

Expert group joint opinion

Evaluation Procedure: Assessment of Study Field

Higher Education Institution: University of Latvia

Study field: Language and Culture Studies, Mother Tongue Studies, and Language Programmes

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

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Experts visit took place at a moment when a number of significant reforms had been recently implemented, but other, no less influential changes in the work of the faculty were awaited for. In the course of a general campaign of consolidation undertaken by the university leadership the number of study programmes at the faculty was substantially diminished and many of the formerly independent specialisations had now become sub-programmes of a programme with a more general label (such as Philology, as one of the programmes is in fact now called). The rationale behind such changes is usually economical, and as Experts analysis showed, the faculty has indeed managed to effectuate a cut of roughly 30% on its personnel expenses from before the reforms (indexed on par with the medium salary of the country). Judging by the comments of the faculty, the graduates, the present students and the representatives of the employers, this has been achieved without significant loss in academic quality and even with additional flexibility that has positively influenced the study process on all levels. This is a significant achievement very much to be commended, and it testifies to the considerable administrative skill of the current leadership of the faculty and the dean, in particular. Experts also understand that the faculty is about to move from the building it currently occupies into much better facilities that are now being built; however, even in the old building the technological resources meant for the use of both the students and faculty are on an outstanding level. Experts were particularly impressed by the self-service system of the library and the availability of state of the art computers and software for students unable to purchase them for financial reasons.

Another positive aspect to note is the way in which input from students is integrated into the development schemes of study programmes. At least in one case Experts noted that a programme still in the developing phase has considerably benefited from monthly discussions with the students, whose recommendations have resulted in a steep increase of the popularity of the programme among possible applicants. Such administrative openness is not often met these days and testifies to an excellent academic climate within the faculty.

Experts did, however, also note two considerable and interlinked weaknesses that put the long-term sustainability of the study field under very strong pressure. These are (1) the weak level of internationally peer-reviewed research and (2) the excessive teaching loads of the faculty on all levels, which inevitably limit their possibilities to engage in research.

Although, in principle, the bibliographies of the faculty meet the requirements of quality on paper, as many articles and chapters have been published in SCOPUS-indexed publications, this is undermined by the fact that the absolute majority of these articles have been published by the University of Latvia, which has secured SCOPUS indexing for its proceedings. In the rare cases of articles appearing outside Latvia, these are mostly conference proceedings, and even then not necessarily from well-recognized hubs of learning. As far as Latvian philology and history is concerned, publishing primarily in Latvia is not a serious problem, since Experts may assume that specialists worldwide are following these journals, but in all other fields this is not really satisfactory. Home-produced journals are a good first step for PhD students, but the work of professors needs to be presented and tested on an international level. At present, SCOPUS indexing is not a sufficient criterion to ensure actual research quality. Experts have serious concerns about the peer review process, as in a small and well-integrated academic community the research topics are sure to give away the author and close colleagues reviewing each other are not likely to be as critical as needed. Note that Experts are not saying anything about the actual quality of the research, but only about the procedure; perhaps a system of rewards should be introduced for those who manage to publish in high-ranking journals, or a minimum of such publications as a threshold for (re)election. Experts have been informed that this concern was pointed out also at the stage of licensing the newly

reconfigured study programmes and are sad to note that it has not been addressed during the time that has passed.

During the discussions Experts discovered that the faculty has established its own rules for the teaching loads of its members, which differ significantly from the rules of the entire university. According to paragraph 6 of the "Latvijas Universitātes akadēmiskā darba samaksas nolikums" (30.05.2016, amended 28.03.2022), the annual workload of 1650 hours contains 600 hours of teaching-related work for professors, 700 for associate professors and 800 for lecturers, with 400, 300 and 200 research time respectively. However, in a lower-ranking document "Akadēmiskā darba plānošanas principi 2022./2023. akadēmiskajā gadā", signed by vice rector Ina Druviete, the numbers have been changed to 900 hours of teaching-related work and 100 hours research time for all academic positions. This is in itself shocking, but a further clarification in the same document states that in the planning of teaching-related work, only 15 minutes can be allocated from the teaching-loaded workload for the preparation of one contact hour of teaching. As a result, at least some faculty members have highly inadequate teaching loads of up to 16-20 contact hours on a weekly basis (up to 600 or more per year). This is scandalous, especially given the level of salaries, and unsustainable in the long run. As the University of Latvia (hereinafter – UL) bears national responsibility for the development of many fields in the humanities, Experts find that such policies should be abolished immediately, and adequate teaching loads in contact hours should be clearly established as a normative. The Expert Group recommends using the international standard, which is about 120-160 contact hours per year for professors, 240 for associate professors and lecturers, 360 for language teachers.

Given that the ratio of faculty per student is not very different from the international practice in the University of Latvia, Experts moreover fear that such excessive numbers of contact hours may balance the student's individual workloads unduly toward class work as opposed to reading and other forms of research work. This, in turn, may lead to the lack of certain skills that could duly be expected from university graduates (as some employers indeed also noted). Experts therefore recommend a further reshuffling of the study programmes in the direction of individual work, leaving contact teaching in the class at the level of no more than 30-50% of the working time of the student, depending on the nature of each course.

Based on the self-assessment report, Experts had an overall positive view of the teaching quality of the study field, with two concerns, the bachelor study programme (hereinafter – BSP) English, European Languages and Business Studies sub-programme European Languages and Business studies and the BSP East-West Intercultural Studies. During the visit, Experts were convinced of the viability of the European Languages and Business studies programme, but concerns about the BSP East-West Intercultural Studies were not only substantiated, but even strengthened further. Experts do not consider that this programme matches the academic standards and do not recommend it for accreditation. The idea that a certain level of social competence in Asian cultural environments can be enough for a professional to be employed as a specialist in the field is simply mistaken. Obviously, social competence is required of anyone who wants to cultivate long-standing relationships with Asian partners, but professionals, graduates of the BSP Asian Studies Department of the University of Latvia, should have more. In particular, the representatives of the employers named excellent linguistic competence as the first reason why they are satisfied with the graduates of Asian Studies programmes until now, and losing this trust may have long-term results. The idea that students in this programme may learn one language and be sent to a different country, the language of which they do not study, also does not strike us as a reasonable way to use the available resources. For example, Experts talked to a student currently on exchange in Korea, who does not study any Korean there, but continues to attend Chinese classes in Latvia via zoom.

As to the sub-programme European Languages and Business studies, Experts not only approve, but even suggest that the principle of combining major/minor subjects, which this sub-programme de facto enacts, should be applied more broadly. One way to ensure the popularity of the modern

languages programmes among applicants would be precisely the ability to combine a major in language/area studies with a minor in business, law, IT, tourism or some other practical field. This is something students, graduates and employers all commented on as a possible future strength. Moreover, it should not be impossible to implement a flexible combination of modules into the study programmes according to the current regulations. Especially after the move to the new premises, where other faculties are also close at hand, this kind of interdisciplinary cooperation would surely be appreciated by all parties involved.

I - Assessment of the Study Field

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1.1 Management of the Study Field

Analysis

1.1.1

The aim and goals of the study field Language and Culture Studies, Mother Tongue Studies, and Language Programmes are clearly defined, fit into the UL development strategy, are integrated into the UL Faculty of Humanities (hereinafter – FH) mission and shapes its strategy as they are about maintaining, developing and offering qualitative and versatile, as well as globally competitive and research-based studies in the humanities in various languages and cultures thus ensuring the stability of the level of humanitarian intelligence and Latvian languages as well as cultural environment in the present and future Latvian society, to prepare specialists of high academic and scientific qualification in compliance with the long-term goals of the Latvian economy, socio-political strategy. Objectives of the study field and their relevance to the development directions and strategic objectives of the University are well-founded and reflected in the Annex Study Field Development Plan. Also the programmes included in the reported study field are relevant and comply with the main directions of the strategic development of the UL and overall they meet the needs and development trends of the society and national economy, e.g., BSP and Master's study programme (hereinafter – MSP) Asian Studies definitely implement a lot by providing the domestic as well as international organisations with high level specialists where the proficiency in Asian languages and knowledge concerning the cultural issues are of great importance. It should be mentioned that some BSP Philology sub-programmes – Classical philology and Finno-Ugric Studies – are taught only in the University of Latvia as sub-programmes under the umbrella of the BSP Philology and therefore they are especially important not only for the UL, but for wider society, for keeping long-lasting teaching and research tradition and cultural ties with the respective countries. It might be said that all the study programmes included in the study field are well interconnected and logical since they correspond to the same detailed field of studies according to the ISCED 2013 (Language Acquisition, Literature and Linguistics, Interdisciplinary Programmes involving Arts and Humanities) and since the study field offers a possibility to cover all levels of education, namely, bachelors, masters and doctoral studies. This is proved by the activities listed on p.21 of SAR and information collected during the Experts' on-site visit. The only concern might be related to the BSP East-West Intercultural Studies, that fits into the reported study field well, but the implementation of it is questionable since a lot of overlaps with the BSP Asian Studies might be identified which leads to the question of the competition between those two study programmes. The courses of the mandatory part overlap with the Asian Studies for more than 50% and in many cases the course content is the same or simplified, although the name of the course is different, f.ex. “Culture, Literature and Art of East Asia”, “Cultural History of East Asia”, “Traditional Worldviews in East Asia”, “Religious Paradigm of Regional Cultures: Sacred Texts and Hermeneutics” in one programme and “Asian Literature and Culture”, “Fundamentals of Asian Religious Culture: Texts, Ideas, Traditions”, “Introduction to Eastern Art and Architecture” in the other. At the moment, the BSP

East-West Intercultural Studies gives the impression that its graduates are able to work as professionals in the field, but this is misleading and also in contradiction with what the employers expect (which is strong linguistic competence and thorough knowledge of the cultures and societies).

1.1.2.

In order to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the study field, the SWOT analysis is done (self-assessment report (hereinafter – SAR)), Table 2.1.2.1.,p.22), besides that, in order to achieve the objectives of the study field, a study field development plan for 2021–2027 has been developed, consisting of general tasks and more specific sub-tasks defined for the achievement of each objective, for which those responsible have also been identified thus ensuring the correlation between the two documents since the Development Plan (Annex) reinforces the study field strengths and opportunities as well as the activities to avoid or minimise the weaknesses and threats are included. The three most significant aspects of the Development Plan, as indicated by the SWOT analysis, are scientific and academic qualifications of the academic staff, the student in the study process and international cooperation. The analysis of the goals and objectives of the Development Plan shows that the objectives and their timelines include complex and multifaceted measures, but that all of them will result in the development of the SF programmes and the functioning of the university as a foundation for Latvia national growth. The interviews with the different stakeholders (faculty and university administration, teaching staff, students, alumni and employers) revealed that they are well aware of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats as formulated in the SWOT analysis and they are also aware of the measures already taken or planned to address them. Based on the SAR and discussions during the on-site visit, it can be clearly seen that all previously mentioned aspects are considered in the changes implemented into the development of the study field and some measures planned to address the identified challenges have been already taken (e.g. in order to increase the number of students in the SF programmes, restrictive elective part opportunities are increased, the student-centred studies are reinforced, digital humanities study courses are introduced, the number of practice-oriented study courses is increased, and the students are more actively engaged in research, etc.).

1.1.3.

According to the regulations on the University of Latvia Study Field Management (the UL Senate Decision No 70 of 27.01.2020.) determine the procedure for the management of study fields at the UL: the functions and operating principles of the respective Study Field Council, duties, responsibilities, and rights of the head of the study field, study programme director, and the head of the sub-programme of the respective study field. The head of the study field ensures the management and development of the study field, is approved by the Rector on the proposal of the dean of the respective faculty whom they report to. The head of the study field works in close cooperation with the study programme director, the Academic Department of UL. Each UL study programme has a study programme director who directs the development of the study programme, is approved by the Senate on the proposal of the respective Faculty Council and is accountable for their activities to the dean of the faculty. There is also the head of each sub-programme who is accountable for their activities to the study programme director. Beside all previously mentioned also the Study Field Council plays a pivotal role in the structure of the study field administration. It is a collegial study field management body which supervises academic and doctoral programmes in FH. It involves the head of the study field, the study programme and sub-programme directors, the representatives of the students and representatives of employers and cooperation partners. It is intended to involve the graduates as well, but it does not happen in real life as found out during the discussions. That proves the necessity to improve the cooperation between the FH and its graduates to use their expertise thus improving the efficiency of the reported study field.

The overall management system is well balanced between the faculty and central administration, between the academic and administrative staff. Distribution of functions, tasks and obligations between different governing bodies and structural units is fair and relevant, taking into account the academic/content-wise and administrative requirements and demands of the SF, needs of different internal and external stakeholders, strategic goals of FH and UL, the SF development Plan analysed in the previous section of the Report (see: Report 1.1.2). As it is clearly revealed by the SAR and during the discussions with the management of the reported study field, the management structure of the study field and study programmes is well developed and is oriented towards the development of the study field as well as the support from other UL divisions is sufficient to ensure the quality and efficiency of the study field although, as it was admitted the decision process sometimes is challenging depending on the issue to be decided upon, but, in fact, any need of the SF, programme and/or sub-programme could be addressed in close collaboration between different collegial bodies and structural units.

Based on the data provided by the institution and the results of the interviews, the Experts Group observed the team working and effective decision making, collaborative leadership and transparent communication, efficient resource allocation (which is crucial due to the limited financial resources), effective support for students and staff implemented despite the comprehensive hierarchical system of the management (study programme director, head of the sub-programme, head of the study fields, study field council, faculty council, the study programme quality assessment commission, the academic department, department of study service, department of academic competence development, student self-government of the faculty, UL student council, etc.).

1.1.4.

Based on the analysis of the SAR, its annexes and the results of the interviews with the different stakeholders, the Expert Group is convinced that there is an efficient system developed and implemented in the UL, regulating the student admission requirements and procedure, the prior knowledge recognition.

Admission procedures at undergraduate, higher-level and doctoral study programmes, registration fee in the admission, tuition fees for completion of the full study programmes, number of study places for admission, procedure for the development of entrance examination materials, composition of the admission committee, composition of the entrance examination boards, date and place of entrance examinations are determined and regulated by the local regulatory documents. For bachelor studies the competition for study places is based on the results of the centralised examinations or the secondary education certificate grades of the persons who have acquired secondary education before 2004, who have been exempted from the centralised examinations or have completed their secondary education abroad. The studies in English/German/Russian languages require preliminary language skills (according to the current regulations, the language requirement for foreign students is at least B2 level in the relevant language). The SF programmes give priority to the State Olympiad degree competition and other contest winners. Enrolment in master's degree programmes is decentralised at each faculty, but with uniform deadlines. Enrolment is based on grades obtained during undergraduate studies. In programmes that allow for prior education in various fields, the entrance examination is used to determine the correspondence of the candidate's prior knowledge to the field of the study programme. Admission in doctoral studies takes place centrally. The applicant must submit the topic of the promotion thesis and the supervisor should be agreed upon. The applicant's eligibility is assessed by the doctoral council of the branch of science. Admission to the study programme requires a master's degree in humanities, social sciences, education sciences or higher education of equivalent standing (SAR, pp. 28-29). The admission requirements listed above reveal that the policy of admission to the programmes/sub-programmes of the SF takes into consideration the specificity of different levels and different fields of studies.

The Expert Group endorses the admission system implemented in the UL and applied for SF “Language and Culture Studies, Mother Tongue Studies, and Language Programmes”, as it follows the best practices in the field, and involved stakeholders have access to all of this information, should they need it. From one side the admission system ensures the intellectual readiness of the applicants to study at the certain study programme/sub-programme to achieve intended learning outcomes, and from other side it allows flexibility in terms of prior formal education for Master and Doctoral Level (by assessing the necessary knowledge, skills and competencies, admitting the graduates of different programmes and not restricting the admission to the holders of Bachelor or Master Degree in the very specific field). Such flexibility in terms of admission increases the number of potential applicants and competitiveness of the study programme on the local/international educational market and supports implementation of Lifelong Learning Principle, allowing the members of the society to change/refine their primary field of studies for better adjustment to the needs of the labour market.

The UL has also developed and implemented the transparent, logical, efficient and logical system for recognition of different types of prior knowledge: recognition of the study period for the students who participated in international mobility programmes, renewed their studies or transferred from other programmes, recognition of prior formal and non-formal education and professional experience. The recognition is administered by the UL recognition committee (consisting of different stakeholders) and it is based on the following evidence: transcripts, certificates, employer's statements, recommendations, project results, job descriptions, etc. It is absolutely logical, that the learning outcomes achieved through professional experience may be recognised only in the frame of the study programme that contains an internship or acquiring of the respective practical skills is envisaged by the programme/course description. The Expert Group believes that the possibility to recognize the learning outcomes achieved through non-formal and informal education could be regarded as a strength of the UL and SF, despite the fact that till now there have been no such cases at the Bachelor's and Master's degree level, as recognition of non-formal and informal education is still a challenge in many countries of Bologna Process/EHEA, while it is a good prerequisite for developing and supporting the microcredentials and University Lifelong Learning (ULLL).

1.1.5.

The students' assessment system in Latvia is regulated by both the national legislation and the local institutional regulatory framework. The analysis of the SAR and its annexes, as well as the interviews with the students, graduates, teaching staff and programme directors revealed, that the assessment of students' achievements in all programmes and sub-programmes of the SF “Language and Culture Studies, Mother Tongue Studies, and Language Programmes” is conducted according to the Law on Higher Education Institutions and the Procedure for Organization of Examinations of Study Courses at the University of Latvia.

Despite the same institutional regulations used for different programmes/sub-programmes, the assessment methods, principles and forms for each course differ and they are in compliance with the aims, goals and intended learning outcomes, students' overall workload (contact hours and independent work), specificity of the level and field of study, teaching and learning methodology applied by the lecturers.

The UL uses the widely spread and recognized 10 grade assessment system, which is fully compatible with the grading systems implemented internationally. There are two types of assessment in each study course: the interim/midterm assessment (the total grade for interim assessments not less than 50% from the total grade) and the study course final examination (grade not less than 10% of the total grade). The study course final examinations may be conducted in writing or orally or in a combined form (written and oral), depending on the specificity of the course, its aims and its learning outcomes. Seminars, practical assignments (seminar and colloquium reports, papers, abstracts, reviews, text analysis, case studies, practical work, essays, presentations,

control work, tests, reports on the results of ongoing work, etc.), individual, pair and group work, discussions and project development, study trips to industry organisations are widely used while assessing the students' achievements.

After the desk analysis and site visit the Expert Group confirmed that the methods, principles and procedures, as well as the criteria of students' assessment are clearly defined and publicly available, which is a mandatory and important prerequisite to ensure fair, objective and transparent assessment of students' achievements and to protect their rights. The students get information on the criteria and conditions of assessment in the course descriptions and e-learning environment. The lecturers also systematically inform the students about the course organisation, providing them with the detailed information on the requirements for midterm and final exams, grading criteria and examination procedures. The assessment system of each course can't be changed throughout the semester. The Bachelor, Master and PhD Thesis defence sessions are open and employers' representatives are involved in the Final Examination Boards of master's programmes, following the best international practices.

In order to demonstrate the conceptual integrity of the courses, that is the relevance of the assessment methods and procedures for achieving the aims of the study programmes and the needs of the students, compliance of the course aims with the learning outcomes, the Programmes' Development Teams conducted the Mapping of SF Programme Courses/Modules to Study Programme Learning Outcomes, which is a time-consuming and demanding procedure, but it could be regarded as an important and useful tool implemented by the UL for internal quality assurance.

For analysing the relevance of the assessment system applied to the different courses of the SF "Language and Culture Studies, Mother Tongue Studies, and Language Programmes" the following measures are taken by the University/Faculty administration: considering the experience of the academic staff, by analysing learning outcomes achieved by the students and the results of student surveys conducted over several academic years. The Expert Group endorsed the mechanisms of taking student input into account in the development process of recently established programmes, the MSP English Studies being a good example.

1.1.6.

The academic integrity both in teaching and research in the UL is ensured by different institutional regulations and technical support by the University Administration. There are several rules and orders approved by the governing bodies of the UL to prevent, detect and address the cases of plagiarism in BA, MA, PhD theses, scholars' works before and/or after publication. Namely, the following regulations could be mentioned: Academic Ethics Code of the University of Latvia, Regulations on Academic Integrity at the University of Latvia, Order on Plagiarism Control, Procedure for Cases in Which, Performing Electronic Identification, Signs of Plagiarism are Detected in the Study Work etc.

As the material in Latvian language available online to detect the similarities was quite limited, the UL created, still updates and maintains the Unified Computerised Plagiarism Control System, which serves not only the UL, but 30 other HEIs of the country. It could be regarded as an important contribution of the University in promoting and implementing the principle of academic integrity.

"The system automatically compares the uploaded graduation papers of the UL with study papers of previous years (starting from 2005) from UL and other HEI, and in the event of a certain percentage match, the authorised persons from faculties are sent an overview of these test results, whereby the same text snippets from different authors are simultaneously viewed. The authorised persons pass this information on to the respective study programme director, the appointed supervisor and reviewer for review and, in the event of a suspected breach of academic integrity, pass on the results of the analysis to the respective Graduation Examination Commission for final consideration" (SAR, p. 38).

As the desk study and interviews with the internal stakeholders revealed, the local software is used

in case of Latvian language, while internationally recognized Turnitin LLC's "Turnitin Similarity" service is applied for the papers, articles and other publications in English and other foreign languages. Based on the data provided by the Institution, no plagiarism has been detected in SF programmes (including those previously implemented but now licensed).

The representatives of the Institution are aware of the limitations in detecting the similarities in case of some languages (e.g. Lithuanian) and they are also aware of confusion caused by the fact that sometimes dictionary material or referenced text is perceived as plagiarised. Such cases usually become a subject of investigation by programme directors and other relevant authorities.

The evidence presented above confirms that the UL and the faculty follow the best practices currently in use and involve different internal and external stakeholders for ensuring academic integrity.

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

Conclusions:

The aim and goals of the study field Language and Culture Studies, Mother Tongue Studies, and Language Programmes are clearly defined, fit into the UL development strategy, are integrated into the UL FH mission and shape its strategy. The programmes included in the reported study field are relevant and comply with the main directions of the strategic development of the UL and overall, they meet the needs and development trends of the society and national economy. In order to achieve the objectives of the study field, a development plan for 2021–2027 has been developed, consisting of general tasks and more specific sub-tasks defined for the achievement of each objective. The three most significant aspects of the Development Plan, as indicated by the SWOT analysis, are scientific and academic qualifications of the academic staff, the student in the study process and international cooperation, which are generally addressed in the changes implemented into the development of the study field, although there is still a place for improvement especially what concerns scientific achievements and internationalisation. What concerns the management structure of the study field and study programmes, it is well developed and is oriented towards the development of the study field as well as the support from other UL divisions is sufficient to ensure the quality and efficiency of the study field. Also, the programmes included in the reported study field are relevant and comply with the main directions of the strategic development of the UL and overall, they meet the needs and development trends of the society and national economy. The only concern might be related to the BSP East-West Intercultural Studies, that fits into the reported study field well, but the implementation of it is questionable since a lot of overlaps with the BSP Asian Studies might be identified which leads to the question of the competition between those two study programmes.

The students' admission system, the regulations for recognition of prior knowledge, skills and competences, that is, the recognition of non-formal and informal education, as well as the forms, methods and principles of assessment of students' achievements are in full compliance with the requirements of the national accreditation standards and best international practices. The conceptual integrity of the courses/programmes/sub-programmes are achieved by harmonising the aims and goals with the intended learning outcomes, teaching and learning, as well as assessment methodology. The efficient system for preventing, detecting and addressing plagiarism is implemented in the UL.

Strengths:

1) Compliance of the study field with the development needs of society and the national and European Union (hereinafter – EU) economy. Some sub-programmes of the study field (e.g. BSP

Philology sub-programs Classical Philology and Finno-Ugric Studies, etc.) taught only in UL.

