 55 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

14 14 - Compliance with the requirements specified in other regulatory enactments that apply to the study programme being assessed (if applicable)

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

N/A

Assessment of the requirement [8]

1 R8 - Compliance of the study programme with the requirements set forth in the Law on Higher Education Institutions and other regulatory enactments.

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Study programme generally complies with regulatory enactments. Compensation should be guaranteed in full in case of closure. The study programme does not feature a true free elective (C) part as mandated by Law on Institutions of Higher Education 6. 4) and 55. 2) c). and Regulation of Academic Education Standard 7.

General conclusions about the study programme, indicating the most important strengths and weaknesses of the study programme

Conclusions.

Based on Appendix MA III 3.2.1. of the package of documents submitted for accreditation of LiepU, the aim of the Academic Master study programme"New Media and Audiovisual Art" (45213) (joint with RISEBA University of Applied Sciences) is to train competitive, research-oriented professionals/artists who have a comprehensive knowledge of new technologies, audio-visual arts and digital cultural processes, as well as specific skills in the creation of works of art and innovative media products, and who are competent in the art, innovation technology and creative industries labour market. Thus, the aim of the new joint Masters was to create a high-quality study programme, taught in English, building on two successful, existing Masters through combining the RISEBA Master study programme 'Audiovisual Media Art' and the LiepU Master study programme 'New Media Art'. This two-year joint study programme could be evaluated as an integral part of the faculty striving to offer education in the study field on all three qualification levels. The content of this joint Masters' programme is very current and builds on the skills and competences the students developed in the Bachelor programme. The wide scope of offered specialisations ensures a valuable addition to the local and national creative industry.

The connection between scientific research and the artistic features of the programme with the study process is logical and justified as the academic staff comprises many practising artists and researchers who attempt to integrate their expertise into the theoretical courses. Scientific-artistic activities such as exhibitions or other hard-to-categorise contemporary art projects often result from cooperation between professors and students in the Master's study programme. Thus, the M.A. programme is a logical and necessary stage of the LiepU "Arts" study field, complying with the study field, and presents potential for further studies.

The programme's teaching staff fully meets the requirements set forth in the laws and regulations as well as the needs of programme implementation. Mostly the teaching staff has excellent English skills, which is helpful in the case of international students. The number of works included in peer-reviewed editions of publications in the programme, including SCOPUS and other databases, is proportionally higher for professors and associate professors, especially in contemporary arts. It must be recognised that the programme is very similar to the bachelor's programme "New Media Art and Design" both in terms of its theoretical and artistic orientation and the composition of the teaching staff, so the scientific and creative performance is also very similar. All teaching staff is characterised by a solid artistic orientation in a range of manifestations - from contemporary art exhibitions and performance projects, participation in international art symposia, and recent music concerts in computer electronics to the latest experiments with technologies of photography. The aspect of applicability dominates the publications of industry practitioners. The teaching staff is characterised by an excellent knowledge of the English language: three lecturers are native speakers, and the rest speak the language at the B2 or C1 level.

The number of students studying this programme is small: currently, there are ten students in the whole programme, five of them are international students. The student number is consistent with a slight tendency to increase.
The resources provided for the joint Masters' programme are largely very good. RT can assert that MA students have in the "Art House" at their disposal excellent IT resources and a creative learning and research atmosphere.

Strengths.

1. Wide options for specialisation and topics within the module framework due to good synergy of theoretical and practical study outcomes.
2. Excellent equipment for a higher education institution of their scale, good learning resources and model of a learning environment at the Arts House (including the Arts Research Lab).
3. Good academic staff involved in wide contemporary theoretical and creative activities.
4. Staff excellent English skills.
5. The environment of Arts House as a much treasured and valued resource.
6. High alumni satisfaction and capability to independently enter international art and creative environments.

Weaknesses

1. Exaggerated descriptions of learning outcomes, skills and competencies with weak correlation between nominal outcomes and rather modest course descriptions.
2. Quite a low student number recruited, which is a bit inexplicable given comprehensive specialisation options.
3. Relatively high non-completion rate.
4. No proof that there is a joint QMS in place.
5. The imperfection of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Moodle regarding the interactive learning environment.

Evaluation of the study programme "New Media and Audiovisual Art"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "New Media and Audiovisual Art"

Short-term recommendations

1. Elaborate on a quality management system for joint study programmes with RISEBA, including a clear division of roles and responsibilities.

2. Document the closed circle of quality management when it results in changes to the programme.

3. Evaluate the programme from a content and concept point of view, paying special attention to the explanation of the module system.

4. Considering the orientation of the programme, the introduction of visual semiotics and visual anthropology courses should be evaluated.

5. Analyse the interest of potential students; perhaps the small number of students is determined not only by the fact that the programme is new, but also by other factors of risk.

6. Analyse the relatively high non-completion rate.

7. Closely define the teaching methods of modules avoiding bias toward online solutions.

8. Establish public online and physical spaces for student and alumni work promotion and publication.

Long-term recommendations

1. Find opportunities to find designated studio/creative production spaces to support individual and collaborative practices and their development in the future and to increase student access to the MPLab.

2. Improve the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Moodle, as an interactive learning environment.

II - "Media Art and Creative Technologies" ASSESSMENT

II - "Media Art and Creative Technologies" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1.

According to SAR (point 3.2.1., pp. 97-98), the Doctoral study programme "Media Art and Creative Technologies" (51213) (joint with RISEBA University of Applied Sciences) is a study programme with the goal "by combining the resources and experience of both universities, to implement a high-quality and innovative academic doctoral study programme in the field of Arts in the Humanities, subfield—Media Arts and Creative Technologies, which would enable suitably qualified doctoral candidates to engage in original and independent research - creation of new knowledge - in digital media and audiovisual arts and creative use of innovative technologies, and which has an impact on culture, economy, politics and social sphere in Latvia and beyond."
The study programme is vital to establish complete cycle education in the field of Arts; therefore, to strengthen capacity, a joint programme was developed to offer a full spectrum of education levels.

As LiepU states in SAR (mentioned above): "Alongside the Academic bachelor's study programme "New Media Art and Design" (43213), the Academic Bachelor study programme "Contemporary Performing Arts" (43212) and the Academic Master study programme "New Media and Audiovisual Arts,"(45213) (joint with RISEBA University of Applied Sciences) the Doctoral study programme "Media Arts and Creative Technologies" contributes to the common goal of the field of study: to provide students with the opportunity to acquire a high-quality academic education in the humanities…"

After getting acquainted with the documents submitted for accreditation and the organisation of the study process at LiepU, RT can conclude that the Doctoral study programme by its curriculum, content, and goal does correspond with the study field of Arts.