2) In some study programmes (MSP English Studies, MSP Latvian Language, Literature and Culture Studies) excellent cooperation with employers, students and other stakeholders.

3) System of recognition of prior knowledge - non-formal and informal education and professional experience.

4) Mapping of SF Programme Courses/Modules to Study Programme Learning Outcomes for demonstrating the conceptual integrity of the courses, that is, the relevance of assessment methods and procedures for achieving the aims of study programmes and the needs of the students, compliance of the course aims with the learning outcomes.

5) Creating, updating and maintaining the Unified Computerised Plagiarism Control System, which serves not only the UL, but 30 other HEIs of the country, as an important contribution of the University in promoting and implementing the principle of academic integrity.

Weaknesses:

1) The implementation of the BSP East-West Intercultural Studies and its place in the study field is questionable.

2) Lack of graduates' involvement in the activities of the Study Field Council, as it was suggested by the regulatory framework and as it was planned.

1.2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System

Analysis

1.2.1.

The quality policy and the quality action policy and processes are defined, quality action policy is publicly available in Latvian and English. An important methodological tool for quality assurance is the Quality Management Handbook of the UL, which identifies in detail the practice of the UL in Environmental, Social and Governance process implementation. Continuous monitoring and analysis of study programmes is carried out during the all study process. The Expert Group also made sure that meetings of the FH structural units are held at least twice a semester, at which topical issues of the study process are examined. Once a semester, student course evaluations are reviewed and analysed and activities are carried out for the modernization of study courses, improvement of the study process, regular meetings of the Study Field Council are held, in which representatives of students and employers are involved (as it was already mentioned above (see the Report, 1.1.3), involvement of alumni representatives in the Study Field Council is envisaged, but is not yet implemented). Student surveys are mandatory to pass to the next semester. For some Experts, this raises doubts about the effectiveness of such mandatory surveys, and how honest students are. Therefore, the Expert Group suggests using the focus group mechanism as well and make conclusions after triangulation of the results by the surveys and focus groups. The FH Student Council is involved in clarifying students' opinions. Topical issues of the study process are considered by the FH Council. The Expert Group found that introduction of the curatorial system allows to provide support to the first year students, better understand their study needs, solve problems, introduce to the university system, and advise individually, if necessary. Exchange of experience, faculty members present to their colleagues at FH departmental meetings what they have learned in professional development courses, such as the course Development of Digital Skills of Academic Staff; share their experience gained in internships with employers, such as the publishing house Dienas Grāmata, language technology company Tilde or The Institute of Mathematics and Computer Science of the University of Latvia, thus expanding their skills and competences. Classes are observed when elections to academic and scientific positions are held, since classroom hospitation is a process of pedagogical interaction and mutual enrichment.

Teaching staff participate in international teaching projects, but in the Expert Group opinion it could be done even more actively as it is both a new experience and a quality test. During the discussions the Expert Group discovered that students (master's students, doctoral students) are involved as participants in research in projects of professors, leading researchers and are invited to participate in scientific conferences (see section 2.4.5.), it is a great indicator of a student's academic and scientific preparation.

All these mentioned measures form an internal quality system which is based on the main principles of ESG 2015 regarding the internal quality assurance and contributes to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study field, but some of the recommendations by the Expert Group concerning the study programmes of the SF coincide with the suggestions made by the Experts during the licensing (for details see the short-term and long-term recommendations outlined in the Report), which means that implementation of the results of external quality assurance is not always consistent and systematic. Representatives of the teaching staff also mentioned in the interview that sometimes too many changes are required in a short period of time and there are too many forms asked by the administration to be filled. Therefore, the Expert Group suggests to avoid rapid changes and minimise the bureaucratic burden for the teaching staff by providing bigger administrative support while preparing the documentation for accreditation and/or other internal and external quality assurance processes.

1.2.2.

The Expert Group discovered that the procedures for developing and reviewing study programmes are defined in the internal Regulations on University of Latvia Study and Continuing Education Programmes and the UL Procedure for Preparation of Annual Study Field Reports. The quality of the study field and its study programmes is managed through a Plan-do-check-act or Deming cycle, planning the development and improvement of the study field over a six-year period, cascading its goals and objectives down to the level of each study programme and regularly monitoring the requirements of stakeholders for effective planning, needs and proponents, in accordance with the UL Strategy 2021–2027, taking into account national and international sectoral policies and trends, as well as the impact of global environmental trends on the activities of the UL up to the level of study programmes. The development of new study programmes is regulated by the Regulations on University of Latvia Study and Continuing Education Programmes (the UL Senate Decision No 102 of 24.04.2017.), it is implemented in several stages, including coordination and evaluation twice at all levels of governance involved in the quality assurance of studies – by coordinating and approving the study programme concept, as well as coordinating and approving the study programme characteristics at the end of the process. In the process of self-assessment and development of new study programmes, responsibilities are divided between study programme directors, the head of the study field, Study Field Council, Faculty Council, Academic Department, and the Study Programme Quality Assessment Commission as well as the Senate. The Expert Group gained confidence that the programme reviews were conducted regularly and the improvements in most cases were implemented in practice (The Expert Group found insufficient implementation of some recommendations during the licensing. For details see the Report 1.2.1 and related short-term and long-term recommendations). The Expert Group found that the study programmes were reviewed after receiving the results of the student surveys, student surveys are mandatory and done at the end of every semester and when preparing study plans for the new study year (the concerns related to the mandatory status of student surveys and also the concerns related to the involvement of alumni in Study Field Council are expressed above. See: Report, 1.2.1 and 1.1.3). The FH management and study field director confirmed that following the recommendations of students, graduates, employers and the requirements of the labour market, all bachelor's study programmes and part of the master's study programmes have included internship and practice-oriented study courses, modernised scientific courses, and included digital humanities courses. For example, a new

cluster of courses Computational Linguistics has been introduced in the master's study programme Latvian Language, Literature and Culture Studies (formerly – MSP Baltic Philology), and delivered by the teaching staff of The Artificial Intelligence Laboratory of the Institute of Mathematics and Informatics of the University of Latvia. The expert Group believe such language technology-oriented courses will help study field graduates to compete in the future labour market, taking into account that demand for digital and technical skills is rapidly growing. Also other study programmes have introduced study courses related to internships and digital skills, for example, Morphemics, Morphology and Latvian Morpheme Database (prof. A. Kalnača, researcher). Dr. philol. D. Dekšne). To attract more students and to make graduates of the Faculty of Humanities more competitive in the Latvian and EU labour market, as well as raise the popularity and prestige of the Faculty of Humanities under the BSP English, European Languages and Business Studies was developed sub-programme European Languages and Business studies, the Expert Group suggest to the management of UL and the Faculty of the Humanities for the future development of the study field to consider for the implementation of the principle of combining major/minor subjects, which this sub-programme de facto and should be applied more broadly. One way to ensure the popularity of the modern languages programmes among applicants would be precisely the ability to combine a major in language/area studies with a minor in business, marketing, PR, law, diplomacy, IT, tourism or some other practical field. This is something students, graduates and employers, particularly representatives of The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Republic of Latvia, IT company Tietoevry Latvia, media agency TVNET GROUP and the rest commented on as a possible future strength. Moreover, it should not be impossible to implement a flexible combination of modules into the study programmes according to the current regulations. Especially after the move to the new premises, where other faculties are also close at hand, this kind of interdisciplinary cooperation would surely be appreciated by all parties involved. The current division of study programmes into compulsory, limited elective and free elective parts still requires each programme to contain all the possible modules on its list, while a major/minor division would enable the students to select their minor from among a broader range of choices, which would contribute to their academic agency, enable them to combine their particular talents and interests as well as be more in correspondence with the expectations of the labour market.

During the on-site visit interviews, the Expert Group obtained confirmation from students, graduates and employers that in general the existing feedback collection mechanisms are well established, efficient, available and used by all stakeholder groups and confirmed willingness to take a more active part in future development of UL FH.

1.2.3.

The Expert Group observed that in all stages of the study process, from admissions to final examinations applicants and students can submit complaints and suggestions and they are informed about such opportunities in a sufficient way, information is easily accessible on the UL webpage, all the links and internal regulations were checked by the members of the Expert Group. For example, the right of UL applicants to lodge complaints regarding irregularities in the admission procedure are governed by the Terms of Admission at University of Latvia (the UL Senate decision No 2-3/68 of 31.05.2021), publicly available here: <https://www.lu.lv/en/gribustudet/normativie-dokumenti/uznemsanas-noteikumi-latvijas-universitate/> Moreover during the all study process, to improve the quality of studies, students have the right to submit proposals and complaints concerning the study process and quality, the quality of material supply, duty fulfilment of the UL employees, service culture and cooperation, as well as dishonest or unethical actions from the UL employees. It means that the UL has developed the overarching quality assurance framework which covers all aspects of higher education provision - material and human resources, teaching and learning, student support services, etc. During the on-site visit interviewees students confirmed to the Expert Group commission that Management of UL FH is very

open to everyone, students are always welcomed to involve more actively into study programme and faculty organisation improvement processes. To ensure the quality of the study process, in 2022 the UL reworked the Procedure for the Submission and Resolution of Students' Proposals and of 2002 and replaced it with Regulations on lodging and review of students' proposals and complaints at the University of Latvia (the UL Order No 1-4/501 of 28.09.2022.). The UL even has an Academic Court of Arbitration, whose regulations provide for the opportunity to apply to this collegial institution for any study-related issues, including control over adherence to the principles of assessment. The Expert Group were convinced that the centralised segment of the UL complaint and proposal submission and review system covers all the components of every student study life as it applies to enrolment at the UL as well as the full-cycle studies, final examinations, etc.

Although official procedures exist, they are published on UL webpage and available to students, the interviews confirmed that the internal cooperative culture of the Faculty of Humanities and the informal contact that exists between the administration of the of the Faculty of Humanities, Study field director, teaching staff, employers and students, gives the opportunity to discuss problematic issues immediately and informally, which is an important prerequisite for developing the institutional quality culture. All involved parties confirmed their determination to solve problems, and also provided real examples. During the onsite visit, the students confirmed that their proposals about studies from home during the pandemic were handled very fast and proactively.

The Expert Group concluded that the mechanism developed in UL for submission of student complaints and suggestions is effective, promotes the implementation of improvements of study programmes, and is used by all stakeholder groups.

1.2.4.

The Expert Group concluded that the UL has established a mechanism on how to collect statistical data. Representatives of UL administration confirmed to the Expert Group that UL is collecting statistical data for several purposes – to control, analyse and forecast the dynamics of the number of students, paying attention to the number of students, broken down by faculties, study programmes, study levels, study years, forms and types of studies, source of financing for studies and so on the UL collects data twice a year. Dean of the UL FH explained to the Expert Group that to control the progress of student's studies and the implementation of the programme, the UL collects data on such indicators as final results of final examinations, weighted average grade, completion of the study programme, in accordance with the requirements set for the acquisition of the programme, students' academic debts in credit points by study semesters and fulfilment of the tuition fee schedule provided in the student agreement. This data is collected once a semester. But to obtain information for planning and efficient use of study resources UL is collecting data on financing of study places, broken down by state-funded and the number of student scholarship recipients and the number of study and student loans.

To get the data, a survey on study courses and work of teaching staff is implemented in the UL information system LUIS every semester and is for all students (including internship study courses). With this survey the UL can learn the students' opinion on the content of relevant study courses in the specific semester and provides assessment of the teaching staff's work. The information obtained through this survey helps to improve the study process, eliminating imperfections and improving the study quality. Separate surveys are for the first-year and final-year students, which is a methodologically relevant approach and allows the Institution to establish the baseline assessment of the students' expectations, experiences and needs and then to monitor the evolution of their perspective. By conducting a separate survey for the final year students, the UL is able to capture their unique perspectives on their overall educational experience, personal growth, career goals and satisfaction with the programme/sub-programme.

Most of the regular surveys – survey on study courses and work of teaching staff, a survey at the start of studies, and surveys on study experience – results are gathered in two ways: (1) The

summary of survey results for each study programme is generated separately, automatically by the ULIS; (2) The summary of surveys (except the survey on study courses and work of teaching staff) results on the UL as a total and on faculties is prepared by the Academic Department after the conclusion of the survey process, and they are published on the My Portal. Surveys on study courses and work of the teaching staff are fully available to each respective member of teaching staff about their own implemented study course; to programme directors – about teaching staff and heads of teaching staff departments (head of department or subdepartment, head of study field, vice-dean, and dean), as well as the UL SC and student self-governments of faculties.

Also each year the head of the study field in cooperation with the study programme directors prepares a report on the operation of the study field and the programmes therein during the academic year. In the preparation of the report, statistical data is collected and analysed, and the obtained information is used for the assessment and improvement of the study field.

The Experts conclude that the statistical data collection mechanism established by the UL is efficient, ensures regular collection and analysis of information (statistics) on the study programmes corresponding to the study field. Data is systematically used to analyse and proactively improve the quality of the teaching process and study programme content. Student grades are evaluated mainly to distribute the state-funded study places. Established mechanism of collecting data from employers, graduates and students is effective and focused on the improvement of the study field.

As it was already mentioned in the Report, there are mechanisms of communication with different external stakeholders, including alumni, outlined in the regulatory documents of the Institution, but these mechanisms have not been sufficiently implemented yet in case of graduates. Based on the interviews with the alumni of different programmes/sub-programmes, the Expert Group suggests keeping closer relationships with the graduates and thinking about implementation of the UL FH Alumni association or membership program, that would help to build the graduates community and would help to attract additional financial support via special scholarships and/or other projects.

1.2.5.

The Expert Group during the onsite visit made sure that information about all study programmes of the study field Language and Culture Studies, Mother Tongue Studies and Language Programmes is published on the University of Latvia website: <https://www.lu.lv> and also on the Faculty of Humanities website: <https://www.hzf.lu.lv/>. Both websites are available in Latvian and English, both languages are used as a language of instruction in all mandatory study courses. In some BSP Philology sub-programmes it is allowed as a language of instruction to use other languages, for example, German in sub-programme German Philology, French in sub-programme French Philology or Russian in sub-programme Russian Philology. Both version of the website provides information for communication with the Programme Director, academic calendar, information on the development of study papers, scholarships, including patron scholarships, and it is possible to get acquainted with the Faculty of Humanities students – the University of Latvia Foundation grant holders; there is also all the necessary information about the study programmes, including study courses and other practical information and available support, with the links to relevant regulations and guides. There is also all the necessary information about study opportunities abroad and the possibility to read the foreign experience stories of the Faculty of Humanities students. Here one can find information about the part C study course offer and Lifelong learning course offer in the faculty – language courses and international language examinations. It should be mentioned that the website of the UL and the FH is informative and provides with the updated information the internal and external stakeholders (students, staff, alumni, employers, wider society, international partners etc.). Information about the study programmes submitted for accreditation is also available in the public register on www.viis.gov.lv and AIKA e-platform <https://eplatforma.aika.lv/>. The UL and the FH also use the social networks (e.g. Facebook and Instagram) for quick and effective communication, as required by the recent developments and current trends in educational marketing policy.

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

Conclusions:

Desk-analysis done before the site-visit and interviews with different internal and external stakeholders (faculty and university administration, academic staff, students, graduates, employers) revealed that the UL has well developed and implemented an internal quality assurance system, according to ESG and best international practices. There are only a few areas in which further improvement would be required: more systematic and consistent implementation of the recommendations provided by external assessment; using the focus group mechanism along with the surveys and make conclusions after triangulation of the results by the surveys and focus groups; introducing more flexible curriculum structure by combining major/minor programs and strengthening communication with the graduates by establishing and/or improving activities of the Alumni association; more active involvement of the teaching staff in international activities (teaching, research, etc.).

Strengths:

- 1) Internal quality assurance system of the study field implemented according to the Quality Action Policy of the University of Latvia, taking into consideration the requirements of ESG 2015.
- 2) Involvement of Master and Doctoral Students in research projects of professors and leading researchers and students' participation in scientific conferences as important indicator of a student's academic and scientific preparation
- 3) Openness and readiness of different administrative units and teaching staff to discuss and address the problematic issues and their determination to solve the students' problems in a very fast and proactive manner.

Weaknesses:

- 1) Insufficient communication with the FH graduates.
- 2) Insufficient participation of the FH staff in international teaching projects.
- 3) Lack of diversified mechanisms/approaches for getting students' feedback.
- 4) Lack of the consistent and systematic implementation of the results of external quality assurance results.
- 5) Rapid changes in the study programmes and bureaucratic overload of the teaching staff required by the administration.

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: Fully compliant

University of Latvia has procedures in place to ensure continuous improvement, development and efficient performance of the study field.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

University of Latvia Quality policy (chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.lu.lv/fileadmin/user_upload/LU.LV/www.lu.lv/Dokumenti/Dokumenti_EN/2/Kvalitates_politika_majas_lapai_ENG.pdf)

University of Latvia Quality Action Policy (chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.lu.lv/fileadmin/user_upload/LU.LV/www.lu.lv/Dokumenti/Dokumenti_EN/2/Kvalitates_ricibpolitika_majas_lapai_ENG_new.pdf)

- 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

Internal regulation -

Regulations on University of Latvia Study and continuing education programmes (chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.lu.lv/fileadmin/user_upload/LU.LV/www.lu.lv/Dokumenti/Dokumenti_EN/3/Study_and_continuing_education_programmes.pdf)

- 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: Fully compliant

Procedure for organization of examinations of study courses at the University of Latvia (chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.lu.lv/fileadmin/user_upload/LU.LV/www.lu.lv/Dokumenti/Dokumenti_EN/3/18_Procedure_for_organization_of_examinations_of_study_courses_at_the_University_of_Latvia.pdf)

Assessment criteria English Philology

Bachelor and master study programme... (chrome-

extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.hzf.lu.lv/fileadmin/user_upload/LU.LV/Apaksvietnes/Fakultates/www.hzf.lu.lv/studijas/studiju_darbi/Term_BA_and_MA_paper_2022.pdf)

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Internal regulations - chrome-

extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.lu.lv/fileadmin/user_upload/LU.LV/www.lu.lv/Dokumenti/Dokumenti_EN/5/Regulatory_Enactments_on_Academic_and_Administrative_Positions.pdf and chrome-

extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.lu.lv/fileadmin/user_upload/LU.LV/www.lu.lv/Dokumenti/Dokumenti_EN/3/264_personala_vadibas_politika-en.pdf)

- 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

There is internal regulation and mechanisms that ensure collection and analysis of student, employment and graduate feedback (see: Survey analysis)

- 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

The continuous improvement has been ensured by implementing most of the recommendations from

previous external quality reviews on licensing level of study programmes.

Despite the fact that some recommendations and suggestions of previous external review have not been taken into account yet, the Expert Group believes that it should not have impact on overall assessment of the standard, as addressing some of the recommendations/suggestions needed more time than was available.

1.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Field

Analysis

1.3.1.

The funding of the study field and its programmes is provided by the state budget-financed student places and revenue from tuition fees. During the onsite visit meetings, the Expert Group made sure that within the framework of the current year budget, the faculty acts independently with the received funding. The prudent use of financial resources is the responsibility of the Dean of the Faculty and of the Executive Director, who carry out operational financial management. It was confirmed by the Dean. Actual returns are recorded at the faculty level, without separating results for each programme or study field. At the same time, the management of the faculty monitors the outcomes of the study process, the dynamics of the number of students and the factors influencing it, the balance of the prime cost of a particular programme with the state budget subsidy and tuition fees and, if needed, makes the necessary adjustments in the organisation of the study process to ensure the long-term viability and development of the study field of the faculty.

The expert group studied the financing of doctoral programme as well. Based on the results of the interview with PhD students and taking into consideration the best international practices, the expert group believes that the monthly scholarship of 140,00 euro a month is not motivating students to work on serious scientific research and not to think about survival.

As concerns the funding for scientific research, there are different sources: Indirectly, research funding sources for academic staff are also channelled to the development of study programmes, e.g., for research activities, participation in international projects, publication of scientific articles, preparation of international project applications, organisation of scientific events at the UL, implementation of research development projects and fulfilment of long-term commitments, etc. By participating in these activities, academic staff increase their professional and research competence, often also involving students, which has a positive impact on the quality of the study process. In addition, the FH has other funding available for projects that are the result of calls for proposals. These are not permanent and depend on the financial security of the grant. Nowadays several research projects funded by the Latvian Council of Science are run by the representatives of the study field. The FH participates as a cooperation partner in cooperation with IMCS UL in the NRP project. The projects involve students and PhD students, financially supplement the salaries of teaching staff, cover academic trips, and finance research findings (for details see: SAR, pp. 57-58). The Expert Group after deep study of the University Of Latvia academic remuneration regulations (https://www.lu.lv/fileadmin/user_upload/LU.LV/www.lu.lv/Dokumenti/Dokumenti_EN/5/nr_14_akad__amatu_atalgojums_eng_01.pdf) has to point out that the funding system for Humanities in University of Latvia is an area of concern, since the budget for ensuring the study process is clearly insufficient

and the situation cannot be blamed on the administration of the faculty. On the contrary, the faculty administration has done all that it can in order to economise, and yet the salaries of the staff are about 50% or even less, compared to the regional level (i.e. with universities in Estonia and Lithuania), while the teaching loads are much higher. The system for redistribution of financial resources currently adopted by the university leadership is the reason for this situation, as it unduly privileges other study fields in comparison with the humanities and social sciences. While it is certainly true that STEM disciplines need costly equipment, it is equally noteworthy that providing graduates with the linguistic proficiency needed to work in the field requires more contact hours. As a result, the faculty has had to cut down significantly on the amount of research work and lecture preparation, making the system unsustainable in the long run.

1.3.2.

UL has identified the necessary infrastructure resources, material and technical support necessary for the successful realisation of the study field and listed those in the self-assessment report (SAR point 2.3.). At the moment the realisation of the study field takes place in the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Latvia building, which is located at Visvalža street 4A, Riga, LV-1050, but the management of the UL and Faculty Dean confirmed to the Expert Group that next spring (2024) the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Latvia will move to new premises in the House of Letters at the Academic Centre of the University of Latvia. The opening of the House of Letters is expected in the second quarter of 2024. In the House of Letter besides the Faculty of Humanities will be located the Faculty of Business, Management and Economics, Faculty of History and Philosophy, Latvian Language Institute; Cross-industry innovation centre, Business incubator and other organisations. The Expert Group believes that this change will provide students of the Faculty of Humanities an opportunity to work and develop in cooperation and synergy with other UL faculties and research institutes. New building and study environment will be more attractive to the potential future students.

Information and statistical data provided in the SAR regarding the purchase and improvement of infrastructure (especially technical equipment and library resources), as well as the interviews with different internal stakeholders prove that there is a unified and well-functioning system and procedure for updating the material resources (for more details see the Expert Group Report 1.3.3). In the Experts' opinion, UL infrastructure resources and material and technical support necessary for the implementation of the study field is sufficient and is most likely to be excellent when the move to new buildings has been completed.

1.3.3.

The Library of the University of Latvia is included in the library register of the Ministry of Culture and accredited as a library of national significance until 2027. The Library of the Humanities is a part of the Library of the University of Latvia and is located in the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Latvia premises on Vissvalža street 4a, Riga, and hosts all the stock for the field of humanities. During the on-site visit Head Librarian of the Library of the Humanities confirmed to the Expert Group that the library provides students and teaching staff with free and paid access to high-quality information corresponding to the study field, offering the information resources in its collection for study and research purposes, as well as booking them from other libraries. The Expert Group was provided with demonstrations, how to work with library databases, how to search and order needed materials. The Library of Humanities is open to students 40 hours per week, with the working hours convenient for them. It is located in 6 rooms with a total area of 616.2 m². 87 job stations are available to users in the Library of Humanities, including 12 stations equipped with computers. During the Library of the UL visit, the Expert Group got all the evidence that the library actively works with its target audiences – students at all programme levels, academic, research and general staff – to promote information literacy and to provide in-depth knowledge and skills at working with

electronic resources.