2.1.2.

The Doctoral study programme "Media Art and Creative Technologies" is implemented jointly with RISEBA. The classification code (IKK) is 51213. Following this code, 213 corresponds to the ISCED field of "Humanities and Arts" subsection "Audiovisual Art and Media Art." 51 corresponds to LQF/EQF 8th level, and the study programme outcomes are formulated in accordance with the levels. A degree obtained when fulfilling all requirements is a Doctor of Science (Ph.D.) in the Humanities and Arts Sciences. Study length is 3 years full time (including 11 months of studies and 1 month of leave each year) in 132 CP. The implementation language is English.

Admission requirements for potential students are a master's degree in arts or humanities or another discipline (sociology, communication, and information science, computer science, physics). Admission to the joint doctoral programme occurs at the university of the applicant's choice: "The LiepU specialises in digital media arts, while RISEBA specialises in audiovisual media and creative technologies." (SAR 3.1.2, pp.116-119). The application consists of document submission, entrance exams, doctoral project application, and interviews in English. The programme has also defined an extensive list of digital competencies necessary/beneficial for potential applicants to fully engage in the specifics of the study programme.

Admission requirements are justified. The title, code, degree, and obtainable qualification are interrelated and coherent and fall within the scope of the general aims of the study programme.

2.1.3.

LiepU states in SAR (point 3.1.1, p.87) that the awarded degree has changed to a Doctor of Science in the Humanities and Arts Sciences. Otherwise, no changes were made, as the study programme was licensed in 2021. Changes to the degree title are supported and justified.

2.1.4.

Since the study programme was licensed only two years ago, there are no current data on this study programme in the sense indicated in criterion 2.1.4. Still, some indications could be found in the previous doctoral study programme. According to SAR (point 3.1.3, pp. 91-92), six people have graduated from LiepU's Media Arts doctoral programme, all of whom lecture at various Latvian universities (LiepU, RISEBA, LMA), four of them are professional artists with regular exhibitions at least once a year, and four continue research in their field participating in conferences, creating publications. It is not to be determined yet what kind of results will yield the new study programme, but RT can make assumptions based on the information available to it.

As LiepU points out, Creative industries are knowledge-intensive and rely on individual creativity and talent to generate significant economic wealth. It should also be mentioned that people working in the creative industries represent and promote a common European identity, culture, and values"

(SAR, mentioned above); it follows that it is self-evident that research capacity in the field of humanities with ambitions for a cross-discipline approach is vital for local/national sociocultural context with the possibility for integration into more practical-economically essential niches. However, the RT wishes to point out that the social and economic justification for Ph.D. programmes can not be accessed by the employment indicators for lower levels of audiovisual media jobs in the region that are often commercial and rather technical than scientific.

Currently, only four students are in the study programme - one in the 2nd year and three in the 1st year. There is no sufficient data to analyse the dynamics of students. If RT is guided by the information in the licensing documents (programme licensed on 17.03.2021, license number 2021/01K), it was planned to enroll five or six students in the doctoral programme each year. Accordingly, there should be at least ten or twelve students.

The study programme is socially justified.

2.1.5.

The study programme was developed in the framework of the SAM 8.2.1 project; the joint programme was designed as the next educational stage of the already successful joint Master's degree programme "New Media and Audiovisual Arts"(43212), which was already conducted jointly with RISEBA. The content of the study programme "Media Arts and Creative Technologies" was based on the so-called old doctoral study programme - "New Media Arts," - implemented at LiepU before. Given the fact that the study programme by its nature, is quite technologically intensive, the joint programme ensures that infrastructure and technical capacities are pooled together. LiepU notes that the main "quality assurance mechanisms include conducting student questionnaires once a year, evaluating the results of the questionnaires, preparing and evaluating the self-evaluation report of the study programme, etc. processes." (SAR, point 3.1.5., pp. 94-97). As for the quality organisation mechanism of the common programme, it must be recognised that in the documents attached to the programme (Annex III 3.1.5. DR), general statements are mentioned, namely that the evaluation system is based on the regulatory documents of both universities and that the teaching staff ensures quality. While the motivation and documents for the joint programme are justified and laid out in SAR, it is hard to understand what precisely the partner organisation contributes in terms of technical or academic value toward the field and title of the programme.

As the study programme is brand new, it is pretty early to deduce the overall performance. However, the development of a joint study programme is justified. The fact that the joint study programme will ensure a quality study process is yet to be confirmed.

Conclusions on this set of criteria, by specifying strengths and weaknesses

Conclusions.

The study programme complies with the study field. Admission requirements are justified. The title, code, degree, and obtainable qualification are interrelated and coherent and fall within the scope of the general aims of the study programme. The study programme is new, student numbers are low, and quality processes are yet to be confirmed.

Despite this, the roles, responsibilities, and contributions of each partner organisations are not clear enough, thus making this partnership appear formal or following non-academic ulterior reasons. RISEBA being a partner in the lower MA programme is not a sufficient argument to take part as a partner in the doctoral programme.

Strengths.

1. The new study programme provides an opportunity to approbate and develop study further.
2. BA, M.A., and Ph.D. programmes at LiepU can provide ground for a holistic and synergetic education approach to the study field.

Weaknesses.

1. Insufficient clarity and justification about the role and contribution of each partner institution in the join programme.

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1.

Before delving into the positioning of the doctoral study programme regarding the study field or the analysis of its content, the very name of the programme, "Media Art and Creative Technologies," sounds "fresh," current, and shows a connection with the latest trends in industry and art science. This circumstance alone will surely attract the attention of prospective students and settle this study programme into a place not yet occupied by another doctoral programme in art.

To understand the content of the programme and the form of its implementation, the conditions for the creation and implementation of the programme must first be made clear. Taking advantage of the possibility provided in Article 3 3, Clause 1 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions, to create a doctoral study programme with another partner institution, the LiepU, on June 26, 2020, signed contract no. 20.1.1-18/2 with the University of Business, Art and Technology "RISEBA" for a jointly implemented inter-university doctoral study programme "Media art and creative technologies"(joint with RISEBA University of Applied Sciences). Joint study programmes should follow the requirements in Article 55.1 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions. As mentioned before, in the package of documents attached to the accreditation in appendix no. III 3.2.1. D, in which the descriptions of the modules are provided, the programme's creators confirm that both universities plan and implement all study modules together, so it is impossible to separate them. If the doctoral programme is designed as a joint programme, then a written agreement must be concluded between the universities, and a quality management system must be developed. When comparing the documents submitted for LiepU's accreditation regarding the doctoral programme and the information on the RISEBA website https://www.riseba.lv/en/students/doctoral-studies/media-art-and-creative-technologies, several discrepancies call for attention.

The programme describes the realisation of modules and their goals, but the content of the modules still needs to be added. Also, they are somewhat loosely composed. Likewise, there must be a clearly defined scope of doctoral programme content that a Ph.D. candidate must know when taking the doctoral exam.

A more precise description is essential for understanding the "Theories and Methodology" module since the doctoral programme in its current version gives the impression of the dominance of social sciences in it. At the same time, the literature lists mainly mention the possibilities of the theoretical scope of art. Since the degree will also be awarded in the humanities, the methodological orientations of the humanities should also appear in the doctoral programme. Point A1-0.1 "Induction" of the "Fundamentals of Research" module should be rendered as "Introduction" (Ievads, ievadījums) since the word "induction" (indukcija) has a different meaning in Latvian.

As the study programme has been opened only recently, it cannot comply with clause 33 (3) 3) of the Law on Higher Education Institutions on the annual defense of doctoral theses and awarding doctorate degrees. For this reason, this aspect cannot be evaluated in the current phase of the

programme's development. However, the study programme cooperates very actively with industries. Thus Article 3.3 (3), Clause 4 of the mentioned Law is fulfilled.

The Latvian Science Council, in the letter of January 16, 2023, no. 2022/4.2-182 by its director Lauma Muižniece, evaluating the quality of the LiepU doctoral programme "Media Art and creative technologies" (51213), considers it to be valuable and to correspond to the demands of the "Arts" study field. (The letter of the Latvian Science Council of January 16, 2023, no. 2022/4.2-182, sent at RT's request, can be found in the accreditation documents, later added a package of documents.)

In general, the content of the doctoral study programme is relevant, and the content of the study modules is interconnected and complementary and meets the goals of the programme. The only remark, as already mentioned above, is that the content of the programme requires detailed elaboration.

2.2.2.

Awarding of the doctoral degree in this programme will be based on achievements and knowledge in the Humanities and Arts, as evidenced by both the professional and artistic qualifications of the supervisors of doctoral theses and the orientation of the doctoral programme.

When improving the programme, RT's previously expressed objections about the insufficient proportion of humanities in the programme should be taken into account.

2.2.3.

Study programmes with a distinctly small number of students (four) cannot be implemented other than taking into account student-centred learning; that is, each doctoral student is cared for personally, which is determined both by the form of programme implementation and by the fact that there is more teaching staff than students. Doctoral students have the opportunity to grow with professionals. Since the programme is conducted in English, it is student-centred also regarding international students. As mentioned in point 2.2.1, the study implementation methods can be improved regarding structure and content.

The language of communication between faculty and students is primarily English, which has several incentives. On the one hand, several lecturers whose native language is English are involved in implementing the study programme, which would allow attracting international students as well. Considering the specifics and size of the doctoral study programme, English is used mainly in communication, reading review lectures, and all activities provided for in the programme. The implementation of a foreign language is fully justified.

The implementation of a joint study programme is a welcoming strategic intervention that may, when conducted well, result in benefits for both partners and create synergic effects. LiepU and RISEBA are partnering, strategically extending the partnership over two programmes based on the LiepU project "Reduction of fragmentation of study programmes and strengthening of resource sharing at LiepU," as mentioned in SAR on page 176 (point 3.1.5., pp. 176-178). In developing the joint programme, the universities have considered the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia's objective that the educational programmes offered by Latvian universities should be consolidated to avoid overlaps, be more competitive, merge, and use resources more efficiently.

Despite formal justification for the joint study programme, the RT found an insufficient definition of both partners' roles, contributions, and responsibilities. The lack of accurate data on how the partnership is reflected in the actual execution of the programme does not allow sufficient estimates of the implementations of methods.

2.2.4.

According to point 3.2.1 of SAR (pp. 178-184), an "Academic internship" is encouraged in the doctoral programme. Depending on the student's chosen field and specialisation, the internship includes supervision or counseling of undergraduate theses and supervision of semester assignments or general counseling of undergraduates. In some cases, doctoral students also teach 1 or 2 KRP lectures within the modules in their field of specialisation.

Although the language of implementation of the doctoral programme is English, all students who are citizens of Latvia are fluent in the Latvian language and have no problem pursuing "academic practice" at LiepU. Due to the lack of a precedent, other cases have not yet been provided in the regulatory documents of LiepU.

2.2.5.

According to Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 1000 point 2.11., the LiepU has been granted doctoral councils in only three branches - educational sciences, linguistics, and literary studies. Since the doctoral study programme "Media Art and Creative Technologies" (51213) is not yet accredited nor fulfills other legal requirements to grant it the right to a promotion council, the LiepU, RISEBA, and the Latvian Academy of Arts on 6.12.2022, have signed a tripartite agreement on ensuring the promotion process at the Latvian Academy of Arts. The implementers of the doctoral study programme have committed to fulfilling all the law requirements by 2027 to receive the Science Council's permission to open the promotion council in Arts at the LiepU.

2.2.6.

The study programme was licensed only two years ago (licensed on 17.03.2021, licence number 2021/01K), so it still only has a few students and a correspondingly limited number of topics for a doctoral thesis. During the visit to LiepU, the RT spoke with one of the student representatives of the doctoral programme. Among other things, the topic of his doctoral thesis, which corresponds to the study programme and is relevant to the industry, was touched upon. The RT lacks information to make more general statements.

Conclusions on this set of criteria, by specifying strengths and weaknesses

Conclusions.

The doctoral study programme "Media Art and Creative Technologies" (51213) is a logical and necessary conclusion of the "Arts" study field of the LiepU, which unites similar interests and related programmes by creating new knowledge in digital media and audio-visual arts and by creative use of innovative technologies. For the above reason, the doctoral programme is the most crucial part and crown of the "Arts" study field. Thus, the doctoral programme development must also interest the lower study levels. The added value is its interdisciplinarity and applied research. The focus on applied sciences meets not only the labour market requirements but also the current status of the LiepU, to which the Cabinet of Ministers recently granted the status of a university of applied sciences.

If applied science study programmes are primarily exciting and suitable for students' perception, problems may appear when the student chooses demanding academic studies based on scientific research. Such studies require a serious methodological base and theoretical frameworks.

The doctoral programme can change the methodological strategy of the entire area. Also helpful is the fact that the doctoral staff is involved in teaching other programme subjects, which would only

make the task easier. As the RT verified with the student representative during its visit to LiepU, specific lectures on methodological strategies proved valuable.

The strengths and weaknesses of the scientific research and artistic creativity of LiepU's "Arts" field of study are determined by the factors mentioned in the previous analysis. More briefly, the following strengths and weaknesses can be distinguished:

Strengths.