In the Experts' opinion, the students and the academic staff have access to all necessary resources. UL has developed a common procedure for obtaining new materials, supplementation of the library collection and subscription to databases at the request of faculty staff and study councils. All the mentioned was confirmed by the information and statistical data provided in the SAR and during the meetings with teaching and academic staff and students. The UL library regularly informs the academic staff about the latest literature, database trials and subscription opportunities so that the academic staff and students can get acquainted with new offers. The expert group confirms that the handbooks, textbooks, monographs, dictionaries and other teaching and learning material available, as well as the journals and library databases subscribed by the Library of the UL are up-to-date and meet the needs of the programmes and sub-programmes presented under the umbrella of the study field "Language and Culture Studies, Mother Tongue Studies, and Language Programmes" (for the list of the journals and databases see SAR, pp. 66-69).

1.3.4.

The study process is provided with the material reproduction techniques, audio and video equipment, specialised software like TRADOS and visual presentation techniques. The information and communication technology solutions are widely used by UL FH. The study process is partly based on several principles of the e-learning environment, e.g., UL uses the e-learning environment Moodle, thus providing direct communication (e-mail, consultations) and information in each study course. UL lecturers systematically use the e-learning environment Moodle and display various study materials there – materials for lectures, seminars, and practical classes, which support students' independent work. Students and lecturers have constant access to the Internet, the Internet connection of the local UL network, the e-learning environment Moodle, as well as the opportunity to use emails and teleconferencing, and various online platforms, such as ZOOM. As a supplement to the e-learning environment Moodle, modern video equipment is available, which allows for creating educational, informative, and advertising video materials, as well as provides live webcasts of conferences. Video lectures are stored on the UL server and are available in the Moodle environment for each corresponding study course.

One of the Office 365 online applications, MS Teams, is used to provide remote learning and distance learning programmes. In addition to MS Teams programme for the online study process, the UL offers its students and employees a web video conferencing system BigBlueButton (hereinafter – BBB system), which is an open-source web online videoconferencing system. BBB ensures the organisation of the University's online events for the UL personnel, including students and event attendees. It can also be used as an integrated solution for an e-study system (for only registered users in the course) and outside an e-study system, in which case one must connect to the UL online conference server in a web browser <https://bbb.lu.lv>. Two e-study environments are available in the UL – estudijas.lu.lv and edu.lu.lv. The e-study environment estudijas.lu.lv is to ensure the study process and management, while the e-education platform edu.lu.lv is developed for e-education projects, events, and courses as well as distance learning programmes (for more details see SAR, pp. 68-69).

In the Experts' Group opinion, the information and communication technology solutions used to ensure the study process in UL are appropriate and effective for full time offline studies, online and distance, as well as for hybrid forms of studies.

1.3.5.

The Experts' Group concluded that UL has an internal system established that regulates the process of teaching staff recruitment and employment. In accordance with the SAR p. 71, there are 3 main normative acts that regulate these procedures and they are: 1. Regulatory Enactments on Academic and Administrative Positions at the University of Latvia; 2. Regulations of the UL Professors Council

and 3. Procedures for the Recruitment of Unelected Teaching and Research Staff at the University of Latvia.

According to SAR p. 71, there are 3 groups of teaching staff that they are divided in: 1. Academic staff, who hold their academic positions based on elections; 2. Acting academic staff and visiting academics 3. Hourly-paid staff. In the case of elected academic positions and acting academic staff, the Regulatory Enactments on Academic and Administrative Positions at the University of Latvia regulate the recruitment and selection. According to the regulations, the following academic positions exist at the UL: professor, associate professor, assistant professor, senior researcher, lecturer, researcher, assistant, research assistant.

Decisions on the need for certain positions are made by the faculties separately. Competitions for elected academic positions are announced openly and anyone can apply. Public calls for applications for the elected academic positions, including the function and terms of reference for the respective position, are published on the UL website <https://www.lu.lv/par-mums/vakances/>, internationally advertised vacancies: <https://www.lu.lv/en/about-us/vacancies/>, and also in National Scientific Activity Information System and State Employment Agency of the Republic of Latvia vacancy portal. Any person who conforms to the requirements specified by the Law on Higher Education Institutions may apply for the position.

In accordance with the established procedure that has been specified in the SAR pp.71-72, the applicants for academic positions must deliver an open lecture, which is evaluated by two reviewers, who issue their opinion on the quality of the lecture. The election procedure is carried out either by the decision-making body of the relevant unit (in the case of assistants, research assistants, researchers, senior researchers, lecturers, and assistant professors – by the respective Faculty Council), however in the case of associate professors and professors – by the relevant Professors Council. Elections must take place within two months from the date of the call for applications. The personnel – docents, lecturers, assistants, senior researchers, researchers, and research assistants – are voted on by secret ballot. Professors and associate professors are voted 72 openly in accordance with the Law on Higher Education Institutions. An applicant who has received more than half of the votes of the members present with the right to vote shall be considered elected. According to the Law on Higher Education Institutions, lecturers are elected for a term of 6 years. At the end of the term, the faculty decides on the need to announce a new competition. There are no restrictions on the term of office.

Some minimum requirements are set for all applicants for academic positions, i.e., knowledge of the state language in accordance with regulatory enactments, knowledge of foreign languages to the extent necessary for the performance of academic duties and continuous improvement of their academic and scientific qualifications. Other requirements differ across academic positions.

Based on the information acquired and reviewed, it can be concluded that UL has defined, implemented and followed procedures for the study field and the corresponding study programmes for attracting qualified teaching staff, they are open and the stakeholders involved are informed about them.

1.3.6.

According to SAR p.75, all of the study programmes implemented within the study field have been developed taking into account the needs of academic staff and their professional development requirements. In the understanding of the Expert Group, professional development may include international mobility and participation in conferences and seminars relevant to the purpose of professional development. As stated during onsite visits by the academic staff, there are constant opportunities for the teaching staff to develop and expand their knowledge in the direction of their personal interest to participate in conferences, prioritise projects that they are working on. Members of academic staff mentioned that in case a research project is present, they are given this opportunity to solely work on the research project for 6 months, which they see as a great benefit.

Based on the SAR p.74, the professional development of the UL academic staff is organised in accordance with the Cabinet Regulations No 569 of 11.09.2018 the Regulations on the Necessary Academic and Professional Qualifications of Pedagogues and Professional Competence Development Procedures. Paragraph 16 of the Regulations states: "Educators of higher education and colleges shall, by the end of the term of their election, undertake a vocational development programme on innovation in the higher education system, or the higher education didactics, or the management of educational work at 160 academic hours".

As stated in the SAR p.74, the teaching staff of the UL has been provided with opportunities to develop in the field of university teaching didactics on a daily basis. The Academic Department of the University of Latvia, the Faculty of Education, Psychology and Arts and Adult Teacher Training Centre provides information, consultation and methodological support to master professional development programme "University Didactics: Modern theory and practice", as well as in-service training programmes "Pedagogical aspects of the development of study programmes in higher education" and "Professional Development of the competence of student tutors" and others.

According to SAR p. 76, UL provides the opportunity for academic staff to develop English language skills at the Applied Linguistics Centre of the FH in-service training programme "Development of the scientific and academic capacity of academic staff in the English language" in case of need and interest.

Outside of the specified possibilities for professional and didactic development, there are many others such as the professional development programme "Promoting the peer learning experience of academic staff" has been developed and provided as well as "Tools and tips for teachers for course design" for testing new teaching and learning methods according with SAR p.77 and examples mentioned during onsite visit.

Based on the data provided by the Institution and information gained during the interviews, the Expert Group concluded that overall needs of professional and didactic development of the UL FH teaching staff are purposefully determined, appropriate improvement measures are used, evaluating the results and effectiveness of the implemented measure.

1.3.7.

During the onsite visit the Expert Group observed high engagement of academic staff. According to CV's provided in annex 2023_03_13_ACADEMIC_STAFF_CV_ENG_FINAL8.pdf the proficiency of Latvian of the academic staff of the study field is at least at C1 level. In line with the law, the proficiency of English of the academic staff is at B2 level. The majority of the academic staff, besides their mother tongue, know at least 2 to 3 languages, but there are also professors who know 5 to 8 languages at different levels, for example, prof. I. Rūmniece, prof. O. Lāms, prof. A. Placinska, prof. V. Muktupāvels, prof. K. Kļaviņš and prof. J. Priede.

During the interviews all members of the academic staff of UL FH confirmed to the Expert Group that they are participating in scientific activities. The University of Latvia is supporting the teaching staff of the study field through the project "Humanitarian thought – language, text, culture (support for the FH scientific conferences, publications and technical provision)". The academic and research work load includes publications and scientific conferences within the framework of this project.

On the other hand, based on the information acquired during the interviews and reviewed, the Expert Group found out that, for example, one lecturer of Arabic language is covering more than a half of all study subjects related to Arabic language studies in the study field. In the Expert Group opinion, it is not sustainable. In fact, the majority of academic staff members' workload in reality is much higher than specified in UL internal documents and regulations. The time allocated to course preparation is very low. During the discussions, the Expert Group was told that members of the academic staff have to use their vacation time to meet the requirements of their workload. Some members of staff seemed even to take pride in this, which is understandable, but not sustainable.

The Expert Group concludes that teaching staff workload is an area of grave concern and needs a

solution on how to productively balance teaching staff time.

1.3.8.

As stated in the SAR p. 81, students have the access needed to academic, career development and psychological support.

When asked during onsite visits, part-time students were happy with the flexibility in regards to their studies and how the programme has been adjusted to the fact that they are working full-time and how often they have to submit their essays or home papers. During an onsite visit, it was clarified that in recent years there have been no students with special needs that required specific tools or assistance in the study process. One of the students shared that the university was very helpful prior and during her exchange of studies. It was said that the studies were well-monitored and there were no problems in regards to the course adjustments. During the onsite visit with students, it became clear that the university is actively building relationships with various employers in public and private sectors for the purpose of student recruitment and provision of internships. All of the students specified that the faculty is helpful and regularly sends out emails with opportunities, however, what regards the internships offered, those are usually unpaid, which is a problem in the long term as students wish to receive remuneration for their work when possible as students do not usually receive scholarships and those who do, the amount of scholarship is very low - 140 euros a month (The same issue is also discussed above. See: Report, 1.3.1). Before Covid-19, the financial support was 90 euros, during Covid-19 - 200 euros and now 140 euros. The Expert Group believes that it would be highly advisable, if possible, to provide larger scholarships and to more of the students. As students specified, first year students never get these scholarships as they have not proven themselves, while they might be the ones who need this support the most.

Students specified that they have the necessary access to all of the information that they need when it comes to library resources, databases, career support and academic support in case of any issues. As stated by the graduates, there are various changes implemented based on their recommendations, which shows that the faculty cares for the student well-being and provision of a good teaching process.

It has been elaborated in the SAR p. 83, that psychological support is provided by the Department of Study Service. A psychologist-counsellor provides psychological support to students in solving personal and study issues arising from studies (relationship issues, conflict resolution, emotional difficulties). A psychologist provides individual counselling and telephone counselling.

The Expert Group concluded that UL FH has identified the necessary support for students and a functioning support system has been established to meet the needs of students, but there is a need to increase the amount and the number of the scholarships.

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

Conclusions:

Based on the analysis of the data on infrastructural developments, material and human resources provided in the SAR and its supporting documents, after considering the results of the interviews with different internal and external stakeholders and after visiting the premises of the FH (classrooms, offices, computer labs, libraries, etc.), the Expert Group concluded that the Resources and Provision of the study field "Language and Culture Studies, Mother Tongue Studies, and Language Programmes" correspond to the requirements of the accreditation standards. The available infrastructure, material and technical support, financial, informational and library resources, internal regulations for development/improvement of infrastructure and electing/hiring academic and teaching staff and their professional development are in line with the requirements and ensure successful implementation of the programmes/sub-programmes despite some

weaknesses and areas for improvement identified by the Expert Group.

Overall, UL and the faculty are going through a period of transformation. The faculty is planning to move to their new premises this year, which is going to be an extensive improvement on their resource base. Academic staff members are involved in administrative, academic and research work, but the workload norms are not in a productive balance, which is an area of grave concern. There are various opportunities for academic staff to develop themselves through participation in seminars, conferences and expand their knowledge on topics of their interest. Students are provided with academic, career and psychological support when needed. However, the faculty could find ways to financially support their students more as the existing scholarships are small and students would highly appreciate that they were increased and became more accessible.

Strengths:

- 1) Essentially updated and improved infrastructure and excellent working conditions for teaching staff when the move to new premises will be completed.
- 2) Possibility given to the academic staff to order books for the library.

Weaknesses:

- 1) The academic staff workload balance.
- 2) Low amount of money and insufficient number of scholarships (especially for PhD students).

1.4. Scientific Research and Artistic Creation

Analysis

1.4.1.

The aim of the Study Field programmes is to ensure national and international quality specialisation in the languages/cultures represented by the study field, strengthening the leading position of the University as a national higher education institution in the country in these fields (Latvian studies, Classical Philology, Finno-Ugric Studies), as their teaching staff are among the most prominent national scientists, experts in their fields of study. Contentwise, the Expert Group concluded that the publications of the teaching staff are well connected with the courses they are teaching. However, almost none of them appear in international, high-ranking academic journals or edited volumes. Many of these do not seem to be blindly peer reviewed, because due to the in-house editing process the authors of specific publications are easily recognizable by their research topics. Doctoral students are directly involved in research activities relevant to their own dissertation topics, and they are encouraged to participate in the research of their supervisors and peers, which is a commendable strength.

Therefore, in the Experts Group's view the directions of scientific research of the study field correspond to the development goals of the UL and are relevant for the study field.

1.4.2.

After desk study and analysing the CVs of the academic personnel and during the onsite visit the Expert Group noted that the teaching staff of UL FH is participating in international conferences, publishing their monographs, research articles in international scientific journals in Latvia and abroad. For example, newest findings in linguistics are published in the conference proceedings of the Department of Latvian and Baltic Studies, FH, UL, 'Valoda: nozīme un forma / Language: Meaning and Form' (SCOPUS, issued since 2009, prof. A. Kalnača(ed.)), but the newest tendencies, which are represented in the study courses of the MSP "English Studies" are in the focus of the Baltic Journal of English Language, Literature and Culture (WoS), which is prepared by the

Department of English Studies, Faculty of Humanities. It is also worth mentioning that the department of Classical Philology of the UL in collaboration with the Centre for Hellenic Studies and the Latin Culture Heritage Centre every two years publishes the collection of the articles “Antiquitas Viva: Studia Classica”, which unites the specialists from Baltic and Nordic countries and serves as a good international platform for scholarly interaction and collaboration. Judging by the titles of the publications, the research activities of their authors are relevant to and integrated with the study process on all levels. The courses offered in the BSP Philology and MSP Linguistics, Literary and Regional Cultural Studies programmes reflect the areas of expertise of the researchers and thus help to give students an overview of the relevant scientific paradigms and to educate them about the latest developments in the corresponding scientific theories.

1.4.3.

There is quite a bit of international research cooperation (e.g. international conferences, joint conference proceedings, Erasmus+ exchange trips, Horizon 2020, Horizon Europe etc.) and in some cases the Expert Group has found long-standing relationships with universities abroad (e.g. involvement of the department of Classical Philology in international network of Baltic Sea Region Universities “Colloquium Balticum” together with the Universities of Germany, Finland, Sweden, Estonia and Lithuania), but in general, the visibility of the University of Latvia on the international scenes pertinent to the study field remains low, except in areas concerning the Latvian language and cultural heritage.

The Expert Group agrees with the statement of the SAR, that the international projects and cooperation in the study field must increase in number and quality, as they strengthen the scientific level of the programmes, engage students in research, and involve guest lecturers. Support measures for the development of international projects and international cooperation have been developed (SAR, p. 88).

1.4.4.

According to the information provided in the SAR and the CVs of the teaching staff, the Faculty members of the SF are involved in their fields of research – linguistics and literary studies, music, visual arts and architecture (subfields – Latvian folklore, comparative folklore studies, folklore studies of other nations, history and theory of theatre and cinema) or interdisciplinary projects and research. The teaching staff of the programmes/sub-programmes also participate in national and international projects, conferences and other scientific events and activities, can use the sabbatical leave, get international research fellowships and/or financial support from the UL for academic trips and publishing research works, etc. It means that the UL FH have developed the mechanisms for involvement of teaching staff in research, but the analysis of the staff workload revealed that it doesn't support high quality and internationally competitive research. The rules for allocating working time to various academic activities permit only 100 hours of research out of the 1650 total working hours per year on all levels of competence, from lecturer to professor. This is clearly insufficient for meaningful research. That aside, the administration of the faculty is making considerable effort to provide the staff with conditions necessary for doing research, e. g. the staff is able to order books for the library, but these opportunities are not used as much as they should.

1.4.5.

During the onsite visit the Expert Group concluded that the most active involvement of students in science takes place in the MSP Latvian Language, Literature and Culture Studies (formerly – MSP Baltic Philology) and the doctoral study programme Language and Culture Studies, but also involvement of the students of the sub-programmes Classical Philology and Romanistics in Colloquium Balticum and Francophonic events should be mentioned. Therefore the criterion is clearly met on the level of PhD students, who are actively involved in various research projects

related to their dissertation topics. Opportunities to participate in research activities are also there for students on lower levels, should they want to take them, for example, students of all the programmes participating in annual UL conferences, local and international student conferences and in the event Scientists' Night, European Language Days, etc.

The Expert Group concluded that the UL FH has developed mechanisms to promote the involvement of the students in scientific research, the students of the study programmes of all levels are welcomed to be involved in scientific research.

1.4.6.

Many members of the academic staff have developed innovative teaching methods on the basis of their research, and these indeed contribute to the quality of the study process in significant ways. Teaching staff of study SF programmes are actively implementing innovative language technology solutions into their study process - TRADOS, NMT post-editing, computer linguistics. The Erasmus+ project "Promoting Easy-to-Read Language for Social Inclusion (PERLSI)" of the HZF Centre for Applied Linguistics is especially innovative and worth mentioning. The target audience of Easy Language is people with intellectual disabilities, neuropsychiatric disorders, dyslexia, aphasia, as well as learning and writing disabilities, and people who are learning a language (children, immigrants).

Therefore, in the Expert Group's view innovative language solutions are applied in the study field, which have a significant positive impact on the study process.

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

Conclusions:

The research conducted by the teaching staff corresponds to the development goals of the UL and is relevant for the SF "Language and Culture Studies, Mother Tongue Studies, and Language Programmes". The results of the research are integrated in the study process of all programmes/sub-programmes. The teaching staff has remarkable research potential, which has not been harnessed in full because of imbalanced workloads. The excessive teaching loads do not leave enough time for research and, as a result, the publications of the academic staff appear primarily in journals published by the University of Latvia, where the Expert Group has concerns about the quality of peer review.

Strengths:

- 1) Ongoing international cooperation.
- 2) Integration of doctoral students into the research activities of their supervisors.

Weaknesses:

- 1) The time allocation guidelines adopted by the faculty which leave virtually no time for research.
- 2) The vast majority of academic publications of the staff are published by the University of Latvia, and while the publications are indexed in SCOPUS, there is doubt about the viability of the peer review process. Little effort has been made to publish in any high-ranking international journals.

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: Partially compliant

The visibility of the research of the scholars of the study field needs be improved.

The teaching load needs to be considerably reduced to allow for time and energy for research.

1.5. Cooperation and Internationalisation

Analysis

1.5.1.

University of Latvia maintains close contacts with numerous cooperation partners. The network for cooperation is well developed. According to SAR, p. 92, it includes public, private, and community organisations that contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes at SF. The Expert Group was convinced that representatives of partner organisations participate in the study process by providing internships, assessing student competencies, completing surveys regarding study content, offering guest lectures and seminars, and participating in the Study Field Council and student career events. However, the criteria for selecting local partners are not clearly defined in the SAR and could not be clarified during on-site meetings. Local research cooperation is mainly carried out with the National Library of Latvia, research institutes, associations/societies and other domestic universities (Liepaja University, Daugavpils University). There is also significant cooperation between the university and non-academic institutions, in particular those interested in students as interns. Local cooperation partners, especially business enterprises, could be encouraged to develop joint research projects with the faculty, as the potential here is not fully exploited.

1.5.2.

The study field enjoys the benefits of the European Universities Alliance FORTHUM, knit together from 9 nine public universities aimed at fostering outreach within European regions, transnational higher education and mobility. The Expert Group was able to gather evidence of active faculty involvement, such as virtual student mobility, participating in study courses in France and Germany, joint programme and research development. In addition to this strategic cooperation initiative the faculty maintains a variety of Erasmus+ partnerships and other collaboration tools, e.g. the international project of the Baltic Sea region universities "Colloquium Balticum". In recent years, participation in Erasmus+ has increased. However, Erasmus+ statistics on outgoing and incoming students still reveals an insufficient number of mobilities, especially in Master's study programmes, please refer to chapter 1.6.1. for further information.

1.5.3.

According to SAR p. 96, students regularly take advantage of Erasmus+ opportunities and scholarships or summer schools in various countries. The faculty has expressed the need for more Erasmus+ scholarships, as there is annual competition within the SF. UL manages to keep a balance between incoming and outgoing flows of students. Incoming mobility of teaching staff has decreased by a huge margin (when compared to 2017-2019) since the pandemics. Various measures are being taken to improve the situation, but the faculty needs a more systematic approach to the attraction of the teaching staff and students from abroad.

As to teaching staff from abroad, the requirement that they be fully proficient in Latvian at the time of application for any academic position considerably restricts the possibilities of their employment. The Expert Group strongly suggests that Latvia should adopt procedures that are similar to those of other European countries, namely that a successful international applicant should be given a time frame for acquiring the necessary linguistic skills.

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

Conclusions:

Although there is room for improvement, the Expert Group judges the study field to be fully compliant with this set of criteria, as the administration of the faculty and each programme in particular are doing what they can to foster internationalisation, but it is beyond their power to solve the issues that are hindering them. Thus, the fact that relatively few international academics are working in the faculty is a result of the required high threshold of linguistic competence and the fact that relatively few MA students are making use of exchange programmes is contingent on their financial and work situations etc.

Strengths:

- 1) Number of international agreements concluded by the faculty that enables the outgoing mobility of students in all of those programmes where it is specifically most needed.
- 2) Participation of the faculty in international networks and clusters that provide opportunities for both outgoing and incoming mobility.

Weaknesses:

- 1) The requirement of high-level proficiency in Latvian makes it impossible to attract international faculty, except people who have Latvian background or family ties, which narrows down the pool of prospective applicants.

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

Cooperation and internationalisation activities are systematically developed with numerous institutions from Latvia and abroad. Participation in the European Universities Initiative ensures a solid basis for strategic projects in the study field.

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

Analysis

1.6.1.

During the previous accreditation and licensing of SF in 2014, the Experts provided a list of recommendations. The UL report on the implementation of recommendations indicates that all the recommendations are implemented or partially implemented. Since the last accreditation, there have been seven recommendations regarding deregulating students' choice in their studies, three recommendations on international activities, and one recommendation on the division of master's programs into theory-based and practice-based tracks. Most of these recommendations have been implemented to the extent allowed by the current Latvian legislation, but some of the issues still need attention and further improvement.

According to SAR pp. 97-98 and the additional information obtained during the site visit, the first seven recommendations have been partially implemented by reducing the mandatory part in all bachelor's programs, introducing free electives in the BSP and MSP, organising the restricted

elective part of some BSP and MSP into course clusters, retaining modules and sub-programmes in most programmes where sequential acquisition of a particular language is important, and making other adjustments to ensure student freedom of choice. The recommendation to transfer credits from other domestic and foreign universities was no longer valid, as all UL programmes recognize credits earned abroad. The recommendation to announce more positions internationally and to implement a post-doctoral programme was not fully implemented because the faculty is unable to offer competitive compensation due to budget constraints and state regulations. The requirement of proficiency in the local language contributes negatively. There are foreign faculty who teach courses at SF, but only project funding is available to attract them. The SAR does not provide intentions to establish or at least strive for a nationally funded post-doctoral programme that would attract young scholars and raise the research and academic profile of the entire SF.

Although the UL report on the implementation of the recommendation Use of the benefits of the Erasmus+ programme states that it is implemented and ERASMUS + opportunities are fully exploited and there are ERASMUS + agreements with 198 programmes abroad signed, the information revealed by the Annexes concerning ERASMUS+ mobility data of outgoing and incoming students does not prove that. During the last two years there have been 25 outgoing student mobilities and 33 incoming students from 9 countries. Besides that, the number of incoming ERASMUS students for MSP is very low, namely, 9 students in 10 years, in the case of BP the activity is higher. The range of countries is acceptable. Concerning the information revealed in the Annex of SF Statistical data on outgoing and incoming mobility of students in 2013-2022 in accredited programmes, it is clearly seen that there have been 35 incoming ERASMUS students for BSP of Baltic Philology, 9 incoming ERASMUS students for MSP Baltic Philology and 46 incoming students for BSP Asian Studies, 11 incoming students for MSP Oriental Studies in 10 years. There is no data provided concerning the incoming ERASMUS students for other BSP and MSP programmes.

The Annex Statistics on outgoing and incoming ERASMUS + mobility of staff of the SF programmes reveals that there have been 21 outgoing mobility in 6 years and also the number of incoming mobilities has decreased (7 incoming mobilities in 2021/2022).

The recommendation to divide Master study programmes into theory-based and practice-based study directions was partially implemented because, according to SAR p. 98, all MSPs are academic study programmes. The faculty took into account the improvement of students' career prospects by introducing internships and practice-oriented courses, e.g. "Literary Editing and Language Practice", "Project Management in Humanities and Creative Industries" in the academic master's study programme "Latvian Language, Literature and Culture Studies".

Six study programmes have received their licences in 2021. BSP English, European Languages and Business Studies has received 7 short-term and 6 long-term recommendations where almost all of them have been addressed and taken into consideration while making changes in the reported study programme. Most of the short-term recommendations were related to the editorial changes needed in the course descriptions and titles of the study courses that have been done. The study course Latvian Language for Foreigners has been transferred from the 3rd semester to the 1st one, as recommended by the licensing experts also the study course English Lexicology has been included in the 3rd semester, instead of the 5th one. The midterm tests and criteria for evaluating learning outcomes are revealed by the course descriptions as suggested by the licensing experts. Noteworthy attempt to attract foreign lecturers to the reported study programme has been made, but there is still room for improvement since only four foreign lecturers are involved in the study programme implementation (3 for delivering Spanish classes and 1 for German classes). The long-term recommendation from the licensing experts was to approach employers outside of Latvia and Baltic countries for cooperation, encouraging even greater interest of foreign students in the reported study programme, but neither the SAR nor on-site visit prove that. Another long-term recommendation was related to promoting the academic staff to publish their research in high-ranking international journals outside Latvia, where some progress can be noticed but is still an

issue to consider. As a response to the recommendation concerning improvement of Latvian language proficiency, the study course Basics of Latvian Scientific Language and Terminology has been introduced in the 3rd semester in restrictive elective part II.

BSP East-West Intercultural Studies has received one short-term recommendation concerning the alignment of the study programme's code (43227) with the awarded degree according to the Regulations No.322 of the Cabinet of Ministers Regulations on the Classification of Latvian Education, that has been done and the awarded degree now is Bachelor's Degree of Humanities in Language Studies and Programmes instead of Bachelor's Degree of Humanities in East-West Intercultural Studies. There are three long-term recommendations, one of them being related to compiling the information concerning the dynamics of the scientific and international cooperation activities of the academic staff involved in the implementation of the reported study programme. SAR p.324-326 reveals the academic staff's research and qualification development activities that ensure the sustainable development of the reported study programme and can be considered as excellent. The second long-term recommendation is related to the involvement of doctoral students in the implementation of the study programme which is not proved neither by the SAR, nor on-site visit. The third recommendation concerns the decrease of the number of study courses related to the topic of religions, which can be considered as taken into consideration since the Study Plan (Annex) reveals only three study courses related to the topic of religion.

The BSP Philology has received eight short-term and six long-term recommendations. As to the short term-recommendations, three of them were related to the changes to be made in the admission requirements, namely, following the licensing experts' suggestion, they are complemented with the requirement of having a Level B2 in Russian as a foreign language and German as a foreign language as well as the languages of the study programme implementation are clearly identified. The course descriptions are complemented with the description of students' independent tasks, but the literature lists must be reconsidered and up-to-date sources must be added (in some course descriptions the latest source is dated by year 2014, 2010 and even older)

As to the long-term recommendations, some of them are not considered yet, for instance, recommended study courses concerning state-of-art technical competences, artificial intelligence, etc are not included in the study plan. The licensing experts have recommended to promote the academic staff's English proficiency to reach at least Level C1, but no evidence is there of having an internationally recognised certificates that would be a strong proof. So far only self-assessments revealed by CVs prove the academic staff's English proficiency. There is no evidence provided by the SAR of having a developed strategic communication with the students in order to get feedback about the study programme and other questions of students' interest (questionnaires etc.) as recommended by the licensing experts. Also no evidence is provided concerning the cooperation with humanitarian scientific research centres and institutes in order to work in projects.

MSP English Studies has received six short-term and eight long-term recommendations. The first short-term recommendation concerns the alignment of the study programme's code (45227) with the awarded degree according to the Regulations No.322 of the Cabinet of Ministers Regulations on the Classification of Latvian Education, that has been done and the awarded degree now is Master's Degree of Humanities in Language Studies and Programmes instead of Master's Degree of Humanities in Philology. The second short-term recommendation relates to the issuance of diploma for foreign graduates both in Latvian and English according to the Regulations No.202 of Cabinet of Ministers Article 15, which has been accomplished and the samples of diploma are available in both languages in Annex. The accomplishment of recommendation concerning the promotion of innovative teaching methods and usage of new technologies in the study process is proved by the information in SAR, p.285-286 where it is revealed that different software, Text corpuses English-Corpora.org. AntConc etc. are applied in the study process. The next recommendation concerns the clear identification of the volume of students' independent work and assessment criteria, which is accomplished and can be seen in the study course descriptions. To follow the recommendation of

complementing the choice of the study courses concerning literary science, 2 study courses in part A and 4 study courses in part B are included (Annex Study Plan). Also the editorial changes in the study course descriptions are done as recommended by the licensing experts.

Some of the long-term recommendations have been addressed already, for instance, the one related to the selection of foreign academic staff. According to the SAR p.293-294, specific criteria are used for the selection of academic faculty as well as the guest faculty, namely, conformity of the qualification of teaching staff with the requirements of regulatory enactments and conformity of the direction of scientific research activity of teaching staff with the content of the study programme and/or study course. Also the recommendation concerning the resources and provision can be considered as implemented since the SAR p.290 and the information gathered during the on-site visit prove that UL Library resources as well as the licences for different language programmes are regularly renewed and purchased to achieve the learning outcomes of the reported study programme. Other recommendations are related to the suggestion to promote cooperation with employers at different levels (private sector as well as the public sector) which has been addressed by the inclusion of an internship in the study programme. The licensing experts have suggested promoting cooperation with language technology companies (SDL Academic Partner Programme, MemoQ Academic Programme, etc.) that have cooperation programmes with universities, but there is still no evidence of the suggested activity.

MSP Linguistics, Literature and Regional Culture has received seven short-term and nine long-term recommendations. The first short-term recommendation concerns the alignment of the study programme's code (45227) with the awarded degree according to the Regulations No.322 of the Cabinet of Ministers Regulations on the Classification of Latvian Education, that has been done and the awarded degree now is Master's Degree of Humanities in Language Studies and Programmes. The second short-term recommendation relates to the issuance of diploma for foreign graduates both in Latvian and English according to the Regulations No.202 of Cabinet of Ministers Article 15, which has been accomplished and the samples of diploma are available in both languages in the Annex. The third recommendation suggests to design a graphical model to reflect the complicated study plan which is done and can be found in the Annex. The study course application and learning procedure is described in SAR p.374-376 as suggested by the recommendation of the licensing experts. Revenue of the MSP has been reflected by the SAR, p.388-389, also the Annex MSP LLRCS Student Statistics Table 5 gives additional information of the number of students by funding sources, but no information can be found that would support the licensing experts' recommendation concerning identifying minimum number of students in each sub-programme the MSP to be profitable. No information can be found concerning the recommendation related to considering different options for students to continue their studies in the case of termination of MSP. Concerning the long-term recommendations, the SAR and the on-site visit prove that some of them have been addressed, e.g, the involvement of employers in the implementation of the programme, digital resources have been supplemented, mismatch of study programme costs and income has been addressed by attracting some sponsors, but there is still a work in progress as well.

DSP Language and Culture Studies has received suggestions from the licensing experts concerning amendments to be made in the regulations that would ensure the transition to a single title of the doctoral scientific degree with an official abbreviation (Ph.D.) without mentioning scientific branch and sub-branch. According to the SAR, the changes have been made and the degree to be acquired is Doctoral Degree of Science Doctor of Science (Ph.D.) in Humanities and the Arts.

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

Conclusions:

The administration of the faculty has made good use of mainly all short-term recommendations

suggested by the licensing experts. Also remarkable attempts can be noticed to manage the long-term recommendations, but there are issues that need to be addressed.

Strengths:

- 1) A considerable progress with regard to derestricting students' choice in their studies.
- 2) The introduction of internships and practice-oriented courses into the academic Master study programmes.

Weaknesses:

- 1) Relatively low number of outgoing as well as incoming ERASMUS students and staff, despite the existing agreements and exchange possibilities.
- 2) Lack of employment of international faculty.
- 3) Lack of a postdoc programme as a limitation to international visibility of the faculty.
- 4) Insufficient implementation of the recommendation by the licensing experts regarding the visibility of research.

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

The majority of the previous suggestions were implemented, but some of the issues still need attention and further improvement.

1.7. Recommendations for the Study Field

Short-term recommendations

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|--|
| 1) The university should find opportunities to reduce the workload of teaching staff or find opportunities to increase the salaries of teaching staff to bring them into correspondence with the regional standard. |
| 2) The faculty should bring the teaching load requirement into correspondence with the loads specified in "Latvijas Universitātes akadēmiskā darba samaksas NOLIKUMS" as to allocated teaching and research proportions. |
| 3) The faculty should raise the amount of time dedicated to course preparation from 15 minutes to 1-3 hours per contact hour, depending on whether the course is newly prepared, thoroughly revised or repeated with minor amendments. |
| 4) The mechanisms/approaches for getting students' feedback should be diversified. The administrative units responsible for quality assurance should introduce focus groups as an additional and effective tool of getting feedback from the students and make conclusions after triangulation of the results by the surveys and focus groups. |
| 5) The LU FH Alumni association or membership programme in addition to the UL Alumni Association should be developed, that would help to build the graduates community and would help to attract additional financial support via special scholarships and/or other projects. |
| 6) The East-West Intercultural Studies BSP should be terminated. |

Long-term recommendations

- 1) The structure of the study programmes should be refined by introducing major/minor subject division.
- 2) The blueprint provided by the Philology programme should be followed in all other study programmes concerning the proportion of free electives.
- 3) The results of external quality assurance (e.g. recommendations by the Experts during the licensing) should be implemented in a more consistent and systematic way.
- 4) The bureaucratic burden for the teaching staff should be minimised by providing bigger administrative support while preparing the documentation for accreditation and/or other internal and external quality assurance processes.
- 5) Number of students' scholarships and the amount of money allocated for scholarships should be increased.
- 6) Special measures should be taken to increase the number of international faculty (e.g. updating the international staff recruitment policy by adjusting the staff selection criteria).
- 7) Special measures should be taken to introduce the post-doc programmes (e.g. developing and implementing the special funding schemes in collaboration with the national and international social partners and industry representatives).
- 8) Special measures should be taken to increase the number of incoming and outgoing students and staff (e.g. strengthening the foreign language proficiency, developing more courses/programmes in English and other languages, raising awareness of the students and staff on existing possibilities, widening collaboration with foreign universities, using social media and other marketing tools to increase international visibility of the UL, etc.).
- 9) UL and the Faculty of Humanities should promote and support more active participation of the teaching staff in international teaching projects.
- 10) The visibility of the University of Latvia on the international scene should be increased by more systematic and intensive publishing in high-ranking international journals outside Latvia.

II - "English, European Languages and Business Studies" ASSESSMENT

II - "English, European Languages and Business Studies" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1.

The academic bachelor study programme "English, European Languages and Business Studies" complies with indicators, conditions and criteria of the study field of "Language and Culture Studies, Mother Tongue Studies, and Language Programmes". The length of the implementation of the study programme, which is 3 years for full-time studies and 4 years for part-time extramural studies, is evaluated as sufficient for acquiring the necessary skills and way of thinking to enter the labour market.

2.1.2.

According to the SAR p.232, the title of the study programme is "English, European Languages and

Business Studies" in the study field of "Language and Culture Studies, Mother Tongue Studies, and Language Programmes" with education classification code 43227 with the last 3 numbers (227) standing for language studies and programmes according to the classification of Latvian education which can be accessed here: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/291524-noteikumi-par-latvijas-izglitiba-klasifikaciju>. There is no qualification given after graduating as it is an academic bachelor study programme.

According to the SAR p.236, the study programme has three sub-programmes, which are 1. "English Language" 2. "English-Scandinavian Languages" 3. "European Languages and Business Studies". According to the SAR p.237, the content of the three sub-programmes of the bachelor's study programme "English, European Languages and Business Studies" is designed based on the analysis of similar study programmes in foreign universities and taking into consideration recommendations of international experts, academic staff, students and graduates of the University of Latvia and employers. To improve the study programme, reviews of employers, the UL collaboration partners and other interested institutions are summarised and taken into account for necessary developments in the future.

According to the SAR p.232, the aim of the programme is to provide general basic academic knowledge in humanities in English, Scandinavian and interdisciplinary European languages and business studies, ensure skills and competence development for pursuing a versatile career in Latvian and international organisations as well as prepare for Master's studies. According to the information provided in the SAR p.234, the admission requirements of this programme is secondary education and English language level of at least B2 as this programme is implemented in English. It has been stated in the SAR p.234, that after successful completion of the studies, students are awarded with Bachelor's Degree of Humanities in Language Studies and Programmes. According to the SAR p.234, the study programme, which is a full-time study programme with 120 CP to be gathered during the study process of 3 years. Part-time studies also have the same CP count, while the studies take an extra year. The title, code, degree to be obtained of the study programme, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation as well as the implementation language, are reasonable and justified.

2.1.3.

According to the SAR p.235, a few changes have been made in the study programme parameters as this is comparably a newly licensed programme on 20 April 2021. Since the licensing of the programme, four changes have been made. As stated in the SAR p.235, the first change made has been of the awarded degree. In compliance with Articles 12 and 22 of Regulations No. 240 of the Cabinet of Ministers as of 13 May 2014 "Regulations on the National Standard for Academic Education" the awarded degree is changed from "Bachelor of Humanities in language studies" to "Bachelor of Humanities in language studies and programmes". Second change that has been made is editorial changes in the learning outcomes which students demonstrate after graduation. Third change has been made in the restrictive elective part supplementing the study programme with the course "Valo 1568, Basics of the Latvian Scientific Language and Terminology" in accordance with licensing experts' recommendations. Fourth change has been adding two courses in the mandatory part of the study programme, which are "Environment Protection" (1 CP) and "Civil Protection" (1 CP) in the licenced Bachelor study programme. The corrections made to the study programme's parameters within the assessment of the study field are, in the opinion of Experts, justified and Experts support them.

2.1.4.

The SAR provides adequate economic and social justification for the study programme. The new programme has been designed by consolidating the length of study and updating the study content

of the BSP "English Philology" and the BSP "Modern Language and Business Studies" (p. 238). This solution has helped not only to keep student numbers stable, but even to increase them temporarily, as the data in Table 3.1.4.1. indicate a decrease in enrolment for the academic year 2022/2023 compared to the previous academic year. Higher student enrolment can have a positive impact on sharing services and optimal deployment of staff. Based on the SAR and the evidence collected during on-site interviews with employers, the Expert Group concluded that the programme is meeting the needs of the labour market. Employers confirmed the demand for professionals proficient in foreign languages and communication, especially in Scandinavian languages. According to their degrees, graduates are employed in various sectors of the economy (marketing, education, finance, translation, etc.) and in the public service (e.g., the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia). However, the SAR doesn't disclose the percentage of employed graduates or graduates who start their own businesses.

According to SAR p. 242, the programme has a dropout rate of zero as of 10/01/2021, but the data in Table 3.1.4.1. show a sharp drop of 32 percent (104 students in the 2nd year). The problem needs to be addressed at the faculty level through further adaptation of study content and methods (low interest in study content), more flexible organisation of studies (doing professional sports and inability to combine studies and sports), psychological counselling (burnout and psychological load related to COVID-19), and academic support including the possibility to pay tuition fees in instalments (inability to pay the tuition), especially considering that 81% of students pay tuition fees (SAR p. 243). As of 02/01/2022, the programme included 27 international degree-seeking students. The number indicates a potential for growth in the programme as well as an opportunity to partially offset the declining number of domestic students.

2.1.5.

Not applicable.

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

Conclusions:

All of the indicators of the study programme are in compliance with the existing preconditions of the implementation of the study programme. The study programme "English, European Languages and Business Studies" complies with the study field indicators, conditions and criteria. In the opinion of the Experts, the title, code, degree to be obtained of the study programme, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation as well as the implementation language, are reasonable and justified. The study programme is implemented in English. The goals, objectives, learning outcomes are in line and in compliance. The programme is relatively new and student numbers have increased in this study year of 2022/23. There has been a level of dropout rate found in accordance with the data available in the SAR, which needs to be addressed and stabilised in the future.

Strengths:

- 1) Demand on the graduates of the study programme on the job market.
- 2) Attractive study programme for international degree-seeking students.

Weaknesses:

- 1) Noticeable student drop-out rates.

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1.

The bachelor study programme "English, European Languages and Business Studies" is organised in three sub-programmes: English Language, English and Scandinavian Languages, European Languages and Business Studies. The English Language programme combines linguistic, literary, cultural and regional studies aspects. This sub-programme is a combination of traditional philological and more recent regional studies approaches. The sub-programme "English and Scandinavian Languages" covers linguistics, literary history and cultural studies, while the sub-programme "European Languages and Business Studies" provides knowledge on the culture of Great Britain, the USA and Canada, basic principles of business and economics. The programme "English, European Languages and Business Studies" has a strong interdisciplinary profile, provides the students with a good balance of theoretical knowledge and practical skills and is closely related to the national and international labour market. There is a strong connection between the objectives and learning outcomes of the programme. The content of the programme is interrelated, comprehensive and reflects the latest achievements of the respective study fields. As it has been already mentioned elsewhere in the report, it would be beneficial to give the possibility to the students to take the major and minor programs, which would allow them to combine the knowledge of European languages not only with Business Studies, but with some other fields (e.g. tourism, IT, law, etc.) which would increase their competitiveness in the labour market.

The Expert Group verified that the full-time and part-time study programme complies with the Regulations of the University of Latvia on Study and Continuing Education Programmes and consist of 120 CP. In each of the 6 semesters students are having in total 20 CPs in full-time face-to-face studies and 14/16 CPs in part-time/face-to-face studies out of 8 semesters. The content of the study programme consists of three parts: (1) the compulsory part, which is the same for all sub-programmes (52 CP), including "Bachelor Paper" (10 CP), "Civil and Environment Protection" courses (2 CP) and an "Internship" (2 CP). The compulsory part is taught in English, which is an important factor for attracting foreign students; (2) the restricted elective part, consists of 68 CP. The restricted elective part courses in the degree programme consist of 42 CPs (the minimum is 20 CPs) in the sub-programme "English Language", 42 CPs in the sub-programme "English-Scandinavian Languages" and 24 CPs in the sub-programme "European Languages and Business Studies", with the difference between the sub-programmes consisting of business, economics and management courses; (3) the elective part (2 KP). The elective part of the study programme also includes the course "Latvian language for beginners", which is compulsory for foreign students.

The study programme "English, European Languages and Business Studies" complies with the national academic education standard (Regulations No. 240 of the Cabinet of Ministers as of 1 May 2014 "Regulations on the National Standard for Academic Education" (<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/266187-noteikumi-par-valsts-akademiskas-izglitiba-standartu>). The compulsory part and the restricted elective part of the study programme includes the guidelines, principles, structure, and methodology of the relevant field of science (not less than 25 CP), the history and current problems of the development of the field of science (not less than 10 CP), as well as the characteristics and problems of the field of science in an interdisciplinary aspect (not less than 15 CP).

2.2.2.

Not applicable.

2.2.3.

The bachelor's study programme "English, European Languages and Business Studies" consists of

three sub-programmes: “English Language”, “English-Scandinavian Languages” and “European Languages and Business Studies”. The structure of the programme reflects the needs of the labour market and some modern trends in higher education - combining humanities with the business education skills and interdisciplinary approach to increase competitiveness of the graduates on the labour market. Offering the programme also in English will help to attract more international students and to improve employment rates of the graduates both nationally and internationally.

The bachelor’s study programme “English, European Languages and Business Studies” is implemented using student-centred, contemporary learning and teaching methods and approaches (e.g. group work, e-learning, modelling situations/simulation, presentation, discussion, project based learning, international mobility, etc.). The learning and teaching methodology considers best international practices. It is closely related to the content and specificity of the courses and ensures achievement of the aims and expected learning outcomes. Study excursions both in the local museums and abroad, participation in various events organised by different international organisations and peer learning are especially beneficial for development of students' practical, communication and social skills and multicultural competencies.

The study courses of the programme are implemented in English and/or European languages. English studies, which is the basis of each sub-programme, will promote attracting international students. The compulsory part (52 CP, including a bachelor’s thesis in the amount of 10 CP) is implemented in English. The restricted electives part is implemented in English, Swedish or Norwegian as well as the 2nd and/or 3rd foreign language. Expert group believes that such an approach ensures a very good balance of teaching and learning in English and other European languages, to support the language diversity and to increase the employability of the graduates (knowledge of Scandinavian and other European languages along with English is an additional advantage of the programme).

Based on the analysis of the curriculum and on the results of the interviews with different stakeholders, the experts agree with the statement of the SAR, that the “Study programme achieved study outcomes mapping against sub-programme study outcomes is also well-balanced. Sub-programme achieved results reflect specialisation in English studies, Scandinavian studies or interdisciplinary applied linguistics and business respectively” (SAR, p. 237).

2.2.4.

The bachelor study programme “English, European Languages and Business Studies” envisages the compulsory internship, which is not required by the local legislation but which is an advantage to acquire practical skills. Internship is implemented at the UL and its structural units, state or municipality institutions, private enterprises, as well as non-governmental organisations, including foreign organisations represented in Latvia. International students of the programme also do internships. Students have the opportunity to make use of Erasmus + mobility opportunities for the provision of internship. Following the programme profile and employment perspectives, the students of the programme “English, European Languages and Business Studies” are offered to make internship in the following directions: Use of applied written language, Translation, Executing the duties of a manager’s assistant and other tasks, Teaching foreign languages to various target groups, Editing texts, Text development.

2.2.5.

Not applicable.

2.2.6.