1. The programme is geared toward creating new knowledge in digital media and audio-visual arts as well as innovative technologies – an unoccupied niche among doctoral programmes in Latvia.
2. The added value to the programme is interdisciplinarity and applied research.
3. Conduction in English and language skills of the teaching staff facilitate internationalisation.

Weaknesses.

1. Since the doctoral study programme was licensed only two years ago, it puts it in a weaker position in terms of quality evidence:
1.1. LiepU does not yet have a doctoral council in "Arts,"
1.2. It does not yet have graduates and demonstrably defended postgraduate theses,
1.3. It still has a study programme to polish: the modules and the literature lists repeat the same content, a little structured course in supportive subjects such as methodological strategies and other required research competencies, etc.;
2. Not fully completed in terms of formality and content and lacks a QMS created together with RISEBA;
3. Lack of clearly defined scope of doctoral programme content that a Ph.D. candidate must know before the doctoral exam.

Assessment of the requirement [5] (applicable only to master's or doctoral study programmes)

1 R5 - The study programme for obtaining a master's or doctoral degree is based on the achievements and findings of the respective field of science or field of artistic creation.

   Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

   As far as the doctoral study programme is not developed in a classic form, successively mentioning the study content, but more in the form of a retelling of the knowledge and competencies to be achieved, RT had to be guided by the list of literature attached to the programme, and the information gained during the visit to LiepU.

   Since "Arts" is a broad field of research and artistic activity, the mentioned study programme cannot cover the entire spectrum of art; it focuses more on creating new knowledge in digital media and audio-visual arts by creatively using innovative technologies. It is a new and promising field in the visual arts, which has no direct analogs in other Latvian universities. The director of the doctoral programme and the involved teaching staff have been working with digital media for a long time in both Latvian and foreign artistic environments and manage both the artistic and scientific literature in this field. For the reasons mentioned, RT believes that the doctoral study programme of LiepU fosters a lot of potential as the final stage of a complete study field and generally meets the requirements set for the doctoral programme in terms of content.
   True, it must be admitted that the study programme at its current stage is not sufficiently clearly

formulated; it will have to choose a more precise scientific focus in the context of the humanities and arts to develop its potential.

As a fresh programme it will need a few years to disclose where it developed fully. Despite the objections, the programme generally corresponds to the field of the sciences and the achievements of the arts.

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1.

LiepU Doctoral study programme "Media Art and Creative Technologies" (51213) is implemented in cooperation with RISEBA University of Applied Arts, LiepU MPLab, and other LiepU departments in a unified system. The programme uses the resources available to BA and MA programmes and MPLab. These are assessed in the SAR (point 3.3.1.-3.3.3., pp. 191-199). The RT confirms the study and scientific provisions in both universities to comply and enable high-quality study processes tailored to the needs of each doctoral student. Financial provisions are analysed in SAR 3.3.3. point (mentioned above), paying attention to only one aspect: tuition fees.

The situation is slightly different if one is looking for studying and informative provisions on the internet. Regarding more studying and informative provisions, RT had difficulty verifying the availability of study materials and their organisation for doctoral students online because the transition link to the study programme on the LiepU homepage is unsafe (https://mplab.lv/lv/izglitiba/5/), which is recommended not to be opened. RT followed this proposal. However, that wasn't the only problem. In the same way, there are discrepancies in the VIIS system regarding the doctoral programme: so on page 199 of SAR 3.3.3 (pp. 198-199), it is pointed out that the tuition fee for full-time studies for the academic year 2022/2023 is EUR 4240, while at the homepage (https://liepu.lv/lv/doktorantura) tuition fee stated is EUR 3800; also, information about implementation language is misleading - (https://www.liepu.lv/en/121/faculty-of-humanities-and-arts#) it is noted that the doctoral study programme is implemented in both Latvian and English, while the doctoral study programme is licensed only for instruction in English. The information about the degree to be obtained in the doctoral programme is also misleading: SAR 3.1.1. (p. 167) the degree to be awarded is a Doctor of Science (Ph.D.) in the Humanities and Art Sciences. In contrast, on the website of LiepU (https://www.liepu.lv/lv/846/mediju-maksla-un-radosas-tehnologijas), the degree to be obtained is different: Doctor of Science (-e) (Ph.D.) in Creative Industries Sciences.

Regarding the doctoral programme's specifics, it should be considered that the students usually use scientific libraries and work with the literature they need. Hence, the opportunities offered by the university are not so primarily essential for them as it is for BA and MA students. During the visit to LiepU, RT ensured that the literature available at the Faculty of Humanities and Arts is mainly in English and meets the programme's needs. Thus, the provision of scientific literature for the needs of the doctoral programme is generally of good quality.

As the study programme is still in the approbation phase, and e-learning platforms are still in the development phase, it can be reasonable that other ways of digitally managed learning can be implemented, given the low number of students. It is not necessarily justified to fully prepare online learning platforms and tools if the number of students is low and the focus on learning is highly individual and independent. However, it is softly recommendable that the digital environment is

developed to a degree and sufficiently maintained as it can enable a better study experience for doctoral students.

Cross-checking of literature units added in course descriptions with the LiepU library catalog (https://alise.liepu.lv/Alise/lv/home.aspx) points out that most literature is available to students in the library. However, it must be highlighted that the doctoral programme by its virtue, is based on individual research, and available library resources could not accommodate the particular needs of the students. However, infrastructure (library, faculty, supervisors, etc.) is in place to ensure that, in some limited capacity, students are supported in their need for information resources.

2.3.2.

The resources provided for the Doctoral study programme "Media Art and Creative Technologies" (51213) (joint with RISEBA University of Applied Sciences) appear to the RT to be entirely adequate. Still, it is difficult to be more precise as doctoral students' resource requirements vary according to the research project. The RT didn't receive the opportunity to visit RISEBA University to view its resources. The SAR contained a comprehensive list of the equipment and resources at both sites. LiepU MPLab (Liepāja, Kūrmājas pr. 13) is an excellent learning and teaching resource with high-end equipment, much appreciated by students and teachers alike. The current student and the alumni the RT met were optimistic about the resources.

2.3.3.