Despite the applied profile of the programme and the intense ties with the labour market, the programme team keeps strong the philological profile and combines it with cultural studies, which is reflected in the students’ research topics, which fully corresponds to the best international practices

and specificities of the sub-programmes presented in the programme. Students develop bachelor's thesis in general and applied linguistics, stylistics, lexicology and terminology, discourse analysis and pragmatics, language acquisition and corpus linguistics. In the literature and cultural fields, the students study anglophone culture and literature, literary history and literary theory, perform analysis in comparative literary studies, film and visual culture studies, postcolonial studies and North American studies.

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

Conclusions:

The content, learning and teaching methodology, provided internship and bachelor theses research areas of the BSP "English, European Languages and Business Studies" fully correspond to the Latvian legislation requirements, programme assessment criteria, requirements of the labour market and best international practices. Only the policy for curricula development could be improved by introducing major/minor programs.

Strengths:

- 1) Good balance between fundamental, philological aspects of the courses and interdisciplinary, applied profile, strong ties with the labour market and relevant up-to-date methodology used in teaching and learning.
- 2) Possibility to study English and also other Scandinavian and other European languages as an additional advantage to increase employability.

Weaknesses:

- 1) Lack of flexibility in curricula development policy.

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.

According to SAR p.255, the study base, informative provision, material technical base and financial base correspond to the specifics of the study programme, implementation conditions, create prerequisites for achievement of the learning outcomes and testify to the possibility of ensuring a quality study process.

Overall, there are 6 professors, 7 associate professors, 8 assistant professors, several lecturers, as well as researchers from the Centre for Applied Linguistics involved in the implementation of the programme.

The UL focuses on close collaboration with external foreign institutions, embassies and funds that are relevant as the languages of those countries are taught in the study programme (English, Italian,

Spanish, German, French, Swedish and others). For example, as stated in the SAR p. 256, to acquire Swedish language and culture, collaboration with Swedish Institute takes place (general support to Swedish language and culture studies); society "Latvia-Sweden" (mutual support in the events of traditional Swedish holidays in Riga and other places of Latvia).

As part of the specific material base needed for the study programme, according to SAR p. 257, specific computer classes are envisaged for conducting various specific courses. Two classrooms are specifically tailored for learning synchronous translation.

Generally, the established resource base is described under Resources and Provision of the study field.

2.3.2.

Not applicable.

2.3.3.

In accordance with the SAR p.258, The tuition fee at the UL for each programme is determined annually, taking into account the planned cost of the study place. The Expert Group believes that the programme, just as all others in the study field, operates under significant financial pressure, with overworked and underpaid staff, and the situation is unsustainable in the long run, but this is not an issue that the administration of the programme or the faculty can solve by themselves, therefore the Expert Group will not consider it to be a flaw in their work. As clarified during the onsite visit and meeting with the management, it is a general issue in the country and has to be tackled on a higher level.

According to SAR p. 260, in the academic year 2021/2022 there were 296 full-time students studying. Based on these numbers, the calculated annual cost per full-time student is 1 587, and the annual total programme cost is 515 920.

According to the data provided in the SAR p.262, the UL possesses sufficient financial resources to implement the study programme and ensure its further development as the total revenue exceeds total expenses by around 130 000.

According to the UL website for the study programme - <https://www.lu.lv/en/admission/study-programmes/bachelors-study-programmes/english-european-languages-and-business-studies/> , the tuition fee differs for EU citizens/EEA/Swiss citizens and their family members as well as long-term residents of EU from other country residents. For EU citizens and aforementioned groups, the tuition fee is 2300 euros per year. For citizens of other countries, the tuition fee is 3050 euros a year.

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

Conclusions:

The UL has established well-equipped resource base for comfortable study process for students, which includes e-study environment, library resources as well as databases of extensive variety. As part of a specially needed resource base for this study programme is computer classes with access rooms tailored for learning synchronous translation. The existing resource base is sufficient for a successful provision of the study process but it has to be noted that the resource base is going to significantly improve with the new premises the university is moving to in the near future. Financially, the study programme is healthy in terms of budget balance, with a positive outlook.

Strengths:

1) Self-take and self-return of the library books;

- 2) Well-established and understandable e-study environment;
- 3) Large variety of accessible databases and platforms for students;
- 4) Balanced budget and financial sustainability of the study programme;
- 5) Access to computer rooms for studies of synchronous translation.

Weaknesses:

None

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

UL provides the study programme with all the necessary tools and resource material, technical as well as informative base for successful implementation of the study programme.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1.

There are three groups of teaching staff at the UL: teaching staff in elected academic positions, teaching staff at acting elected academic positions (acting and visiting lecturers), and instructors. Selection and recruitment of elected academic positions as well as acting academic positions shall be in accordance with the Regulations on Academic and Administrative Positions at the University of Latvia (the UL Senate Decision No. 11 of 31.01.2022). According to the Statute, the following academic positions exist at the University of Latvia: professor, associate professor, assistant professor, senior researcher, lecturer, researcher, assistant, research assistant. The BSP "English, European Languages and Business Studies" is run by the teaching staff whose educational background, knowledge and skills, pedagogical, research and professional experience correspond to the profile, aims and learning outcomes, research areas of the programme. Clause of the section 55(1)(3) of the Law on Higher Education Institutions, which stipulates that "not less than five professors and associate professors altogether, who are elected to academic positions in the relevant higher education institution, shall take part in the implementation of the compulsory part and the limited elective part of academic study programmes" is fulfilled, 5 professors, 7 assoc. professors, 3 assist. professors, 14 lecturers, 2 instructors are involved in the implementation of the BSP. All members of the teaching staff hold Master or PhD degrees, as required by the Latvian legislation and local, University regulations. The representatives of the teaching staff publish both locally and internationally recognised journals, participate in national and international projects, attend international scientific conferences, participate in various seminars, participate in organising and providing further education, participate in various national organisational committees, participate in various international scientific editorial boards, organise international conferences and post-graduate schools, deliver lectures abroad, attend further education programmes in Latvia and abroad, etc. All teaching staff of the study programme have at least a B2 level of English (CEFR). Teaching staff of other foreign language courses have certified proficiency in the respective foreign languages at C2 level.

2.4.2.

The data provided by the UL reveals that there were no significant changes in the staff composition

of the BSP “English, European Languages and Business Studies”. There is a mechanism for replacing the staff: inviting guest lecturers, announcing the open competition and selecting/electing the new staff members, involvement of PhD students in teaching or inviting the programme graduates as lecturers, etc.

2.4.3.

Not applicable.

2.4.4.

The CVs and SAR reveals that the academic staff involved in implementation of the programme “English, European Languages and Business Studies” has professional/practical experience related to the sub-programmes’ profile and/or regularly publishes in peer-reviewed journals indexed in ERIH PLUS, EBSCO, SCOPUS, Web of Science, etc., but there is a lack of international publications, which should be regarded as an area for further improvement as already mentioned in the report (see the Report, 1.4.3).

2.4.5.

There is a strong mechanism developed and implemented for faculty cooperation to promote the improvement and interconnection of the study courses for delivering the bachelor programme “English, European Languages and Business Studies”. Namely, there is jointly developed BSP concept, jointly developed study courses, cooperation with the Faculties of Business, Management and Economics, collaboration with the Departments of Contrastive Linguistics, Translation and Interpreting, Latvian and Baltic Studies, cooperation with the Centre for Applied Linguistics and with the UL Institute of Philosophy and Sociology. According to the SAR, to deepen interdisciplinarity and expand students’ knowledge and competence, the programme embraces study courses delivered by several faculty members (for example, “European Union Institutional and Project Management Discourse”, “Introduction to Applied Linguistics and Digital Humanities”). Programme faculty members also cooperate in research, developing joint projects, writing and publishing joint papers and teaching materials. The published scientific papers are used in the study process.

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

Conclusions:

The bachelor programme “English, European Languages and Business Studies” is run by the teaching staff whose qualification is in full compliance with national and local requirements. There are effective mechanisms for smoothly replacing the teaching staff (if necessary) and for fruitful cooperation with different structural units of the University for ensuring interdisciplinarity in teaching and learning. The teaching staff is actively involved in research, but there is a lack of international publications.

Strengths:

- 1) Sustainability of the teaching staff.
- 2) Interfaculty and interdepartmental cooperation.

Weaknesses:

- 1) Lack of publications in high-ranking international journals published abroad.

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

CVs, SAR, legislative and local University regulations and the information obtained ensure compliance with this requirement.

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

Annex (EELBS compliance with standard.docx) confirms that the study programme complies with Regulations No. 240 of the Cabinet of Ministers as of 1 May 2014 "Regulations on the National Standard for Academic Education" <https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=266187> (Available only in Latvian).

- 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

The study course descriptions are prepared in English and Latvian that can be accessed under Study course descriptions_21_02.docx. Descriptions comply 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 samples (Diploma supplements English ELBS BSP.zip with 3 annexes that differ based on the 3 sub-programmes (1. "English Language" 2. "English-Scandinavian Languages" 3. "European Languages and Business Studies") that are implemented in this study programme. The diploma samples comply 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".

- 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

Head of study field declaration No.26 - 22/93 certifies that the academic staff involved in the implementation of the study programme complies with the requirements specified in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Annex (HEAD OF STUDY FIELD DECLARATION ON COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 55 1-3.docx)

- 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

This is identified in the annex (2023_03_13_ACADEMIC_STAFF_CV_ENG_FINAL8.pdf). It can be concluded that the state language proficiency is compliant with Cabinet Regulation. Nr. 733 "Regulations Regarding the Extent of the Knowledge of the Official Language, the Procedures for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language and the State Fee for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language".

- 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

As this programme has implementation language English, it is required for the teaching staff to have at least B2 level English. The attached documents: 1.

2023_03_13_ACADEMIC_STAFF_CV_ENG_FINAL8.pdf and 2.B2 LEVEL.rar.

- 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 (Studiju līgumi angļu valodā.zip. Annex 2) complies with Cabinet Regulation. 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

UL has provided confirmation that students will be provided with opportunities to continue their education in another higher education institution if the implementation of the study programme is terminated. The agreements are specified in the annexes under “Agreements in case of SP discontinuation”. It is specified that in case of discontinuation of this study programme, students are to be able to continue their studies at Daugavpils University in study programme Bachelor's study programme Philology (English Philology).

- 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: Fully compliant

UL has provided confirmation that students are guaranteed compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the study programme's licence is revoked. It is ensured based on the “Refund and Compensation Policy Statement” document added to the annexes pursuant to paragraph 13.4 of the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 795 “Regulations Regarding Licensing of Study Programmes”.

- 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: Fully compliant

The Council Decision on the changes to the Bachelor's study programme “English Philology” and bachelor's study programme “Modern Languages and Business Studies”. The decision decides to consolidate and update the content of study courses and ensure the transition to a three-year programme, thereby implementing the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 27 of 09.01.2018 on “Provisions for the Implementation of the First and Second Call for Proposals of the Specific Objective 8.2.1 “To Reduce Fragmentation of Study Programmes and Strengthen Resource Sharing” of the Operational Programme “Growth and Employment”, and thus to discontinue the courses in the English-English and English-Scandinavian sub-programmes of the BSP “English Philology” (specified in the annex - “Council decision on programme changes 90. docx).

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: Fully compliant

Study programme fully complies with regulatory enactments.

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

The BSP “English, European Languages and Business Studies” with three sub-programmes - “English

Language", "English-Scandinavian Languages" and "European Languages and Business Studies" - is assessed as excellent based on the desk study of the documentation provided, the interviews with different internal and external stakeholders and examining the infrastructure during the onsite visit. All three sub-programmes are interrelated, their concept and content, teaching and assessment methodology, teaching staff qualification and competencies (their education, pedagogical, research and professional experience), student services and infrastructure equally ensure high quality teaching and learning. The programme structure supports employability and an interdisciplinary profile also required on the national and international labour market.

The BSP "English, European Languages and Business Studies" with three sub-programmes - "English Language", "English-Scandinavian Languages" and "European Languages and Business Studies" - can be implemented in English in the following forms: full time studies (3 years), part time extramural studies (4 years) in the University buildings located in Riga.

The expert group identified the following strengths and weaknesses (The relevant recommendations are presented below in the special section).

Strengths:

- > Demand on the graduates of the study programme on the job market.
- > Attractive study programme for international degree-seeking students.
- > Good balance between fundamental, philological aspects of the courses and interdisciplinary, applied profile, strong ties with the labour market and relevant up-to-date methodology used in teaching and learning.
- > Possibility to study English and also other Scandinavian and other European languages is an additional advantage to increase employability.
- > Self-take and self-return of the library books.
- > Well-established and understandable e-study environment.
- > Large variety of accessible databases and platforms for students.
- > Balanced budget and financial sustainability of the study programme.
- > Access to computer rooms for studies of synchronous translation.
- > Sustainability of the teaching staff.
- > Interfaculty and interdepartmental cooperation.

Weaknesses:

- > Lack of flexibility in curricula development policy.
- > Lack of publications in high-ranking international journals published abroad.
- > Noticeable student drop-out rates.

The BSP "English, European Languages and Business Studies" with three sub-programmes - "English Language", "English-Scandinavian Languages" and "European Languages and Business Studies" - fulfils the requirements of the Latvian higher education and quality assurance legislation, as well as the local, University and Faculty regulations. There are no deficiencies identified by the expert group which cannot be eliminated during the 2-year accreditation period. And there are no serious weaknesses which may prevent fulfilling the requirements of the accreditation standards. Therefore, the bachelor's study programme "English, European Languages and Business Studies" with three sub-programmes - "English Language", "English-Scandinavian Languages" and "European Languages and Business Studies" - is assessed by the expert group as excellent.

Evaluation of the study programme "English, European Languages and Business Studies"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Excellent

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "English, European Languages and Business Studies"

Short-term recommendations

Long-term recommendations

- | |
|--|
| 1) Special measures should be taken for further development of the teaching staff capacity and strengthening the supporting mechanisms (including financial incentives) for publishing in highly ranked international journals published abroad. |
| 2) Curricula development policy should be updated to offer to the students the flexible combination of major and minor programmes/sub-programmes. |
| 3) The University/Faculty should analyse and address the high drop-out rates of the students. |

II - "East-West Intercultural Studies" ASSESSMENT

II - "East-West Intercultural Studies" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1.

The overall standard of the study field is to provide graduates with a sufficient knowledge of the cultures and societies they specialise in as well as sufficient linguistic competence that makes them able to work as professionals in the field. Although this is also acknowledged in the SAR (p.109 and elsewhere), the East-West Intercultural Studies programme does not do that, as such linguistic competence is not a requirement for the graduates. Moreover, during the meeting with the teaching staff the experts were presented with a spurious quotation of Ibn Rushd stating that the study of foreign languages is appropriate for slaves only. The expert team strongly condemns this attitude, which, it fears, is also being imparted to the students of this programme during the study process. Experts were told during the meeting that being familiar with the cultural and behavioural norms of the studied countries is enough for conducting business there – the knowledge of these norms is certainly something that a specialist must have, but it is clearly insufficient for a professional, if not accompanied by linguistic competence. One of the modules is Baltic Region and Languages and is obviously designed for foreign students. In fact, the module consists only of 3 subjects: Latvian language, Cultural History of Baltic States and Literature, Music and Audiovisual Media of the Baltics. In experts' opinion Graduates will not be prepared for work in diplomacy, intercultural projects and will not get academic knowledge. Name of the module should be specified to the Baltic region and Latvian language. Broad study programmes could be interesting for students, but does not help to prepare highly skilled professionals who know the language, understand the region, specific countries culturally, historically, economically and politically fully, not just on a basic level. The Expert Group therefore has to conclude that among the assessed programmes, this one stands out as not delivering a skillset comparable to all other assessed programmes.

The compliance of the academic bachelor's study programme East-West Intercultural Studies is not explicitly revealed by the self-assessment report, thus it might be only assumed that the above

mentioned study programme partially complies with the study field Language and Culture Studies, Mother Tongue Studies, and Language Programmes, since the aim of the study field is to maintain, develop and offer qualitative and versatile as well as globally competitive and research-based studies in the humanities in various languages and cultures, thus ensuring the stability of the level of humanitarian intelligence and Latvian language as well as cultural environment in the present and future Latvian society, to prepare specialists of high academic and scientific qualification in compliance with the long-term goals of the Latvian economy, socio-political strategy, and other goals (SAR, p.17) and the reported study programme's goal is to deliver a body of knowledge, skills and competence in line with the knowledge, skills and competences established for the 6th level of the Latvian Qualifications Framework, by preparing locally and internationally competitive specialists with an academically oriented and empirically consolidated understanding of the process of global civilization and their interactions. This is evident that the programme's aim only partially complies with the above-mentioned study field aim in a way of developing professionalism in East-West intercultural relations and enhancing research competence since the linguistic competence provided by the programme is questionable

2.1.2.

The title of the programme partially complies with the defined scientific study field title since it does not reflect the language aspect but rather emphasises the cultural aspect. The degree- Bachelor's Degree of Humanities in Language Studies and Programmes - to be awarded only partially complies with the regulations (No.240 Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia Regulations Corresponding to National Academic Education Standard). The study programme code 43227 does not fully comply with the regulations No.322 of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia Regulations Corresponding to the Classification of Latvian Education (43 - academic education, bachelor's degree; 227 - language studies and programmes) since the reported programme's content does not fully implement the language studies, namely, it does not provide its graduates with adequate linguistic competence. Out of 120 credits, only 18 are dedicated to language courses, compared to 36 cr in the Asian Studies BSP or even 44 cr in some parts of the Philology BSP. The report indicates and collected information during the on-site visit at UL confirms that the programme design complies with the requirements for the Bachelor's level duration - 3 years (6 semesters of studies), providing for the acquisition of 40 CP per year. The programme anticipates implementation in Latvian and English that gives a unique possibility for students of Western and Eastern descent a mutually transparent interpretation of the European and Asian worldviews, preparing them for a broad and flexible range of job prospects in the diplomatic service, business, etc. (SAR, p.306)

The programme claims to be interdisciplinary, but, as explained in more detail in the content section below, what it has achieved is only incoherent eclecticism. In an interdisciplinary programme, the components should be clearly linked and each of them should have a function in the overall structure. Here, it is unfortunately not the case. The course names are vague and partially overlapping (f.ex. "Intercultural Studies in Literature" and "Values and Ideas of Asian and European Culture and Literature in the Comparative Perspective") and the expert group cannot speculate which areas and disciplines are covered, which not.

Admission requirements are clearly reflected in the UL Admission Requirements and subordinate regulations that determine the procedures for the given academic year. The admission criteria, the formula for calculating the admission score and the admission procedure is published on the UL portal www.lu.lv/gribustudet.

The degree to be awarded to the graduates of this programme is Bachelor's Degree of Humanities in Language Studies and Programmes - according to the regulations (No.240 Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia Regulations Corresponding to National Academic Education Standard). However, the programme is not really a programme in language studies, as professional linguistic competence is not attained. It is also quite unclear in what capacity the graduates of this programme might be

employed. Without the necessary language skills, they are unqualified to serve as experts of the studied country or region, project managers or in some other assisting capacity to businesspeople or foreign policy professionals; they are also not prepared by the programme to start businesses dealing with Asian countries or acting as diplomats there, even though they may have such aspirations. The competence equivalent of the learning outcomes on offer is something like a specialist in Latvian affairs who only knows Russian and primarily has to rely on Russian sources. If this programme were a minor subject offered to journalists, tourism professionals or future foreign policy experts, it might have a positive role, but as a standalone study programme it is not viable.

2.1.3.

According to the SAR p.302-303, since the issuance of the licence on 01/06/2021, several changes have been made in the reported programme in accordance with the previous recommendations of Experts as well as taking into consideration the fact that other field programmes were changed as well which affected the courses that were taught in joint groups with other programmes. Although it is not mentioned in the SAR, it can be seen that the Experts' recommendation from the licensing procedure has been taken into account and the awarded degree is changed from Bachelor of Humanities in Language Studies to Bachelor's Degree of Humanities in Language Studies and Programmes and now is in compliance with the Regulations No.240 of the Cabinet of Ministers Regulations on the National Standard for Academic Education.

Some qualitative changes have been made to the mandatory (A) part where the reported programme's study plan was complemented by the study course Basics of the Latvian Scientific Language and Terminology, which is intended for students who have acquired secondary education in Latvia, and is delivered in parallel with the course Latvian Language for Beginners I, which is intended for international students. As the most recognised change the introduction of internship should have been noted. It would definitely strengthen the link between the reported programme and the development of career skills for students. In accordance with the recommendations of Experts in the licensing procedure, symmetry in the mandatory (A) part was created, balancing courses on European and Asian topics to approximately similar levels (SAR p.302-303).

Part B has been extended that gives the students more free choice and flexibility in choosing the study courses that fit their interests.

The changes made are noteworthy and appreciated.

2.1.4.

During our discussions with potential employers, notably the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the main strength of University of Latvia graduates that was stressed repeatedly was their high linguistic competence and ability to orient themselves in the social structures of the area they study. This characterises the Asian Studies programme offered by the same faculty. It is not likely, however, that the graduates of the East-West Intercultural Studies programme will provide its graduates with a comparable skillset. More probably it might even undermine the trust the labour market currently has in the competence of University of Latvia graduates.

As to the social justifications, the expert group is of the opinion that mixing international students interested in Latvian and European Studies with students studying Asian languages and cultures should be relegated to extracurricular activities, but joining them together in one programme is unnecessary, as it makes it even more eclectic and academically messy.

2.1.5.

Not applicable.

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

Conclusions:

Although the BSP East-West Intercultural Studies formally seems to comply with the requirements set by the Latvian Law and other by-side legislation, it does not provide its graduates with the competences necessary to work in the field. The Expert Group recommends that certain courses in the programme be merged as electives into the Asian Studies programme, or combined into a 10-15 credit module to be offered within the Asian Studies programme, or possibly even offered as a minor subject to students of other disciplines such as international relations, business and so on.

Strengths:

1) The programme administration has made efforts to develop the programme on the basis of legal requirements, including the implementation of important changes to bring the programme into formal compliance with the Regulations No.240 of the Cabinet of Ministers Regulations on the National Standard for Academic Education.

Weaknesses:

1) The programme does not provide its graduates with a skill set necessary for working as professionals in the field thus not complying with the aims of the study field and the Paragraph 6 in the Regulations on the Classification of Latvian Education (<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/291524-noteikumi-par-latvijas-izglitiba-klasifikaciju>)

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1.

Formally study programme East-West Intercultural Studies complies with minimum requirements of the national academic education standard (Regulations No. 240 of the Cabinet of Ministers as of 1 May 2014 "Regulations on the National Standard for Academic Education" (<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/266187-noteikumi-par-valsts-akademiskas-izglitiba-standartu>)). Based on a full-time study plan the Expert Group can verify that the study programme complies with the Regulations of the University of Latvia on Study and Continuing Education Programmes and consist of 120 CP. The content of the study programme consists of three parts: (1) the compulsory part (consists of 64 CP), which includes "Bachelor Paper" (10 CP) and "Civil and Environment Protection" courses (2 CP), (2) the restricted elective part that consists of 52 CP and (3) elective part, that consists of 4 CP. The study programme include internship as well. The elective part of the study programme also includes the course "Latvian language for beginner", which is compulsory for foreign students.

However, despite the compliance of the programme with formal regulations, it is not academically valid. The assertion, found in the SAR, that the programme is "in line with academic standards and global trends in the field and with the specifics of the respective modules" (p. 304) is most certainly incorrect. The content of the study programme does not meet the needs of the labour market and is insufficient as a preparation for a career in research. The list of taught courses consists of introductions to everything the staff can teach, which do not seem to be integrated in a systematic manner. There is nothing on the list concerning the theory of intercultural studies - no cultural theory, no anthropology, no cultural semiotics. The only course on "Intercultural communication" is taught by a linguist specialising in language pedagogy. Some courses, such as "Contemporary European Lifestyle" (2 CP) seem quite vague, others, such as "Religious Paradigm of Regional Cultures: Sacred Texts and Hermeneutics" (4 CP), comparatively specific; courses such as

“Multilingualism and Multiculturalism” and “Intercultural Communication” give 4 credit points each, and the same amount is allocated to “Culture, Literature and Art of East Asia”, which should comprise much more material. There is a course on “The Connections and Relations Between Europe and the Middle East in Science and Law” (2 CP), but none in philosophy or the arts, for example. It is commendable that courses on the societies of various regions also contain anthropological aspects and so on, but this does not compensate for the absence of an introduction to anthropology as an academic discipline. There is a 4 CP course about the European Union, but only one 2 CP course on the politics of the Arab world (nothing on East Asia). Economics of Asian countries is also not studied, despite the claim that the graduates would be able to work for businesses. The main problem, however, is the small amount of language courses, which is probably sufficient for attaining level A2, but not more, and it is in theory also possible to graduate as an “East-West” specialist without studying any Asian language at all, which is contrary to the principles acknowledged in the SAR (p.109 and elsewhere) that state that sufficient linguistic competence is mandatory for working in this area. There are also courses such as “Introduction to Asian Linguistics and Translation Theory” and “Asian literature and culture I” (sic), which seem to imply that the programme suggests a unified concept of “Asia” comparable to “Europe”, although the cultural regions of Asia differ possibly more from each other than some of those regions from Europe in some respects. Although the Expert Group has no reason to doubt the quality of each of these, and other courses in particular, the Expert Group do not see how they make up a systematic body of knowledge that could be practically applied.

2.2.2.

Not applicable.

2.2.3.

The academic staff the Expert Group discussed with are competent instructors and the Expert Group is confident that the level of teaching quality is, for most courses, comparable to that of all other assessed programmes. The Expert Group is aware that the several instructors in the programme, notably Ingrida Kleihnofa, have developed innovative teaching methods that should be propagated more widely on the international level. However, the programme also relies on a relatively large number of courses taught by instructors not very closely involved with the programme, and the Expert Group was unable to independently verify that the level of teaching quality is equal across the programme. The only student of this programme we met has been in Korea for a year and therefore unable to comment on the quality of teaching.

2.2.4.

According to the study plan, there is an internship foreseen in the Bachelor's study programme East-West Intercultural Studies in Mandatory part (A) (2CP) during the 4th semester. According to the SAR (p.317-318.) the aim of internship is to enhance theoretical and practical knowledge in the context of Asian languages, communication culture and cultural interactions, to provide students with the opportunity to apply the acquired theoretical knowledge of different regions of Asia, their languages and cultures by performing work duties in a real workplace under the supervision of a specialist and summarising the acquired information in a scientific study, as well as to get acquainted with projects, offers and foreign partnerships of a given non-governmental organisation, state, municipality or enterprise in the given field. In conformity with the order of the UL Rector on the organisation of internships, and by the instruction of the Dean, a teaching staff member - UL Placement Supervisor - is approved to supervise the internship in accordance with the study programme aims and achievable learning outcomes. At the placement site, the trainee is assigned a Site Placement Supervisor from the organisation, institution or company, who ensures that the placement is run properly (SARS, p. 318). The programme administrator helps students to find the

placement, but students may find the placement themselves as well. Although the SAR claims that there are cooperation agreements signed with different organisations concerning the students' placement, no specific information/criteria are provided concerning the selection of organisations that would support the provision of the internship. The internship conditions are the same for students with Latvian and English language instruction and the internship course must be taken by all without having a specific procedure concerning the foreign students. The previously mentioned confirms that the internship complies with the regulatory enactments, but still improvements would be needed concerning the selection of the internship providers and procedure concerning the foreign students. Since the reported programme is a new one (licensed on 01/06/2021), there is still no detailed information on the outcomes of internship available. The students of this programme are also provided with opportunities to spend time in an Asian country, but this is not implemented reasonably. For example, the Expert Group talked via zoom with a student who is currently in Korea, but has never studied Korean nor intends to. Instead, she continues to attend remotely the Chinese classes of the University of Latvia, even though these now exceed her graduation requirements. It would have been much more rational to send this student to China and give the exchange place in Korea to someone who already knows Korean.

2.2.5.

Not applicable.

2.2.6.

Not applicable (new programme).

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

Conclusions:

The Expert Group commends the implementation of the internship programme, even though there is room for improvement, and is puzzled about the distribution of exchange places in Asian countries.

Strengths:

1) The foreseen internship in the Bachelor's programme East-West Intercultural Studies is a noteworthy improvement of the study programme since it would enhance theoretical and practical knowledge in the context of Asian languages, communication culture and cultural interactions, to provide students with the opportunity to apply the acquired theoretical knowledge of different regions of Asia, their languages and cultures by performing work duties in a real workplace.

Weaknesses:

- 1) No specific criteria designed for the selection of organisations that would support the provision of the internship.
- 2) No specific procedure available concerning the internship of foreign students although the SAR states that the internship conditions are the same for students with Latvian and English language instruction.
- 3) Exchange possibilities with Asian countries seem to be distributed randomly, taking valuable exchange places away from students who actually need them.

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 library resources of the University of Latvia are adequate for the studies related to this programme on the BA level, and the students also have access to the collections of the National Library of Latvia, which has more extensive holdings relevant to the content of the programme. Students also have access to up-to-date information technology resources.

2.3.2.

Not applicable.

2.3.3.

According to the SAR (p. 320-21), there are no state-funded study places in the programme. The tuition fee, set at 2200 euros for EU and 2700 euros for foreign students, and is supposed to break even when the minimal student number of 25 is reached. Currently, the number of students is 21, which means that the programme is, at the moment, economically unfeasible and needs investments from other programmes. The expert team finds the situation to be unjustifiable, especially given the low overall quality of the programme.

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

Conclusions:

Based on the desk study, interviews and after visiting the faculty premises, the Experts Group concluded, that the library resources, material and technical provision of BSP "East-West Intercultural Studies" complies with the requirements of the accreditation standards and are in line with the planned learning outcomes, but implementation of the programme is not economically feasible and needs investments from other programmes, which is unjustifiable taking into account the deficiencies identified during the assessment of the programme content.

Strengths:

None.

Weaknesses:

- 1) The programme is an additional economic burden on other programmes, which already operate under considerable financial strain.
- 2) The programme takes much-needed teaching preparation and research time away from the teaching staff involved in it.

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: Partially compliant

The programme has not reached the number of students that would make it economically sustainable. As to library and IT resources, the situation is similar to that of other programmes.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1.

There are three groups of teaching staff at the UL: teaching staff in elected academic positions, teaching staff at acting elected academic positions (acting and visiting lecturers), and instructors. Selection and recruitment of elected academic positions as well as acting academic positions shall be in accordance with the Regulations on Academic and Administrative Positions at the University of Latvia (the UL Senate Decision No. 11 of 31.01.2022). According to the Statute, the following academic positions exist at the University of Latvia: professor, associate professor, assistant professor, senior researcher, lecturer, researcher, assistant, research assistant. There is no permanent teaching staff involved solely in the implementation of this programme, so there is no separate qualifications issue that has not been covered by the assessment of other programmes. The competence of the teaching staff of the Asian Studies BSP, who are bearing the main burden of this programme, has been assessed in the relevant section. The only person responsible for the theory of intercultural communication, Vita Kalnberzina, is a specialist in English language teaching and has no publications in the discipline. Cultural theory is not taught in any of the courses in any other form. Clause of the section 55(1)(3) of the Law on Higher Education Institutions, which stipulates that “not less than five professors and associate professors altogether, who are elected to academic positions in the relevant higher education institution, shall take part in the implementation of the compulsory part and the limited elective part of academic study programmes” is fulfilled (in the study programme are involved professors Jānis Priede, Leons Taivans, Kaspars Kļaviņš and Gunta Ločmele, as well as assistant professors Agita Baltgalve and Agnese Haijima). Other professors and associate professors of the Faculty of Humanities are also involved in teaching certain courses. All teaching staff of the study programme have at least a B2 level of English (CEFR).

2.4.2.

Some changes have been made according to the recommendations of the licensing expert team, but these have not improved the overall quality of the programme. If anything, the introduction of certain courses, taught in other programmes, have further disbalanced the structure: the SAR lists a number of courses on European and Asian topics which allegedly create a balance, but they are completely different in their topics, level of specificity and volume, and seem fairly random.

2.4.3.

Not applicable.

2.4.4.

Although the staff has been publishing in SCOPUS-indexed outlets, the vast majority of these publications have appeared in the publications of the University of Latvia and are mostly relevant to the content of the study programmes they primarily work for (i.e. in the majority of cases, the Asian Studies programmes). For example, the director of the programme, Prof. Kļaviņš, has a long

bibliography of predominantly short articles of 5-10 pages on a vast, but eclectic range of topics; out of 19 listed publications of the last 6 years, only 3 have been published in volumes by academic publishing houses outside Latvia. His work ranges from Livonian landscapes to Korean spirituality, the reception of Islam in Latvia to diet in Eastern medicine, but a common core of research interests is hard to identify. Ms Ingrida Kleinhofa, probably the most overworked member of the staff of all assessed programmes, has only published one article outside her home university outlets, in an Estonian publication which is not recognized by the Estonian Research Information System as an internationally peer-reviewed academic publication. That said, the expert team has no doubts about her competence as an instructor and researcher, but is worried about her teaching load, which has also caused the delay in her completion of doctoral studies. NB! Indicating “doctoral candidate” in the CV as an academic degree is incorrect.

Most other instructors seem to be teaching courses in specific areas or are having their courses, designated for other programmes, included in the course list of this BSP.

2.4.5.

The teaching staff is working in close cooperation with each other, all instructors we talked to have had ample opportunity to provide input toward the development of the programme both formally and informally. The organisation of studies takes into account the duties and responsibilities participating instructors have to other programmes.

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

Conclusions:

Formally, the teaching staff is compliant with the requirements of the law. The research output of the teaching staff is an area of concern, and certain key aspects of the interdisciplinary whole this programme purportedly represents are either covered by non-specialists or not covered at all.

Strengths:

None.

Weaknesses:

- 1) The publication record of the instructors involved in this programme is weak even compared to other programmes, which also typically rely on home university publication outlets.
- 2) Participation in this programme unnecessarily increases the workload of the involved staff.

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 programme had no programme-specific elected personnel, but made use of the instructors of other programmes. All the instructors are primarily working for other programmes. Although they formally comply with the publication requirements, nearly all publications appear in the publications of their home university. The only person teaching “intercultural communication”, Vita Kalnberzina, has a very weak research profile with no publications in this particular area.

2.5. Assessment of the Compliance

Requirements

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

Assessment of compliance: Non-compliant

The SAR and related documentation claim that the study programme complies with Regulations No. 240 of the Cabinet of Ministers as of 1 May 2014 "Regulations on the National Standard for Academic Education" <https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=266187>.

However, it is the opinion of the Expert Group that the programme is not in compliance with Regulations No 240 § 4, as it does not provide its graduates with adequate linguistic competence. Out of 120 credits, only 18 are dedicated to language courses, compared to 36 cr in the Asian Studies BSP or even 44 cr in some parts of the Philology BSP. Given that the languages taught are studied without any previous knowledge, this amount is clearly insufficient for preparing professionals.

- 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 - 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 study course descriptions are prepared in English and Latvian that can be accessed under Study course descriptions_21_02.docx. Descriptions comply with regulations set forth in Law on Higher Education Institutions.

- 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 samples can be found on Diploma_and_supplement_English_E-W-BSP.docx in Latvian as well as English and they comply 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".

- 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 academic staff complies with the requirements set in Law on Higher Education Institutions. Head of study field declaration No.26 - 22/93 COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 55 1-3.docx)

- 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

This is identified in the annex (2023_03_13_ACADEMIC_STAFF_CV_ENG_FINAL8.pdf). It can be concluded that the state language proficiency is compliant with Cabinet Regulation. Nr. 733 "Regulations Regarding the Extent of the Knowledge of the Official Language, the Procedures for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language and the State Fee for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language".

- 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

This is identified in the annex (2023_03_13_ACADEMIC_STAFF_CV_ENG_FINAL8.pdf) by self-assessment.

- 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 (Studiju līgumi angļu valodā.zip. Annex 2) complies with Cabinet Regulation. 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: Partially compliant

The students could be transferred to the Asian Studies BA programme. Although there is an agreement signed between the UL and Daugavpils University (DU) (Annex), where paragraph 1.2 states the continuation of the implementation of the BSP East-West Intercultural Studies in the DU BSP Philology (Russian Philology) (43226), this does not seem plausible since the students only have possibility to acquire the knowledge, skills and

competencies in Russian philology, not issues related to Chinese, Korean, etc.

- 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: Fully compliant

UL 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. It is ensured based on the "Refund and Compensation Policy Statement" document added to the annexes pursuant to paragraph 13.4 of the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 795 "Regulations Regarding Licensing of Study Programmes".

- 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

The programme is not in full compliance with Regulations No 240 § 4, as it does not provide its graduates with adequate linguistic competence for them to work in the field. The primary teaching staff is formally compliant with the regulations (the UL Senate Decision No. 11 of 31.01.2022), but their research profiles are unusually weak also in comparison with other evaluated programmes.

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

Although formally partially compliant with most legal and university regulations, the programme is academically inviable and does not provide its graduates with a sufficient skill set for working as professionals in the field as required by the Paragraph 6 in the Regulations on the Classification of Latvian Education. It moreover does not qualify them for continuing their studies in the MA programme of Asian Studies, unless they have acquired the necessary linguistic skills on their own. The course list is a relatively random assembly of courses with no solid and unifying disciplinary basis, the claim that its graduates would be competent enough to work in the field with just knowing the rules of behaviour of Asian societies is invalid. The publication record of the instructors involved in this programme is weak compared to other programmes. Moreover, the programme has not reached a student number sufficient for financial feasibility. While the Expert Group understands that this takes time, the overall quality of the programme is too weak to justify continued investment in it. The Expert Group recommends that the few courses developed solely for this programme would be integrated as cross-disciplinary electives into the Asian Studies programmes and the students transferred to the BSP of Asian Studies or other relevant programmes so that their

currently completed courses could replace a proportion of their electives, and the programme in its present shape would be terminated.

Besides all above mentioned, there is a threat concerning the students' rights in the case of termination of the reported programme. Although there is an agreement signed between UL and Daugavpils University (Annex), where paragraph 1.2 states the continuation of the implementation of the BSP East-West Intercultural Studies in the DU BSP Philology (Russian Philology) (43226), this does not seem plausible since the students only have possibility to acquire the knowledge, skills and competencies in Russian philology, not issues related to Chinese, Korean, etc. Also the location is a concern, that would definitely put the students at a disadvantage and might force them to discontinue their studies.

Here are the strengths and weaknesses identified during the assessment:

Strengths:

- > The programme administration has made efforts to develop the programme on the basis of legal requirements, including the implementation of important changes to bring the programme into formal compliance with the Regulations No.240 of the Cabinet of Ministers Regulations on the National Standard for Academic Education.
- > The foreseen internship in the Bachelor's programme East-West Intercultural Studies is a noteworthy improvement of the study programme since it would enhance theoretical and practical knowledge in the context of Asian languages, communication culture and cultural interactions, to provide students with the opportunity to apply the acquired theoretical knowledge of different regions of Asia, their languages and cultures by performing work duties in a real workplace.

Weaknesses:

- > The programme does not provide its graduates with a skill set necessary for working as professionals in the field thus not complying with the aims of the study field and the Paragraph 6 in the Regulations on the Classification of Latvian Education (<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/291524-noteikumi-par-latvijas-izglitiba-klasifikaciju>) (for the issues identified in the content of the programme, see the recommendations provided below).
- > No specific criteria designed for the selection of organisations that would support the provision of the internship.
- > No specific procedure available concerning the internship of foreign students although the SAR states that the internship conditions are the same for students with Latvian and English language instruction.
- > Exchange possibilities with Asian countries seem to be distributed randomly, taking valuable exchange places away from students who actually need them.
- > The publication record of the instructors involved in this programme is weak even compared to other programmes, which also typically rely on home university publication outlets.
- > The programme takes much-needed teaching preparation and research time away from the teaching staff involved in it.
- > Participation in this programme unnecessarily increases the workload of the involved staff.

The Experts Group concluded that the BSP "East-West Intercultural Studies" doesn't fulfil the requirements of the accreditation standards in terms of the content, human and financial resources. Identified deficiencies cannot be eliminated during the 2-year accreditation period. Therefore, the Expert Group suggests termination of the programme.

Evaluation of the study programme "East-West Intercultural Studies"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Poor

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "East-West Intercultural Studies"

Short-term recommendations

The Expert Group doesn't offer any short-term recommendations, as the shortcomings identified during the assessment cannot be eliminated in a 2-year period.

Long-term recommendations

- 1) The programme should be terminated and students transferred to other programmes where possible. New students should not be accepted.
- 2) If, for whatever reasons, recommendation 1 is ignored, then the programme content and structure should be given a complete conceptual overhaul in order for it to be compatible with international academic standards, to ensure compliance with the aims of the study field as required by the Latvian legislation and achievement of the proper learning outcomes as required by the labour market.
- 3) Instruction of the specific languages, with sufficient learning outcomes should be added to the programme as a compulsory element in a volume comparable to other programmes of the study field, as it is impossible to study the culture of any country without proper knowledge of its language/languages and the current volumes are too low even for the acquisition of the very basics.
- 4) Courses on cultural theory (in particular, cultural semiotics and anthropology) should be included in the curriculum, taught by specialists in those areas.
- 5) Irrelevant courses should be scrapped from the programme and replaced by missing courses, such as introductions to the political and economic life of all the studied regions.
- 6) The volume and number of credit points given for each course should be balanced with its significance for the overall learning outcomes.
- 7) The combination of foreign students studying Latvian or European cultures and Latvian students studying Middle Eastern and Asian cultures should be ended, while joint extracurricular activities should be organised and promoted.
- 8) Specific criteria for selection of the organisations supporting the provision of the internship should be developed.
- 9) The specific procedure for internship of foreign students should be developed.
- 10) Exchange Possibilities with Asian countries should be provided in a more systematic way, taking into consideration the real needs of the students; students should only be sent to countries, the language of which they have previously studied.
- 11) No financial resources should be allocated from the revenue of other programmes.
- 12) More time should be allocated to the teaching staff for teaching preparation and research.
- 13) The workload of the teaching staff should be balanced.

14) The teaching staff should publish in international peer-reviewed journals rather than publications of the University of Latvia and conference volumes.

II - "Philology" ASSESSMENT

II - "Philology" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1.

The academic bachelor study programme "Philology" complies with indicators, conditions and criteria of the study field of "Language and Culture Studies, Mother Tongue Studies, and Language Programmes". The length of the implementation of the study programme, which is 3 years for full-time, is evaluated as sufficient for acquiring the necessary skills and way of thinking to enter the labour market.

2.1.2.

According to the SAR p.330, the title of the study programme is "Philology" in the study field of "Language and Culture Studies, Mother Tongue Studies, and Language Programmes" with education classification code 43227 with the last 3 numbers (227) standing for language studies and programmes according to the classification of Latvian education which can be accessed here: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/291524-noteikumi-par-latvijas-izglitibas-klasifikaciju>. There is no qualification given after graduating as it is an academic bachelor study programme.

The programme is formed of five sub-programmes for students to specialise in philology of their specific interest. According to SAR p.330, the five sub-programmes are 1. Classical Philology; 2. German Philology; 3. French philology; 4. Russian philology and 5. Finno-Ugric Studies. As stated in the SAR p. 330, the tasks of the sub-programmes slightly differ based on the specificities of each of the sub-programmes.

According to the SAR p.330, the common aim of the programme is to provide academic, up-to-date basic general knowledge in the field of linguistics and literary studies, philology, and to offer specialisation in a specific language and culture environment, as well as in their relation to other languages and cultural phenomena, in line with the long-term goals of the Latvian economy and socio-political strategy. However, the aim of each of the sub-programmes differ and are indicated below as also stated in the SAR p.330:

The aim of the "Classical Philology" sub-programme is to provide, in addition to basic knowledge of philology, linguistics and literary studies, a specialisation in classical philology - Ancient Greek and Latin, and Antique cultural background, especially literature.

The aim of the "German Philology" sub-programme is to provide, in addition to basic knowledge in philology, linguistics and literary studies, specialisation in German philology - linguistics, literary studies and background/cultural studies, with additional focus on the development of linguistic competence in an interlingual context and in a desired direction for the Latvian economy.

The aim of the "French Philology" sub-programme is to provide, in addition to basic knowledge in philology, linguistics and literary studies, a specialisation in French philology - the French language and the Francophone cultural environment, with particular emphasis on the interaction of French with other Romance languages (Italian and Spanish).

The aim of the "Russian Philology" sub-programme is to provide, in addition to basic knowledge in philology, linguistics and literary studies, academic, up-to-date general basic knowledge in Russian philology and linguistics and literary studies, and to offer specialisation in Russian and Slavic

linguistic and cultural environment; to train highly qualified, competitive specialists in the field of Russian philology.

The aim of the “Finno-Ugric Studies” sub-programme is to offer, in addition to basic knowledge in philology, linguistics and literary studies, a specialisation in Finno-Ugric studies - in the Estonian and/or Finnish language and cultural environment, as well as in their relation to other languages and cultural phenomena.

According to the information provided in the SAR pp.332-333, the admission requirements of this programme differ based on the sub-programme. Generally, the implementation languages of the programme are Latvian and/or English, so either way, the general requirement for students that wish to join either of the sub-programmes is English at least on B2 level and secondary education. Other specificities of admission requirements differ based on the sub-programme chosen to study. For the “German philology” programme, admission requirements in addition to English language are German language skills at B2 level. For “Russian philology” it is a requirement to know Russian at B2 level. However, on the contrary, during the onsite visit students indicated that for “Finno-Ugric Studies” they are not required to have prior knowledge beforehand when they are starting their studies.

After successful completion of the studies, students are awarded with Bachelor’s Degree of Humanities in Language Studies and Programmes. According to the SAR p.332, the study programme, which is a full-time study programme with 120 CP to be gathered during the study process of 3 years. The title, code, degree to be obtained of the study programme, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation as well as the implementation language, are reasonable and justified.

2.1.3.

According to the SAR p.334, no changes have been made in the parameters of the study programme “Philology” since it was licensed on 9th of June in 2021. The five sub-programmes that are a part of the study programme of “Philology” correspond to the subject field of linguistics and literary studies and the study field of philology.

2.1.4.

According to the information on SAR p. 339, the degree programme is well founded in economic and social terms. The consolidation of the five bachelor's degree programmes helped to maintain high-demand sub-programmes, avoid fragmentation, increase the efficiency of the study process, and add interdisciplinarity through common courses by giving students a broader perspective before they enter the sub-programmes. Based on the data provided at SAR and evidence gathered at the site meetings, the Expert Group is confident that the programme is meeting the needs of the labour market. Employers confirmed the growing demand for philology specialists. Graduates of five former bachelor's degree programs (the BSP Philology has been licensed since 2021, therefore no graduates) are employed in state and local government institutions, foreign ministries, national embassies, media companies and publishing houses, translation agencies, libraries, museums, schools, language courses (SAR p. 339). However, the SAR does not provide data on the percentage of employed graduates, graduates developing their own businesses, or those who continue their studies at Master's level.

The total number of students as of Oct. 01, 2021, was sufficient, despite the lack of ratio between sub-programmes. The latest admission figures show a sharp decline (70 students in 2022/2023 compared to 123 in the previous year), with the sub-programme of Finno-Ugric Studies being the main focus (a fourfold decline). However, in the French Philology and Russian Philology sub-programmes, state-funded seats were filled. According to SAR p. 340 and student statistics in the appendices, the programme features a moderate dropout rate (19,4 percent (103 to 83 students).

The analysis of the reasons for dropout presented by the programme management is commendable.

2.1.5.

Not applicable.