This is a difficult question for the RT to answer as RT has met only one current Doctoral student from four students currently studying on the programme (three in year one and one in year twoo). The SAR (point 2.3.1., pp. 41-47) gives clear figures on the income from students at each level and the allocation of funds, but it doesn't present a risk analysis of the financial viability of the programme. LiepU points out that the total income for one student in one year is EUR 19 072.29 (EUR 1630.11 per one study place with 3.9 multipliers for study field and a 3.0 multiplier for doctoral-level study programme). The number of study places funded by the state budget in 2022 is three. The tuition fee for self-financed students is EUR 4240 (which cannot be corroborated by information featured on the webpage as there is a different fee amount stated). Most importantly, the minimum required number of students, as indicated by LiepU, is three. This provided analysis accounts only for the revenue part of the study programme and analysis of actual expenditures (staff salary, maintenance costs, informative resources, etc.) is lacking. No information is available to SAR regarding allowance to doctoral students for conference attendance, publishing, and other research-related expenses. However, during interviews programme management pointed out that there is such an opportunity. Clarification is required so students can get a clearer view of available resources if they decide to study in this study programme.

The RT didn't hear of any significant issues or problems about providing the appropriate resources to ensure the full implementation of the study process from its meetings with the students, teachers, and alumni. Albeit not ideal, as the majority of resources such as academic staff and material provisions are shared with programmes of lower levels or partnership organisations it is possible to maintain feasibility even with fewer students.

Conclusions on this set of criteria, by specifying strengths and weaknesses

Conclusions.

The resources provided for the Doctoral study programme "Media Art and Creative Technologies"

(51213) (joint with RISEBA University of Applied Sciences) appear to the RT to be entirely adequate. They lean on the generally excellent resources of all three degrees of the study field, emphasising student-centred focus related to each doctoral student's research. This was also confirmed by the doctoral student facing the RT.

Strengths.

1. LiepU MPLab (Liepāja, Kūrmājas pr. 13) is an excellent learning and teaching resource.
2. Research-oriented acquisitions and student-centred support.

Weaknesses.

1. The lack of accurate information on the direct costs of the programme raises the suspicion that with the low number of students, they are too large.
2. The website is not developed for the doctoral study programme's needs and contains misleading information.

Assessment of the requirement [6]

1 R6 - Compliance of the study provision, science provision (if applicable), informative provision (including library), material and technical provision and financial provision with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and ensuring the achievement of learning outcomes

   Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

   The one current student and alumni the RT met were optimistic about the resources available and a tour of the resources at LiepU by the RT, particularly the IT labs and the LiepU MPLab. The programme rests on the general good resources of the lower degrees in the study field offered at LiepU, emphasizing student-centred focus related to each doctoral student's research. The shortcomings mentioned in the analysis part are relatively easy to fix.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1.

The qualification of teaching staff in implementing the Doctor study programme "Media Art and Creative Technologies" (51213) can be evaluated using quantitative and qualitative indicators. Based on Section 33 2) of Chapter IV of the Law on Higher Education Institutions and Appendix II 3.7. of the package of documents submitted for accreditation of LiepU "Evaluation of the qualifications of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of study programme," given information can provide orienting guidance on compliance of the qualifications of the teaching staff involved in implementing the study programme with the requirements of regulatory acts.
Since doctoral programmes are implemented only by teaching staff with a doctorate, a quantitative assessment of lecturers' qualifications is useless. LiepU's doctoral programme is implemented by nine doctors of science and six doctors of science who are also Latvian Science Council experts. They primarily specialise in social sciences, engineering, technology, and philology. Six doctors, who carry out the mandatory part of the doctoral programme, have been elected at the LiepU. Since the doctoral programme has been licensed for only two years (licensed on 17.03.2021, licence number 2021/01K) and the number of students in it is small, there is far more teaching staff than students. Furthermore, in the study programme, the completion of which will result in the award of a

doctorate in humanities and arts, the number of doctors and experts with a specialisation appropriate to the programme should be increased.

This is all the more important because neither LiepU nor its partner university RISEBA has a single Science Council expert in the Arts which was confirmed by checking the Latvian Science Council's expert database.

It should be recognised as a positive fact that the teaching staff of the doctoral programme also participates in implementing other programmes in the "Arts" study field. Hence, they have a good overview of the study field, goals, and attainable opportunities.

2.4.2.

Based on the goal set in point 1 of the "Study field "Art" development plan for 2022-2027" namely to stabilise and balance the quantitative and qualitative indicators of the academic staff, supporting the performance of scientific activities (including successful doctoral studies) as far as possible, raising the qualifications of academic and management staff and attracting professionals, as well as specific measures to achieve this goal, as well as evaluating Appendix II 3.7. of the package of documents submitted for accreditation of LiepU, "Evaluation of the qualifications of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study program," RT can conclude that the university is taking purposeful and planned measures that improve study in the event of a change in the composition of the teaching staff, the quality of the programme implementation, and the compliance of the study programme with the requirements.

Discussions with alums did not show any shortcomings or negative comments regarding the teaching staff composition. However, for truth's sake, we spoke with only one student in the doctoral programme.

By evaluating the scientific level, scientific-artistic activities, and several scientific publications of the academic teaching staff involved in the doctoral study programme, RT confirms that the qualification of the teaching staff complies with the regulatory framework. True, it should be recalled what was said earlier that no expert of the Council of Science in the Arts works in the programme.

2.4.3.

The majority of doctoral teaching staff carry out both academic and artistic activities. Since already at the master's level, the teaching staff involved students in their scientific and creative projects, it is also a common practice in doctoral studies and one of the rules for successfully implementing this level of study. The doctoral programme is implemented by teaching theoretically qualified staff who carry out artistic activities. Thus, subsections 2.4.1. and 2.4.3. of SAR (pp.64-67 and pp.69-71) mention LiepU Art Research Laboratory, created by two professors of the highest study level, that organises International Weeks, when artists and researchers from different countries gather at MPLab to discuss various topics in media art and collaborate in research and creative projects with leading European art, etc.

The doctoral teaching staff has developed cooperation with Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences (Norway), Ars Longa (France), Baltan Laboratories (Netherlands) in the Creative Europe project 'Renewable Futures,' Aalto University Media Lab, Zavod Projekt ATOL in Slovenia and more. The international cooperation projects of Rasa Šmite and Raitis Šmits described in SAR are numerous, relevant, and vital. International cooperation in the field is ensured and established with partners listed in SAR on page 69 (mentioned above). Among those is Faboratory of Hangar (Spain), Oslo's Art in Society Research group.

RT can classify the academic staff's research-related projects and artistic creativity as inter-, trans- or meta-disciplinary oriented projects.

2.4.4.