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

Conclusions:

All of the indicators of the study programme are in compliance with the existing preconditions of the implementation of the study programme. The study programme "Philology" complies with the study field indicators, conditions and criteria. In the opinion of the Experts, the title, code, degree to be obtained of the study programme, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation as well as the implementation language, are reasonable and justified. The study programme is implemented in various languages at the same time based upon the sub-programme chosen by the student, which makes it a unique study programme. The goals, objectives, learning outcomes are in line and in compliance. The programme is in demand and there is a flow of incoming students every study year. However, the demand and student numbers within the study programme depends on the sub-programme causing inconsistency. The dropout rates are consistent and stable. Employers have confirmed the necessity of experts in this field during the visit.

Strengths:

- 1) A unique, interdisciplinary and multi-language study programme, firmly founded in economic and social terms.
- 2) The study programme is well set-up and complies with the study field.

Weaknesses:

- 1) Existing inconsistency in the demand of sub-programmes as it differs.
- 2) Lack of data collection and analysis on graduates employment.

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1.

The bachelor study programme "Philology" consists of the following sub-programmes "Classical Philology", "German Philology", "French Philology", "Finno-Ugric Studies" and "Russian Philology" and it is developed according to the national legislation and local university regulations. The study programme "Philology" complies with the national academic education standard (Regulations No. 240 of the Cabinet of Ministers as of 1 May 2014 "Regulations on the National Standard for Academic Education" (<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/266187-noteikumi-par-valsts-akademiskas-izglitiba-standartu>)). The Expert Group based on provided documents (study programme curriculum and study course descriptions) verified that the full-time study programme complies also with the Regulations of University of Latvia on Study and Continuing Education Programmes and it consist of 120 CP and is designed into three parts: (1) mandatory part study courses (52 CP), (2) elective part study courses (58 CP) and (3) free elective study courses (10 CP). The mandatory part includes Civil Protection (1 CP) and Environment Protection (1 CP) study courses, as well as Bachelor Thesis (10 CP) and Academic

Internship for Philologists (2 CP). The study programme includes the course “Latvian for Beginners I” (2 CP), the course of the Latvian language is mandatory for all international students (in compliance with Section 56 (7) of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education: the acquisition of the Latvian language is included into the mandatory courses for international students, if the duration of the studies in Latvia exceeds 6 months, or if the number of credit points is higher than 20). Each sub-programme of the study programme “Philology” corresponds to the independent, important study field and research and presenting them under the umbrella of Philology is justified by the financial efficiency of such somehow artificial merging. It should be mentioned that each sub-programme is conceptually well-developed, well-structured and balanced in terms of the obligatory, restricted elective, elective, free courses and internship. Programme content has been developed according to the best international practices in teaching and reflects the recent developments in research. The programme “Philology” is organised into 4 thematic course clusters - Languages and Linguistics (VV), Literature and Culture (LK), Research Competence (Pētn. K), Professional competence (Prof. K) - which provide the students with necessary subject-related theoretical knowledge and interdisciplinary insights, ensure development of necessary philological and other practical, as well as transferable skills and competencies, highly required both on national and international labour market. The learning outcomes are closely related to the objectives and the content of the programme. In general, the Expert Group agree that the compulsory part and the restricted elective part of the study programme includes all the guidelines, principles, structure, and methodology of the relevant field of science, as well as the history and current problems of the development of the field of science and the characteristics and problems of the field of science in an interdisciplinary aspect.

2.2.2.

Not applicable.

2.2.3.

The desk study of the SAR and supporting documents provided, as well as the interviews with the students and graduates revealed that a variety of methods are used to create the student-centred learning environment, to acquire and consolidate knowledge, such as introductory, interactive, summary and problem-oriented lectures. Practitioners, professionals from different institutions are invited to lecture on individual courses to maintain the unity of theory and practice. Practical exercises, seminars, individual, pair and team work, discussions and project development, e-learning, international mobility and study tours to industry organisations are widely used. Employers are involved in the implementation and development of study courses. Student-centred learning is supported and relatively easily achieved due to the small number of the students in some sub-programmes.

The language of instruction of the bachelor's study programme “Philology” with five sub-programmes are Latvian and English, but the sub-programmes of the German and Russian Philology are conducted in German and Russian. It should be noted that some courses of other sub-programmes are also provided in “specialisation language/languages” of the sub-programme. French Philology courses are taught in French, Spanish and Italian, some courses of Finno-Ugric Studies are conducted in Finnish and Estonian (for the details see the SAR, pp. 330-333, 336). Such language diversity of the programme is determined by its specific concept and structure. The programme combines teaching and learning of five different sub-fields of philology. The expert group believes that the approach chosen by the University - providing the full programme not only in Latvian, but also in English and providing the sub-programmes in German and Russian improves the internationalisation aspect of the programme and supports graduates' employability due to the good knowledge of the language (high level knowledge could be achieved due to intensive studies in English, German or Russian). Different languages of instruction also increase the competitiveness of

the programme/sub-programmes on the international educational market by attracting more international students, which may help the Institution to address the recommendation by the expert group regarding the financial sustainability (see the recommendations presented in the end of the programme assessment). The expert group believes that conducting some courses in “specialisation language/languages” like French, Spanish, Italian, Estonian or Finish has a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning, as it helps to improve language acquisition skills (especially speaking and listening skills).

2.2.4.

The Philology programme includes and provides an internship, which is not required by the Latvian legislation, but which helps to develop students’ practical skills as required by the labour market. According to the SAR, the aim of the academic internship is to develop the professional skills of philology students (according to an individually coordinated plan), based on the knowledge and research skills acquired during their studies. The internship course ("SDSKR020 Academic Internship for Philologists", 5th semester) is provided for the implementation of academic knowledge in various professional fields according to the specific sub-programme and students' interests (translation, foreign language teaching, international correspondence, museology and tourism, work in research and information institutions, etc.). The provision of internships is confirmed in agreements of intent (cooperation agreements) with institutions offering internships. Internships in translation and language technology companies are common to all sub-programmes; the involvement of other institutions stems from the linguistic/cultural specificities of the sub-programmes and their representation in Latvia.

2.2.5.

Not applicable.

2.2.6.

According to the SAR, the programme “Philology” envisages writing and defending the bachelor thesis, which is an independent research work created by the student, the aim of which is to promote the acquisition of philological thought, to develop research skills and to prepare for independent scientific research work in linguistics or literary studies (history of foreign literature, Germanic linguistics, Romance linguistics, Slavic linguistics, Finno-Ugric linguistics or Classical philology, etc.), as required by the best international practices.

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

Conclusions:

Content, structure, learning and teaching methodology of the BSP “Philology” (including the internship and bachelor thesis writing policy) corresponds to the national legislation and university regulations, best international practices and fully complies with the programme assessment criteria.

Strengths:

- 1) The language diversity of the programme (the students have the possibility to study the courses in different European languages).
- 2) Conceptually well-developed, well-structured and balanced programme in terms of the obligatory, restricted elective, elective, free courses and internship.

Weaknesses:

None.

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.

According to SAR p.348, the study base, informative provision, material technical base and financial base correspond to the specifics of the study programme, implementation conditions, create prerequisites for achievement of the learning outcomes and testify to the possibility of ensuring a quality study process. The study programme is implemented by 7 professors, 5 associate professors, 12 assistant professors and 10 lecturers.

Generally, the existing material technical base, informative provision and methodological support is described in the Resources and Provision section of the study field.

2.3.2.

Not applicable.

2.3.3.

According to the SAR p.351, there are two types of funding for the implementation of the study programme - 1. A state budget grant from the Ministry of Education and Science, set at 1,630 for full-time studies for academic year 2021/2022; 2. The tuition fee is fixed for academic year 2021/2022 in the amount of 2,200 per year for full-time studies; for full-time foreign students, the tuition fee shall be 2,880. According to the UL website of the study programme - <https://www.lu.lv/studijas/fakultates/humanitaro-zinatnu-fakultate/bakalaura-limena-studijas/filologija/>, the tuition fee for all the sub-programmes is the same. For the study year of 2023 the tuition fee is 2300 euros a year for EU/EEA/Swiss citizens and long-term residents of EU, while for other country citizens - 3050 euros a year. As specified in the SAR p.340, the minimum number of state-funded places has been increased in several sub-programmes due to the minimum number of students for admission to Bachelor's studies being at least 15.

According to the data provided in the SAR p.351, the annual revenue as the estimated budget of the study programme is 422 670. As provided in the analysis of data in the SAR p.353 in the table "Programme outcome", the total costs of the programme exceed total revenue by 16 000. As stated by the UL in the SAR p.353 in order to implement the programme and ensure its further development, there must be an increase of fee-paying students by 17. It shows that there is a lack of financial revenue at this point to make the implementation of the study programme financially sustainable. Based on the calculation made in the SAR p.352, for the programme to be cost-effective and to ensure high-quality studies for students, the number of fee-paying students in the programme (in all courses combined) should be at least 170. On the other hand, if the programme had only state-funded students, the number of students should reach 346, which is a significant increase from the existing number of students at this point of time. Currently, based on the information provided in the SAR p. 351, the programme has 213 state funded full-time students and

13 full-time self-funded students and 1 foreign student.

It should be also noted that the University and Faculty administration in order to address the existing issue of financial sustainability already took some measures. Different programmes have been merged under the umbrella of Philology. During the onsite visit the expert group asked the Faculty Administration to provide the financial data before and after merging. The provided information proved that the merging of different, independent study fields is financially efficient and at the same time the new structure ensures high quality learning and teaching.

Despite the financial benefits of the merging mentioned above, the Expert Group believes that the programme, just as all others in the study field, operates under significant financial pressure, with overworked and underpaid staff, and the situation is unsustainable in the long run, but this is not an issue that the administration of the programme or the faculty can solve by themselves, therefore the Expert Group will not consider it to be a flaw in their work. As clarified during the onsite visit and meeting with the management, it is a general issue in the country and has to be tackled on a higher level.

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

Conclusions:

The UL has established well-equipped resource base for comfortable study process for students, which includes e-study environment, library resources as well as databases of extensive variety. As part of a specially needed resource base for this study programme is computer classes with access rooms tailored for learning synchronous translation. The existing resource base is sufficient for a successful provision of the study process but it has to be noted that the resource base is going to significantly improve with the new premises the university is moving to in the near future. Financially, the study programme needs improvements and stabilisation as total costs exceed total revenues.

Strengths:

- 1) Self-take and self-return of the library books;
- 2) Well-established and understandable e-study environment;
- 3) Large variety of accessible databases and platforms for students;
- 4) Financially efficient merging of different, independent study fields, which ensures high quality learning and teaching.

Weaknesses:

- 1) Total costs exceed total revenues; thus, financial sustainability of the programme has to be improved.

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

UL provides the study programme with all the necessary tools and resource material, technical as well as informative base for successful implementation of the study programme.

There is an issue of financial sustainability of the programme, but it cannot be considered as any obstacle/issue for the overall quality of the Programme considering the international context. The programmes of similar profile in the humanities face the same issue in many countries (especially in East European, Baltic and post-soviet countries in general). E.g. Only Germany, France, Italy, Greece, UK and USA manage to have financially sustainable study programs in Classics, but even in these countries the number of students is decreasing.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1.

There are three groups of teaching staff at the UL: teaching staff in elected academic positions, teaching staff at acting elected academic positions (acting and visiting lecturers), and instructors. Selection and recruitment of elected academic positions as well as acting academic positions shall be in accordance with the Regulations on Academic and Administrative Positions at the University of Latvia (the UL Senate Decision No. 11 of 31.01.2022). According to the Statute, the following academic positions exist at the University of Latvia: professor, associate professor, assistant professor, senior researcher, lecturer, researcher, assistant, research assistant. The BSP "Philology" is run by the teaching staff whose educational background, knowledge and skills, pedagogical, research and professional experience correspond to the profile, aims and learning outcomes, research areas of the programme. All members of the teaching staff hold Master or PhD degrees, as required by the Latvian legislation and local, University regulations. Clause of the section 55(1)(3) of the Law on Higher Education Institutions, which stipulates that "not less than five professors and associate professors altogether, who are elected to academic positions in the relevant higher education institution, shall take part in the implementation of the compulsory part and the limited elective part of academic study programmes" is fulfilled. The BSP Philology is implemented by 7 professors and 5 associate professors, 12 assistant professors and 10 lecturers. All teaching staff of the study programme have at least a B2 level of English (CEFR). Teaching staff of other foreign language courses have certified proficiency in the respective foreign languages at C2 level. The representatives of the teaching staff publish both locally and internationally recognised journals, participate in national and international projects and international mobility, attend international scientific conferences, participate in various seminars, organise international events, attend further education programmes in Latvia and abroad, etc. In the context of the gradual change of academic staff generations and accumulation of teaching experience, professors also involve doctoral students in certain stages of the study process (reviewing written works, tutorials on information revision and consolidation, etc.). Development of professional skills and qualification of the teaching staff is supported by the following courses provided by the University: "Didactics of Higher Education: modern theories and practices", "Pedagogical aspects of the development of study programmes in higher education", "The professional development of the competence of the student trustee", etc.

2.4.2.

According to the SAR and other supporting documents, there have been minor changes in the composition of the teaching staff involved in the programme: 1 lecturer has left the programme (due to termination of employment), 1 lecturer will continue to work in the programme as an elected academic staff lecturer (due to election to the position).

2.4.3.

Not applicable.

2.4.4.

The CVs and SAR reveals that the academic staff involved in implementation of the programme “Philology” has professional/practical experience related to the sub-programmes’ profile and/or regularly publishes in peer-reviewed journals indexed in ERIH PLUS, EBSCO, SCOPUS, Web of Science, etc., but there is a lack of publications abroad, which should be regarded as an area for further improvement.

2.4.5.

According to the SAR, the regular face-to-face or online consultative meetings and discussions of the teaching staff involved in the programme “Philology”, have taken place at all stages of the Philology programme development and during the preparation of the licensing and accreditation materials. Lecturers systematically analyse their experience, collaborate with colleagues, analyse students' achievements and improve course descriptions. Teaching staff collectively discuss and formulate objectives to achieve the programme learning outcomes. The teaching staff shall endeavour to develop an optimal cooperation mechanism between the sub-programmes and the departments involved in the implementation of the consolidated programme. In view of broadening the opportunities for students in an interdisciplinary context, mutual consultation and discussion in working groups are carried out to ensure that the mandatory and sub-programme courses include current topics, use the latest academic literature, freely available Internet resources and collections of scientific articles (SAR, p. 357).

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

Conclusions:

The bachelor programme “Philology” is run by the teaching staff whose qualification is in full compliance with national and local requirements. There were no major changes in the composition of the teaching staff. Fruitful and effective communication and cooperation have been carried out between different departments during the development of the programme “Philology” after merging different sub-programmes, which resulted in a well-balanced structure regarded as strengths. The teaching staff is actively involved in research, but there is a lack of publications in highly ranked international journals published abroad.

Strengths:

- 1) Sustainability of the teaching staff.
- 2) Fruitful and effective communication and collaboration between different departments for developing the programme “Philology”.

Weaknesses:

- 1) Lack of publications in highly ranked international journals published abroad.

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

CVs, SAR, National legislation and University regulations and the information obtained ensure

compliance with this requirement.

2.5. Assessment of the Compliance

Requirements

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Annex (BA_Philology_Compliance_with_the_state_education_standard.doc) confirms that the study programme complies with Regulations No. 240 of the Cabinet of Ministers as of 1 May 2014 "Regulations on the National Standard for Academic Education"
<https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=266187> (Available only in Latvian).

- 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 - 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 study course descriptions are prepared in English and Latvian that can be accessed under BSP Philology (course descriptions.zip). Descriptions comply with regulations set forth in Law on Higher Education Institutions.

- 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 samples (Philology_Diploma_Appendix.zip) with 5 annexes that differ based on the 5 sub-programmes that are implemented in this study programme. The diploma samples comply 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".

- 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

Head of study field declaration No.26 - 22/93 certifies that the academic staff involved in the implementation of the study programme complies with the requirements specified in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Annex (HEAD OF STUDY FIELD DECLARATION ON COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 55 1-3.docx).

- 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

This is identified in the annex (2023_03_13_ACADEMIC_STAFF_CV_ENG_FINAL8.pdf). It can be concluded that the state language proficiency is compliant with Cabinet Regulation. Nr. 733 "Regulations Regarding the Extent of the Knowledge of the Official Language, the Procedures for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language and the State Fee for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language".

- 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

As this programme has various sub-programmes with different combinations of implementation languages. According to the SAR p.336, English language proficiency is required for all sub-programmes with English language on B2 level or higher. For sub-programme "German Philology", in addition, proficiency in German is required on B2 level or higher. In the sub-programme "Russian Philology", in addition, proficiency in Russian is required. Either way, the very basis of the language requirement generally is Latvian and English B2 requirement (as it is in "Classical philology"). However, this requirement is to the lecturers only who teach the specific language related courses in the study programme. The attached documents: 1. 2023_03_13_ACADEMIC_STAFF_CV_ENG_FINAL8.pdf and 2.B2 LEVEL.rar.

- 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 (Studiju līgumi angļu valodā.zip. Annex 2) complies with Cabinet Regulation. 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

UL has provided confirmation that students will be provided with opportunities to continue their education in another higher education institution if the implementation of the study programme is terminated. The agreements are specified in the annexes under "Agreements in case of SP discontinuation". It is specified that in case of discontinuation of this study programme, students

are to be able to continue their studies at Daugavpils University in study programmes based on the sub-programmes that they have chosen to study.

- 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: Fully compliant

UL 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. It is ensured based on the "Refund and Compensation Policy Statement" document added to the annexes pursuant to paragraph 13.4 of the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 795 "Regulations Regarding Licensing of Study Programmes".

- 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: Fully compliant

Study programme fully complies with regulatory enactments.

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

The BSP "Philology" with five sub-programmes - "Classical Philology", "German Philology", "French philology", "Russian philology", "Finno-Ugric Studies" - is assessed as excellent based on the desk study of the documentation provided, the interviews with different internal and external stakeholders and examining the infrastructure during the onsite visit. All five sub-programmes are interrelated, their concept and content, teaching and assessment methodology, teaching staff qualification and competencies (their education, pedagogical, research and professional experience), student services and infrastructure equally ensure high quality teaching and learning. The programme is especially important for cultural and intellectual development of the Latvian society, as the programme promotes the language and cultural diversity and consists of the unique sub-programmes for the local educational and labour market (Classical Philology and Finno-Ugric Studies).

The BSP "Philology" with five sub-programmes - "Classical Philology", "German Philology", "French philology", "Russian philology", "Finno-Ugric Studies" - can be implemented in Latvian and in English, the sub-programmes "German Philology" and "Russian Philology" can be conducted in German and Russian. The bachelor's study programme "Philology" can be implemented in the following forms: full time studies (3 years) in the University buildings located in Riga.

The expert group identified the following strengths and weaknesses (The relevant recommendations are presented below in the special section).

Strengths:

- > A unique, interdisciplinary and multi-language study programme, firmly founded in economic and social terms.
- > Well structured study programme in compliance with the study field.
- > The language diversity of the programme (the students have the possibility to study the courses in different European languages).
- > Conceptually well-developed, well-structured and balanced programme in terms of the obligatory, restricted elective, elective, free courses and internship.
- > Self-take and self-return of the library books.
- > Well-established and understandable e-study environment.
- > Large variety of accessible databases and platforms for students.
- > Financially efficient merging of different, independent study fields, which ensures high quality learning and teaching.
- > Sustainability of the teaching staff.
- > Fruitful and effective communication and collaboration between different departments for developing the programme "Philology".

Weaknesses:

- > Existing inconsistency in the demand of sub-programmes as it differs.
- > Lack of regularly collected and analysed data on graduate employment.
- > Insufficient financial sustainability of the programme.
- > Lack of publications in highly ranked international journals published abroad.

The BSP "Philology" with five sub-programmes - "Classical Philology", "German Philology", "French philology", "Russian philology", "Finno-Ugric Studies" - fulfils the requirements of the Latvian higher education and quality assurance legislation, as well as the local, University and Faculty regulations. There are no deficiencies identified by the expert group which cannot be eliminated during the 2-year accreditation period. And there are no serious weaknesses which may prevent fulfilling the requirements of the accreditation standards. There is inconsistency in the demand of sub-programmes and there is an issue of financial sustainability of the programme, but it cannot be considered as any obstacle/issue for the overall high quality of the Programme considering the specificity of the programme profile and the international context. It is natural that there is a big demand for English and German and less students are interested in Ancient Greek, Latin, Estonian or Finish. The programmes of similar profile in the humanities face the same issue in many countries, especially in East European, Baltic and post-soviet countries in general (E.g. Only Germany, France, Italy, Greece, UK and USA manage to have financially sustainable study programs in Classics, but even in these countries the number of students is decreasing). Therefore The bachelor's study programme "Philology" with five sub-programmes - "Classical Philology", "German Philology", "French philology", "Russian philology", "Finno-Ugric Studies" - is assessed by the experts group as excellent.

Evaluation of the study programme "Philology"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Excellent

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Philology"

Short-term recommendations

Long-term recommendations

- | |
|---|
| 1) Teaching staff capacity and supporting mechanisms (including financial incentives) for publishing in highly ranked international journals published abroad should be developed. |
| 2) Data on graduate employment should be collected and analysed regularly to ensure a successful transition of graduates into the labour market. |
| 3) Financial sustainability of the programme should be improved, as at this point the total expenses exceed the total revenues, which in a long term can cause financial instability. |
| 4) Existing inconsistency in the demand of sub-programmes should be addressed. |

II - "Latvian Studies" ASSESSMENT

II - "Latvian Studies" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1.

The academic bachelor study programme "Latvian studies" complies with indicators, conditions and criteria of the study field of "Language and Culture Studies, Mother Tongue Studies, and Language Programmes". The length of the implementation of the study programme, which is 3 years for full-time, is evaluated as sufficient for acquiring the necessary skills and way of thinking to enter the labour market.

2.1.2.

According to the SAR p.172, the title of the study programme is "Latvian studies" in the study field of "Language and Culture Studies, Mother Tongue Studies, and Language Programmes" with education classification code 43227 with the last 3 numbers (227) standing for language studies and programmes according to the classification of Latvian education which can be accessed here: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/291524-noteikumi-par-latvijas-izglitiba-klasifikaciju>. There is no qualification given after graduating as it is an academic bachelor study programme.

The programme does not have any sub-programmes. According to the SAR p.172, the aim of the programme is to prepare highly qualified and competitive Bachelor of Humanities level Latvian studies specialists for the labour market, providing the opportunity to study Latvian language and literature, as well as basic cultural issues in a broader – Baltic and European cultural context, to develop, study, preserve and pass on to future generations all that is special about the Latvian people - national culture, art, language, literature, folklore, traditions - with the specificity of its geographical and historical environment, which has been and can be brought to world culture and science.

According to the information provided in the SAR p.174, the admission requirements of this programme is secondary education and this programme is implemented in Latvian. After successful completion of the studies, students are awarded with "Bachelor's Degree of Humanities in Language Studies and Programmes". According to the SAR p.174, the study programme is a full-time study programme with 120 CP to be gathered during the study process of 3 years. The title, code, degree

to be obtained of the study programme, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation as well as the implementation language, are reasonable and justified.

2.1.3.

One of the most important changes in the study programme changes has been the changes of the title of the study programme. According to the SAR p.175, the academic bachelor's programme "Latvian studies" has been implemented under the title "Baltic Philology". The previous title, historically maintained from the founding of the UL, no longer corresponds to the contemporary level of research and study of the Latvian language, literature and culture and, accordingly, does not clearly describe the essence of the programme. Accordingly, the programme title is updated to "Latvian Studies", while the core of the programme remains unchanged. It includes courses in linguistics, literary studies, foundations of culture history, as well as modern Latvian and Latvian literature.