Since practically only professors and associate professors work in the doctoral programme, their qualification as experts of the Latvian Science Council is desirable since high requirements are set for the teaching staff of the doctoral programme in terms of scientific and artistic quality. Evaluating Chapter II 2.4.4._2. of the appendix "List of publications, patents, creative artistic works of teaching staff for the reporting period" of the package of documents submitted for accreditation of LiepU, it can be concluded that, in general, the scientific and artistic performance of the teaching staff during the last six years corresponds to the provisions of Article 34 (5) of the Law on Higher Education Institutions. The number of works in peer-reviewed editions of publications, including SCOPUS, Web of Sciences, and other databases, only for some teaching staff is the same or comparable.
The professor in computer science has exceptionally high results in this regard (Web of Science - 6, SCOPUS - 6). For other professors, creative activities or articles in peer-reviewed collections are at the forefront of their achievements.
In general, all teaching staff of the doctoral programme, either in terms of scientific activities or artistic performances, have fulfilled the requirements outlined in the following clauses of the "Law on Higher Education Institutions": clause 33 (3)2), clause 27 (2), clause 28 (1), and (4) in all sub-clauses. It is true that all doctoral programme's teaching staff publications still need to meet the highest requirements that would allow them to be awarded the qualification of an expert of the Latvian Science Council.

2.4.5.

Although the documentation available to the RT does not show direct indications of the creation of a mutual coordination mechanism among the teaching staff in implementing the study programme, close cooperation among all those involved in performing the study programme was observed during the RT's visit to the "Arts" faculty of LiepU.
Given we are here dealing with a joint programme, assessment of cooperation is a vital mechanism. It should be among the priorities of the programmes' future activities as it also serves prospective students' awareness of the programme execution. Cooperation and interconnection of courses are usually also one of the key justifications for the establishment of joint programmes and the RT observes a lack of it.

Conclusions on this set of criteria, by indicating strengths and weaknesses

Conclusions.

The doctoral programme has a solid academic staff with theoretical knowledge and artistic orientation whose paramount and distinctive quality is the orientation towards contemporary art and new technologies. Such a consistently maintained orientation cannot be observed in other art programmes in Latvia and determines the orientation of scientific research and artistic projects of teaching staff, which often form a unified whole.
All teaching staff involved in implementing the academic doctoral programme - professors and associate professors - have a doctor's degree, moreover, in a vast spectrum of sciences - in computer science, pedagogy, arts, philology, social sciences, etc. Doctoral studies are carried out by five professors elected at LiepU. All teaching staff have scientific publications and realised artistic activities during the last six-year reference period as provided in the regulatory enactments.
Based on the above, RT can conclude that, generally, the requirements outlined in the Laws have

been met (see point 2.4.4.). At this study level, these professors are used to scientific activities, leading creative activities, and on whose shoulders rest the prominent internationally recognised publications. However, the RT analysis also mentions that not every one of the lecturers in this programme has sufficient publications that meet international scientific requirements. Above mentioned applies especially to the Arts, which can be considered a significant obstacle in developing the doctoral programme.

Strengths.

1. Solid academic staff oriented towards contemporary art, new technologies, and unique identity among Latvian artists and art theorists.
2. Student involvement in scientific and creative projects of the academic staff.

Weaknesses.

1. Several experts from the Latvian Science Council in "Arts" is not available to ultimately serve the needs of the programme: neither LiepU nor its partner university RISEBA has a single Latvian Science Council expert in Arts.
2. Unclear mechanisms of academic cooperation between LiepU and RISEBA.

Assessment of the requirement [7]

1 R7 - Compliance of the qualification of the academic staff and visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting docents, visiting lecturers and visiting assistants with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements set out in the respective regulatory enactments.

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

The doctoral programme has a solid academic staff with theoretical knowledge and artistic orientation. Despite the positive qualities, it is urgent to achieve the appearance of Latvian Science Council experts in Arts among the teaching staff of LiepU. Their current lack is a significant obstacle to the programme's implementation.

2.5. Assessment of the Compliance

Requirements

1 1 - The study programme complies with the State Academic Education Standard or the Professional Higher Education Standard

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

N/A

2 2 - The study programme complies with a valid professional standard or the requirements for the professional qualification (if there is no professional standard required for the relevant occupation) provided if the completion of the study programme leads to a professional qualification (if applicable)

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

N/A

3 3 - The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in all languages in which the study programme is implemented, and they comply with the requirements set forth in Section 561 , Paragraph two and Section 562 , Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The attached study course descriptions ("Media Art and Creative Technologies (51213) Modules.docx") are prepared in English. Descriptions comply with regulations outlined in Law on Higher Education Institutions.

4   4 - The sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme complies with the procedure according to which state recognised documents of higher education are issued.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The provided Diploma sample complies with the procedure by which state-recognised documents of higher education are issued according to MK No. 202 "Kārtība, kādā izsniedz valsts atzītus augstāko izglītību apliecinošus dokumentus". However, it is stated in the diploma, that the promotion decision is made by the Promotion Council of LiepU - there is no Promotion Council of relevant study fields in LiepU. In the Academic Statement, it is noted that the study programme is a joint programme.

5   5 - The academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements set forth in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The attached confirmation letter ("Certificate_MMRT_EN.pdf") indicates that five LiepU-elected professors are involved in implementing the study programme.

6   6 - Academic study programmes provided for less than 250 full-time students may be implemented and less than five professors and associated professors of the higher education institution may be involved in the implementation of the mandatory and limited elective part of these study programmes provided that the relevant opinion of the Council for Higher Education has been received in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

N/A

7   7 - At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of an academic doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field of science. At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a professional doctoral study programme in arts (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The confirmation letter ("Certificate of study direction_LZP_EN.pdf") indicates that 6 LSC experts (holding doctoral degrees) are involved in the implementation of the study programme.

8   8 - The teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme are proficient in the official language in accordance with the regulations on the level of the official language knowledge and the procedures for testing official language proficiency for performing professional duties and office duties.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Confirmation letter ("27.09.2022_1.-1.6._378.edoc") and attached resumes verify that state language proficiency is compliant with Cabinet regulations No 733 "Noteikumi par valsts valodas zināšanu apjomu, valsts valodas prasmes pārbaudes kārtību un valsts nodevu par valsts valodas prasmes pārbaudi."

9 9 - The teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language, if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language (if applicable).

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The attached resumes of staff and LiepU confirmation letter ("27.09.2022_1.-1.6._379.edoc") verify that language proficiency in English is at least B2.

10 10 - The sample of the study agreement complies with the mandatory provisions to be included in the study agreement.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Sample of attached study agreement complies with Cabinet regulations No 70 "Studiju līgumā obligāti ietveramie noteikumi".

11 11 - The higher education institution / college has provided confirmation that students will be provided with opportunities to continue their education in another study programme or another higher education institution or college (agreement with another accredited higher education institution or college) if the implementation of the study programme is terminated.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Attached is contract No 1.-2020/140 with the Art Academy of Latvia confirms that the institution allows continuing studies within the doctoral study programme "Arts."

12 12 - The higher education institution / college has provided confirmation that students are guaranteed compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the study programme's license is revoked due to the actions (actions or omissions) of the higher education institution or college and the student does not wish to continue studies in another study programme.

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

LiepU confirmation letter No1.-1.6./367 states that students are guaranteed compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the college's actions (actions or failure to act) and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme. However, in the study agreement, the statement is "2.1.6. To provide a possibility to continue studies in another study programme or another educational institution, if the implementation of the study programme in LiepU, mentioned in clause 1.1. of the Agreement, is terminated. Suppose the Student disagrees with opportunities for study continuation offered by LiepU. In that case, LiepU reimburses the Student the paid study fee for the last semester of studies in accordance with clause 3.1." The current version of the study agreement is only partially compliant with requirements, as compensation should be guaranteed in full, not partially. The ability to complete a study programme in full and the possibility to receive a degree in chosen institution constitutes the leading right of enrolled students. If the study programme licence is revoked or the study programme is not accredited due to actions of HEI, student financial status regarding tuition fees must be returned to the position before the infringement of rights as students, in their good faith, have believed in the ability to fully finish study programmes in chosen institutions.

13 13 - The joint study programmes comply with the requirements prescribed in Section 55.(1), Paragraphs one, two, and seven of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (if applicable)

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

The attached comparison table ("Media Art and Creative Technologies (51213) Compliance with

law.docx"), together with other attached documents and self-evaluation report, generally confirms compliance of the joint LiepU RISEBA academic doctoral study programme "Media Arts and Creative Technologies" with the requirements of the Law on Higher Education Institutions. However, based on point 3.2.1. D of Appendix III of the package of documents submitted for accreditation of LiepU, where it is mentioned that "It is not possible to separate which modules are organised by LiepU and which by RISEBA," RT should note that point (2) 1) of the Article 55' of the Law on Higher institutions has not fully complied. The programme must have an agreed procedure in written form regarding the program's implementation and the division of responsibilities among the partner universities.

However, given that the 14.07.2022 redaction of the Law on Higher Education Institutions does exclude the formal need for a joint quality management system, in this case, we see a similar mechanism that facilitates cooperation and clarifies the roles of each institution could be recommended.

14 14 - Compliance with the requirements specified in other regulatory enactments that apply to the study programme being assessed (if applicable)

   Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

   In general, requirements set out in clause 55.1, subsection (8) 1) of the Law on Higher Education Institutions have been met.

Assessment of the requirement [8]

1 R8 - Compliance of the study programme with the requirements set forth in the Law on Higher Education Institutions and other regulatory enactments.

   Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

   Study programme generally complies with regulatory enactments, although the documents submitted to accreditation somewhat formally present the compliance of several criteria with the legislation. Compensation should be guaranteed in full in case of programme closure; in the same way, each partner university's role, contribution, and responsibility in implementing the programme must be precisely formulated in writing.

General conclusions about the study programme, indicating the most important strengths and weaknesses of the study programme

Conclusions.

The Doctoral study programme "Media Art and Creative Technologies" (51213) was created as a joint study programme of LiepU and RISEBA, anticipating it as the next educational stage of the already successful joint Master's degree programme "New Media and Audiovisual Arts." Such a strategy was intended to pursue an innovative academic doctoral study programme in the field of Arts in the Humanities, subfield "Media Arts and Creative Technologies," which would enable suitably qualified doctoral candidates to create new knowledge in digital media and audio-visual arts by engaging in original and independent research, and by creatively using innovative technologies, which would have an impact on culture, economy, politics and social spheres in Latvia and beyond. In that respect, the creation of the doctoral study programme "Media Art and Creative Technologies" can generally be recognized as justified and appropriate both to the specifics of LiepU as a university of applied sciences and to the targeted orientation of the "Arts" study field, thereby promoting the development of the relatively new media sciences, and testing the artistic dimensions of new technologies. Among other things, this field also explores the potential of transdisciplinary strategies.

With the aforementioned orientation, the LiepU doctoral study programme inhabits an original and unoccupied niche among Latvian art programmes. Thus, the study programme complies with the study field; its title, code, degree, and obtainable qualification are interrelated and coherent and fall within the scope of the general aims of the programme. Also, its curriculum and content correspond with the study field of Arts.

Given the fact that the study programme by its nature is technologically intensive, the joint programme ensures that infrastructure and technical capacities are pooled together. While the motivation and documents for the joint programme are justified and laid out in SAR, it is hard to understand what precisely the partner organisation contributes in terms of technical or academic value toward the field and title of the programme. However, RT can assert that Ph.D. candidates have in the "Art House" at their disposal good IT resources and a creative learning and research atmosphere.

The lectures and other activities in the doctoral study programme are held in English. Although it is a full-time in-person study programme, as a doctoral programme it can also be partly implemented remotely (low-residency). The latter is a factor that can attract international students. However, since the programme was licensed only two years ago, its attractiveness to international students cannot be confirmed.

The doctoral programme is implemented by theoretically qualified staff who carry out artistic activities. For truth's sake, RT must admit that the professors have not yet met the requirements set for the Latvian Science Council in Arts experts, a significant obstacle to the programme's further development.

Since the programme has been licensed for only two years, it still is undergoing approbation, and the first fruits cannot yet be assessed. There are no graduates and demonstrably defended postgraduate theses, and it still has a study programme to polish. Since the programme currently has very few students, there is several times more teaching staff for each student, which cannot be considered an optimal use of the university's faculties and resources. On the other hand, study programmes with a distinctly small number of students (four) cannot be implemented other than considering student-centred learning; each doctoral student is cared for personally. Thus, doctoral students have the opportunity to grow with professionals. Since the programme is conducted in English, it is student-centred also regarding potential international students.

Despite the shortcomings indicated in the programme or its realisation, RT believes that the doctoral programme "Media Art and Creative Technologies" (51213) is a logical and necessary conclusion of the "Arts" study field of LiepU, which unites similar interests in related programmes of three cycles by creating new knowledge in digital media and audio-visual arts and could become the leading scientific centre as well as the pinnacle of the scientific-artistic activity of this field of study and that most of its problems can be solved in a relatively short time.

Also, in the letter of January 16, 2023, the Latvian Science Council, no. 2022/4.2-182 by its director Lauma Muižniece confirms its support for the accreditation of the joint doctoral study programme "Media Art and creative technologies" (51213). (The letter of the Latvian Science Council of January 16, 2023, no. 2022/4.2-182, sent at RT's request, can be found in the accreditation documents later added to the package of documents.)

Strengths.

1. Thematic correspondence to bachelor's and master's "Arts" study field programmes forming a thematic whole with them, only in different levels of complexity.
2. Creating new knowledge in digital media and audio-visual arts as well as innovative technologies, occupying a niche among doctoral programmes in Latvia.
3. Conduction in English and language skills of the teaching staff facilitate internationalisation.
4. Interdisciplinarity and applied research.

5. IT resources and research-oriented acquisitions with student-centred support.
6. LiepU MPLab (Liepāja, Kūrmājas pr. 13) is an excellent learning and teaching resource.

Weaknesses.

1. Insufficient clarity and justification about the role and contribution of each partner institution in the join programme.
2. The weakest point of the doctoral programme is its lack of a doctoral council and no experts from the Science Council in Arts.
3. Strengths can turn into weaknesses if the content side of the programme is not expanded: too direct an orientation only on contemporary art or new technologies can remain dull and unattractive over time.
4. Lack of humanitarian areas in the doctoral programme.
5. The thematic scope of the discipline is not strictly defined for the Ph.D. degree applicant to take the doctoral examination in Arts.
6. No consistent use of basic methods, e.g., practice-led and practice-based.

Evaluation of the study programme "Media Art and Creative Technologies"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Media Art and Creative Technologies"

Short-term recommendations

1. Elaborate on a clear division of roles and responsibilities for joint study programmes with RISEBA.
2. Define the scope of doctoral programme content that a Ph.D. candidate must know before taking the doctoral exam and make it available to any interested party, either in printed or electronic form.
3. Assure that there are experts of the Science Council in "Arts" in the doctoral programme, and also increase the number of experts in "Arts." Revise, if necessary, in point 3.4.2 (page 201) in SAR mentioned commitment not to envisage changes in the composition of teaching staff and try to get additional professors who are Latvian Science Council in Arts experts. This will allow receiving permission to establish the LiepU Promotional Council in Arts and increase the confidence of potential doctoral students in the programme's sustainability.
4. Introduce supportive humanities modules such as methodological and argumentation strategies, expansions of concepts, and specifics of interdisciplinary framework; in the same way, revise the modules and the literature lists to avoid repetition. Such a deepening of the theoretical depth and expansion of the content side of the programme will promote the programme's compliance with the awarded degree, improve the quality of the argumentative part of the doctoral theses, and contribute to the programme's flexibility regarding the appearance of more art-related doctoral topics, thereby contributing to the increase in the number of doctoral students in the future.
5. Firmly define and publish the practice-led research method and explain how it differs from practice-based research.

6. Improve and correct the information available on the website of the doctoral study programme, as well as review the possibility of placing relevant study materials for students.

Long-term recommendations

1. Deepen the programmes' context formed after the shortcomings mentioned in point 4 of short-term recommendations have been eliminated. The redefinition of the doctoral programme will improve its theoretical identity and allow it to compete more successfully with other doctoral study programmes in Latvia and attract more varied profiles of Ph.D. candidates than now.

2. Analyse the interest of potential students; may a decrease in the number of students in the 2020/2021 year be determined by other risk factors that have not been noted by the programme managers?

3. Develop strategies to recruit more students domestically and internationally.

4. Expand the range of linguistic options by considering the possibility of using French and German to access contemporary art centres with their libraries and materials, e.g., Zentrum für Kunst und Medien, MACBA, Centre Pompidou, and earlier relevant materials in these languages.

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

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

Assessment of the Requirements for the Study Field

Requirements	Requirement Evaluation		Comment
R1 - Pursuant to Section 5, Paragraph 2.1 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions, the higher education institution/ college shall ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study field whilst implementing its internal quality assurance system:		Partially compliant	LiepU has several mechanisms for study quality improvement, including the Quality Management System (QMS) and the questionnaires/surveys from key stakeholders, procedures for evaluating teaching staff and updating study programmes (SAR, point 1.4., pp.13-16 & Annex II). However, lack of clear guidance by the Senior Management team of the FHA through the Quality Manual (currently one page), not fully presenting the policy, expectations, and specific requirements; and the assurance process to the Programme Directors on the faculty internal quality management practice and procedure and required levels of achievement (clear qualitative and quantitative metrics), the implementation of the Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) is not fully embedded.

Requirements	Requirement Evaluation		Comment
R2 - Compliance of scientific research and artistic creation with the level of development of scientific research and artistic creation (if applicable)	Fully compliant		The research and artistic activities of LiepU's "Arts" study field are highly commendable. True, they are primarily the result of the enthusiasm of the teaching staff and students. If evaluated from the point of view of the overall strategy of LiepU, then it is desirable to strive for higher goals such as increasing the international importance of the study field, for example, by preparing research papers for internationally cited publications, trying to cooperate more closely with foreign universities, from which a lot can be gained in the field of art as Tallinn University, Aalto University, etc. Despite the shortcomings mentioned in the analysis, RT believes that the "Arts" field of study meets the requirements for universities regarding scientific activity and creativity. The directions of scientific and applied research and artistic creation of the study field correspond to the development goals of LiepU. They are relevant for the study field and industry.

Requirements	Requirement Evaluation		Comment
R3 - The cooperation implemented within the study field with various Latvian and foreign organizations ensures the achievement of the aims of the study field.	Fully compliant		Clear evidence is mentioned in the SAR (points 2.5.1. and 2.5.2., pp.75-78). Through the meetings the RT had with the Programme Directors, the alumni, and the employers, there is a strong motivation and push by the Faculty and programmes to develop and build upon the national and international links with the world of work and the cultural sector. The cooperation is in place and strongly and continuously supports the development of the field by participating in international education exhibitions and international events abroad. Art teachers and staff actively use Erasmus+ mobility opportunities, which effectively attract new foreign organisations. LiepU actively uses Erasmus+ mobility grants, inviting foreign lecturers, artists, etc., and representatives of the "Arts" field of study.
R4 - Elimination of deficiencies and shortcomings identified in the previous assessment of the study field, if any, or implementation of the recommendations provided.		Partially compliant	Activities carried out by the LiepU and the management of the study field in order to take into account the recommendations provided in the previous accreditation and licensing procedures are clearly visible. Some of the recommendations have been taken into account fully, but in some cases, despite the activities already carried out, the study field did not manage to fully implement the recommendations or provided recommendations that cannot be considered a singular event that can be implemented once, but demands continuous and ongoing action.

Assessment of the Requirements for the Relevant Study Programmes of the Study Field

No.	Study programme	R5	R6	R7	R8	Evaluation of the study programme (excellent, good, average, poor)
1	Contemporary Performing Arts (43212)	Not relevant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Average
2	New Media Art and Design (43213)	Not relevant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Good
3	New Media and Audiovisual Art (45213)	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Good
4	Media Art and Creative Technologies (51213)	Partially compliant	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Partially compliant	Good

The Dissenting Opinions of the Experts

The opinion of experts does not differ.