There have also been structural changes made within the programme such as reduction of the credit points of the mandatory study course part from 98 CP to 66 CP. According to the SAR p. 175, the changes have been implemented gradually through the years of the study programme implementation. This approach has helped to provide the opportunity for the students to have more freedom of choice in regards to their free and restrictive elective courses based on their personal interests.

According to the SAR p. 175, the programme core, which provides the Latvian language and Latvian literature, has remained unchanged. The mandatory part consists of two sets of relevant 16-credit subjects or four courses of 4 CP each (Modern Latvian, 4x4 CP and Latvian Literature, 4x4 CP). However, according to the SAR pp.175-176, the restricted elective part has changed significantly based on student advice to make changes in the structure of choice. The new design of the restricted elective part has moved away from module restrictions to one broad and varied restricted elective offer, grouping subjects into thematic clusters for clarity and for balance and proportionality of choice, and setting a minimum number of mandatory subjects to meet the programme's aim, objectives and learning outcomes, which is seen as reasonable to the Experts as the new structure gives the possibility for students to specialise in their field of their personal interest. According to the new structure, there are seven thematic clusters: 1. Applied Latvian Studies; 2. Digital Latvian Studies; 3. Research Foundation; 4. Baltic and Comparative Studies; 5. Contrastive Language Studies; 6. English for Latvian Studies; 7. Pedagogy. Students are relatively free to choose the amount of credits from each cluster. According to the SAR p. 176, for the purpose of expansion of elective courses, some subjects are implemented in cooperation with the UL Faculty of Social Sciences and some with the UL Faculty of Education, Psychology and Art.

As stated in the SAR P. 176, the minimum elective requirement is set in Digital Latvian Studies (4 CP), because nowadays, successful and prospective study of Latvian Studies is unthinkable without digital skills. At least one 2-credit subject must be chosen from the English for Latvian Studies course cluster, as the study of one subject in English is a requirement of the degree. Expert Group agrees with this approach and requirement set.

Another change implemented in the study programme parameters is the increase of free elective part from 2 to 4 CP, as specified in the SAR p.176.

A crucial improvement as advised by the students and employers is the implementation of internship. It is a 4 CP Internship course, which is mandatory, but there is a wide range of options for the internship placement. Interestingly, this is an academic internship as a mandatory course of an academic bachelor's programme, which is a unique approach, while also seen as useful and needed. Students and employers are mutually satisfied and wish for this to be remaining as part of the programme.

Due to the changes in the requirements of the Law on Environmental Protection and the Law on Civil

Protection, the courses Environment Protection (1 CP) and Civil Protection (1 CP) were included in the bachelor's study programme in accordance with the requirements.

2.1.4.

The study programme is characterised by an essential social justification. Latvian Studies serve as an indispensable institute for the development of Latvian society, culture, language and its heritage. According to SAR p. 178, the programme "distinguishes the University of Latvia from any other university in the world and is the most significant facet of its academic identity." From the evidence gathered during on-site meetings it can be concluded that the programme meets the needs of the labour market. Graduates are employed in education, cultural institutions, the book industry, the media, translation, state and local government, museums, and non-formal education institutions (SAR p. 178). However, the SAR does not provide data on the percentage of employed graduates, graduates developing their own businesses, or those who continue their studies at Master's level. The 10-year trend in student numbers shows a significant decline that needs to be addressed urgently. The same is true for the negative dynamics of student enrollment. The high share of state-funded students still provides some economic stability to the programme, but in the long run, low enrollment can lead to significant economic complications. According to SAR (p. 179), the programme is undergoing changes in content and organisation to maintain and increase the future numbers of students. Future improvements could include measures to address the lack of international students despite the uniqueness of the programme and its exceptional appeal to Latvian audiences. The dropout rate has fluctuated over the past 10 years. The reasons for dropout given by the programme management is in line with the reasons for attrition in other study programmes, therefore urgently needs to be addressed at the faculty or institutional level, e.g. by further adapting study content and methods, more flexible organisation of studies, psychological counselling and academic support.

2.1.5.

Not applicable.

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

Conclusions:

All of the indicators of the study programme are in compliance with the existing preconditions of the implementation of the study programme. The study programme "Latvian studies" complies with the study field indicators, conditions and criteria. In the opinion of the Experts, the title, code, degree to be obtained of the study programme, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation as well as the implementation language, are reasonable and justified. The study programme is implemented in Latvian. The goals, objectives, learning outcomes are in line and in compliance. The programme's demand has declined substantially in the last 10 years, which has to be addressed and adapted accordingly, clarifying the reasoning behind it. The same in regards to the dropout rates. However, currently the study programme is going through some changes that could help to tackle the issues raised before.

Strengths:

- 1) Study programme is going through changes to address the existing decline and drop-out rates in the study programme;
- 2) A unique study programme, dedicated to the development of Latvian society, culture, language

and its heritage.

Weaknesses:

- 1) Decline in demand of the study programme in the last decade;
- 2) Unstable drop-out rates;
- 3) Lack of collection and analysis of the data on graduate employment.

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1.

The BSP “Latvian Studies” consists of the mandatory (66 CP), restrictive elective (50 CP) and elective courses (4 CP). The mandatory part includes mandatory subjects set by the state in Civil and Environmental Protection, and also basic courses in Latvian Studies, Bachelor’s thesis and internship and fully complies with the national academic education standard (Regulations No. 240 of the Cabinet of Ministers as of 1 May 2014 “Regulations on the National Standard for Academic Education” (<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/266187-noteikumi-par-valsts-akademiskas-izglitiba-standartu>) as well with the Regulations of the University of Latvia on Study and Continuing Education Programmes. The scope of the full-time study programme is 120 CP, of which 10 CP are for the Bachelor’s Paper and 4 CP for the Internship in Latvian Studies. The restricted elective part is arranged in 7 thematic clusters: Applied Latvian Studies, Digital Latvian Studies, Research Foundation, Baltic and Comparative Studies, Contrastive Language Studies, English for Latvian Studies, Pedagogy. The content of the programme is closely related to the objectives and learning outcomes, which are directly connected to the needs of the labour market and reflects the latest scientific developments in the field. Interconnected and complementary courses ensure interdisciplinary profile of the programme, development of subject-specific and transferable skills, as well as relevant competencies. According to the SAR, the achievability and interconnectedness of the intended learning outcomes have been assessed through the mapping of learning outcomes (SAR, p. 180). The Expert Group verified that the compulsory part and the restricted elective part of the study programme includes the guidelines, principles, structure, and methodology of the relevant field of science, as well as the history and current problems of the development of the field of science and the characteristics and problems of the field of science in an interdisciplinary aspect as it is stated in Regulations No. 240 of the Cabinet of Ministers as of 1 May 2014.

2.2.2.

Not applicable.

2.2.3.

According to the SAR, the principles of student-centred education promote student mobility (recognition of the learning outcomes), and students engage in research and social activities in the community initiated by academic staff, thus gaining significant experience applying what they learn in their studies in practice. Students receive support and feedback from lecturers during the study process. Tutors mostly use methods that encourage students' active participation, critical thinking and reflection. Practitioners, professionals from different institutions are invited to lecture on individual courses to maintain the unity of theory and practice. Practical tasks, seminars, individual, pair and team work, e-learning, discussions and project development, study tours to industry organisations are widely used. Employers are involved in the implementation and development of study courses (invited to lead individual seminar sessions, often organised as exchange visits to workplaces, etc.) (SAR, p. 183). The information provided in the SAR regarding the learning and

teaching methodology has been proved during the site visit, through the interviews with the teaching staff, students and graduates.

2.2.4.

The BSP "Latvian Studies" envisages mandatory internship, which is not required by the Latvian legislation, but it is important for development of students' practical skills. The internship (course title "Internship in Latvian Studies") has been included in the programme recently and has been implemented for one academic year only, but the Expert Group already witnessed its positive results, as the students expressed their satisfaction at the interviews. UL concluded long-term contracts with important employers – the Literature and Music Museum, the Association of Memorial Museums, the UL Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art, the UL Latvian Language Institute, and the National Centre for Education. It's worth mentioning that the students had and will have the opportunity to find their own internships (e.g. interning at the magazine "Lilit", the New Riga Theatre, and several translation companies, etc.). Students also have opportunities to get internships in the projects implemented in the Department of Latvian and Baltic Studies (SAR, p. 183-184).

2.2.5.

Not applicable.

2.2.6.

Students choose the topics of their final theses according to their research interests, the programme content and current research trends in the field of Latvian Studies, coordinating the topics with their supervisors. Students are taught the basics of research work by choosing one of the subjects in the restricted elective part of Research Foundation, which offers both a course focusing on linguistic research and a course on research in literature and culture. Final theses are written on Latvian language, Latvian literature, Latvian folklore and Latvian theatre, as well as on interdisciplinary topics. The themes of the bachelor theses are relevant to the recent developments in interdisciplinary humanities and cover a wide range of research issues - research on the earliest Latvian language written monuments, the origins and current processes of Latvian literature, Latvian grammar and language use today, theatre history and contemporary theatre, folklore field studies, the interaction of Latvian and world cultural processes, linguistic relations, etc. It's worth mentioning that the best final theses are published in various cultural research journals and web platforms (SAR, p. 186).

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

Conclusions:

The content, learning and teaching methodology, provided obligatory internship and bachelor theses research areas of the BSP "Latvian Studies" fully correspond to the Latvian legislation requirements, programme assessment criteria, requirements of the labour market and recent developments in the humanities.

Strengths:

1) Diverse internship opportunities for development of subject-related and practical skills and competences, required by the labour market.

Weaknesses:

None.

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.

According to SAR p.186, there is a significant amount of established informative and methodological support as the UL possesses a developed information system environment, which is actively used in the study process. In detail, the informative base and methodological support has been described in the Resources and Provision section of the study field analysis.

2.3.2.

Not applicable.

2.3.3.

According to the SAR p.187, for the implementation of the Bachelor's study programme "Latvian Studies", the UL uses three types of funding: 1. A state budget grant from the Ministry of Education and Science, set at 1,630 for full-time studies for academic year 2021/2022; 2. The tuition fee fixed for academic year 2021/2022: 2,200 per year for full-time studies.

According to the SAR p.188, the study programme total revenue is estimated at 126 730 per year. According to the data provided in the SAR p.189, the calculation shows that for the programme to be cost-effective and for students to be provided with a high-quality study process, the number of students in the programme (in all study years) should be at least 103, which is not met. As projected in the numbers accessible in the SAR p.189, currently there are 71 full-time state funded students and 5 full-time self-funded students in the programme, which results in total costs exceeding the total revenue per year by around 20 000.

According to the opinion of the Expert Group, the programme, just as all others in the study field, operates under significant financial pressure, with overworked and underpaid staff, and the situation is unsustainable in the long run, but this is not an issue that the administration of the programme or the faculty can solve by themselves, therefore the Expert Group will not consider it to be a flaw in their work.

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

Conclusions:

The UL has established well-equipped resource base for comfortable study process for students, which includes e-study environment, library resources as well as databases of extensive variety. As part of a specially needed resource base for this study programme is computer classes with access rooms tailored for learning synchronous translation. The existing resource base is sufficient for a successful provision of the study process but it has to be noted that the resource base is going to significantly improve with the new premises the university is moving to in the near future. There are

dedicated computer labs for various specialised courses. Financially, the study programme needs improvements and stabilisation as total costs exceed total revenues.

Strengths:

- 1) Self-take and self-return of the library books;
- 2) Well-established and understandable e-study environment;
- 3) Large variety of accessible databases and platforms for students;
- 4) Dedicated computer labs for specialised courses.

Weaknesses:

- 1) Financial sustainability of the programme as the total costs exceeds the total revenues.

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

UL provides the study programme with all the necessary tools and resource material, technical as well as informative base for successful implementation of the study programme. However, this programme needs to improve financial sustainability and find extra financial support.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1.

There are three groups of teaching staff at the UL: teaching staff in elected academic positions, teaching staff at acting elected academic positions (acting and visiting lecturers), and instructors. Selection and recruitment of elected academic positions as well as acting academic positions shall be in accordance with the Regulations on Academic and Administrative Positions at the University of Latvia (the UL Senate Decision No. 11 of 31.01.2022). According to the Statute, the following academic positions exist at the University of Latvia: professor, associate professor, assistant professor, senior researcher, lecturer, researcher, assistant, research assistant. The BSP “Latvian Studies” is run by the teaching staff whose educational background, knowledge and skills, pedagogical, research and professional experience correspond to the profile, aims and learning outcomes, research areas of the programme. All members of the teaching staff hold Master or PhD degrees, as required by the Latvian legislation and local, University regulations. Clause of the section 55(1)(3) of the Law on Higher Education Institutions, which stipulates that “not less than five professors and associate professors altogether, who are elected to academic positions in the relevant higher education institution, shall take part in the implementation of the compulsory part and the limited elective part of academic study programmes” is fulfilled. Proportionally, the programme involves 15% professors, 15% associate professors, 30% assistant professors and 25% lecturers. Nominally, 6 professors and 2 associate professors of the University of Latvia are involved in the implementation of the programme. The programme is implemented not only by the representatives of academia, but also by practitioners, high-class professionals from cooperating institutions, ensuring the link between studies and the labour market. All teaching staff of the study programme have at least a B2 level of English (CEFR). Teaching staff of other foreign language

courses have certified proficiency in the respective foreign languages at C2 level.

2.4.2.

The data provided by the UL revealed that there were significant changes in the staff composition of the BSP "Latvian Studies" due to the advanced age or death of some professors, but the University hired/elected the young and qualified staff (PhD holders and/or candidates). Their presence already had a positive impact on modernising the curriculum and teaching methodology. Some new courses have been developed and introduced, informational technologies and digital humanities tools have been intensively implemented.

2.4.3.

Not applicable.

2.4.4.

The Department of Latvian and Baltic Studies, which is the main provider of the programme, is one of the leading institutions for humanities studies and research in Latvia. In the field of Latvian Studies, the Department is a centre for studies and research of national and global importance, as proved by the employment of graduates in Latvian cultural, educational and research institutions, and by the international scientific publications, monographs, textbooks, periodicals published and regular national and international conferences organised by the lecturers, as well as their participation in and management of international and national projects. Interdisciplinary research and synergies with foreign research institutions have been promoted. Projects have attracted international, national, municipal, non-government and UL funding (SAR, p. 190).

2.4.5.

Cooperation and interaction between the teaching staff of the programme "Latvian Studies" is ensured using the following mechanisms and activities: organising the general departmental meetings and meetings of working groups in the sub-fields, teaching courses by several lecturers, jointly developing and updating the courses, discussions on study process and learning outcomes, activities of the Study Field Council, collaboration in the framework of the research project groups, etc.

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

Conclusions:

The bachelor programme "Latvian Studies" is run by the teaching staff whose qualification is in full compliance with national and local requirements. There are effective mechanisms for smoothly replacing the teaching staff and for fruitful cooperation and interaction. The teaching staff is actively involved in research important for development of the country's national identity.

Strengths:

1) Strategic importance of the Latvian Studies programme for development of the country's national identity.

Weaknesses:

None.

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

CVs, SAR, Latvian legislation and University regulations and the information obtained ensure compliance with this requirement.

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

Annex (Compliance of the BSP Latvian Studies with the state education standard.docx) confirms that the study programme complies with Regulations No. 240 of the Cabinet of Ministers as of 1 May 2014 "Regulations on the National Standard for Academic Education"
<https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=266187> (Available only in Latvian).

- 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

The study course descriptions are prepared in English and Latvian that can be accessed under Latvian Studies BSP course descriptions.docx. Descriptions comply 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 BSP_Latvian_Studies_Diploma(1).docx). The 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".

- 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

Head of study field declaration No.26 - 22/93 certifies that the academic staff involved in the implementation of the study programme complies with the requirements specified in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Annex (HEAD OF STUDY FIELD DECLARATION ON COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 55 1-3.docx).

- 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

This is identified in the annex (2023_03_13_ACADEMIC_STAFF_CV_ENG_FINAL8.pdf). It can be concluded that the state language proficiency is compliant with Cabinet Regulation. Nr. 733 "Regulations Regarding the Extent of the Knowledge of the Official Language, the Procedures for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language and the State Fee for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language".

- 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 (Studiju līgumi angļu valodā.zip. Annex 2) complies with Cabinet Regulation. 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

UL has provided confirmation that students will be provided with opportunities to continue their education in another higher education institution if the implementation of the study programme is terminated. The agreements are specified in the annexes under "Agreements in case of SP

discontinuation". It is specified that in case of discontinuation of this study programme, students are to be able to continue their studies at Daugavpils University in study programme.

- 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: Fully compliant

UL 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. It is ensured based on the "Refund and Compensation Policy Statement" document added to the annexes pursuant to paragraph 13.4 of the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 795 "Regulations Regarding Licensing of Study Programmes" .

- 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: Fully compliant

Study programme fully complies with regulatory enactments.

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

The BSP "Latvian Studies" is assessed as excellent based on the desk study of the documentation provided, the interviews with different internal and external stakeholders and examining the infrastructure during the onsite visit. Programme's concept and content, teaching and assessment methodology, teaching staff qualification and competencies (their education, pedagogical, research and professional experience), student services and infrastructure ensure high quality teaching and learning. The programme is especially important strategically, as it serves for preserving, studying and promoting unique Latvian language, literature and culture.

The BSP "Latvian Studies" can be implemented in Latvian, in full time studies (3 years) in the University buildings located in Riga.

The expert group identified the following strengths and weaknesses (The relevant recommendations are presented below in the special section).

Strengths:

- Orientation of the study programme on development and improvement.

- > Unique study programme, dedicated to the development of Latvian society, culture, language and its cultural heritage in general.
- > Diverse internship opportunities for development of subject-related and practical skills and competences, required by the labour market.
- > Strategic importance of the Latvian Studies programme for development of the country's national identity.
- > Self-take and self-return of the library books.
- > Well-established and understandable e-study environment.
- > Large variety of accessible databases and platforms for students.
- > Dedicated computer labs for specialised courses.

Weaknesses:

- > Decline in demand of the study programme in the last decade.
- > Unstable dropout rates.
- > Lack of collection and analysis of the data on graduate employment.
- > Financial sustainability of the programme as the total costs exceeds the total revenues.

The BSP "Latvian Studies" fulfils the requirements of the Latvian higher education and quality assurance legislation, as well as the local, University and Faculty regulations. There are no deficiencies identified by the expert group which cannot be eliminated during the 2-year accreditation period. And there are no serious weaknesses which may prevent fulfilling the requirements of the accreditation standards. There is a decline in demand for the study programme, which is natural due to the existing demographic problem in Latvia and there is an issue of financial sustainability, which is also related to the decreased number of the students. Therefore, the bachelor's study programme "Latvian Studies" is assessed by the experts' group as excellent.

Evaluation of the study programme "Latvian Studies"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Excellent

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Latvian Studies"

Short-term recommendations

Long-term recommendations

- 1) Students' decreasing number and high dropout rate should be addressed at the faculty or institutional level, e.g., through further adaptation of the study content and methods, more flexible study organisation, psychological counselling, and academic support.
- 2) Data on graduate employment should be collected and analysed regularly to ensure a successful transition of graduates into the labour market.
- 3) Financial sustainability of the programme should be improved, as the total expenses exceed the total revenues, which can cause large inconsistencies and financial instability of the programme in the future.

II - "Asian Studies" ASSESSMENT

II - "Asian Studies" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1.

The University of Latvia bears national responsibility for the study of Asian languages and cultures as the only university in the country offering such a programme. The academic Bachelor study programme Asian Studies, code 43227 is developed in accordance with the requirements of the study field Language and Culture Studies, Mother Tongue Studies and Language Programmes. The content of the study programme is in compliance with the mission and vision of the respective study field as well as the development plan and goals of the study field revealed by the Annex The Development Plan and Goals of the Field of Study 2021-2027.

2.1.2.

The title of the programme complies with the defined study field. As it is stated in the UL report p.108 it clearly indicates not only the specifics of Asian languages and communication culture to be acquired in the programme, but also the complex of regional and cross-regional Asian studies included in the programme modules. According to the SAR, p.107-108, the BSP Asian Studies comprises 4 modules, namely, Japanese studies, Chinese studies, Korean studies, Middle Eastern studies. The modules integrate 7 languages of which 2 languages are offered in the elective part as a second Asian language (Indonesian and Persian/Farsi). The content of the reported programme is designed and developed in line with current global trends in the field. Courses are updated taking into account the recommendations of industry experts, employers and students, as well as international experience in similar study programmes in the European Union. (SAR, p.110). The reported programme is delivered in two languages, namely, Latvian and English. The admission process is governed and clearly described by the UL Admission Requirements and subordinate regulations that determine the procedures for the given academic year and are published on the UL portal www.lu.lv/gribustudet where all the information is available also in English.

The code of the academic bachelor's study programme Asian Studies (43227) is consistent with the Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No. 322 Regulations on the Education Classification in Latvia, which corresponds to the 6th qualification level of the Latvian Qualifications Framework for the group of academic education programmes. The scope and duration of studies are regulated by the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No.240 Regulations on the State Academic Education Standard and they comply with the requirements specified in the Regulations. The degree to be awarded - Bachelor's degree of Humanities in Language Studies and Programmes complies with the regulations, too (No.240 Cabinet of Ministers Regulations on the State Academic Education Standard, ch.12). Although the aim of the reported study programme is not clearly defined and revealed in the SAR, it is clear that the aims, objectives and learning outcomes defined by the programme are mapped against the learning outcomes of study courses (Annex). It can be claimed that the reported programme's objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated and the programme is an excellent foundation for further research into the languages and culture of the Asian region, as well as for studies at master's level.

2.1.3.

There are changes made to the study programme's parameters that are not considered as significant, according to the UL report (p.104). Considerable contribution to improve the quality of the reported study programme is evitable, e.g. The content of study courses and course descriptions have been updated and harmonised to ensure the coherence of individual study courses as well as to eliminate duplication, several study courses were rescheduled across study semesters to improve

the continuity of them.

Considerable change and innovation introduced in the programme is Internship in Asian Studies (2CP) that is done taking into account students' opinion and employers' recommendation. The introduction of the internship definitely implements into the quality of the reported study programme, namely, considering the tasks of the study programme, e.g., to promote students' involvement and practical application of acquired knowledge, competences and skills in scientific research work, as well as to help organise internships in Latvian and foreign state and municipal institutions, enterprises and non-governmental organisations, thus preparing specialists for productive and creative work in public and cultural spheres, who meet the requirements of today's industry.

Also there are considerable changes made in the mandatory part of the programme (part A). The study course Latvian Language for Beginners intended for foreigners was added; Civil Protection course (1CP) and Environment Protection (1 CP) were introduced in the programme thus complying with the Regulation No.240 of 13 May 2014 Regulations on the National Academic Education Standard <https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=266187>

Since three study courses were removed from the mandatory part of the programme, the introduction of new courses does not exceed the volume of the mandatory part (50 CP+ 10 CP for Bachelor's thesis).

There are considerable changes made to restricted electives (Part B). New courses have been developed that would ensure the programme's topicality. Besides that, the new study module Korean Studies has been introduced instead of The India and Indonesian study module. Also the 2nd Asian language courses were added where the students have a wider choice to choose from.

All the changes made to the reported study programme can be considered as noteworthy, oriented on further development and improvement and ensure the overall quality of the BSP Asian Studies.

2.1.4.

As the UL report states on p.110, the Bachelor's study programme Asian Studies is the only Bachelor's study programme in Latvia that is implemented for the training of high-level specialists in linguistics and language programmes with interdisciplinary knowledge, skills and competences in the languages and communication culture of the Middle and Far East regions. The role of the reported study programme is particularly relevant taking into consideration global tendencies in business and trade with countries in the Far East as well as migration, driven by economic and political factors, and refugee flows caused by regional wars, are putting increasing strain on social structures, and are creating a particular demand for language and culture specialists from the Middle East region. Not only the above mentioned but also the fact that there are fee-paying students in the programme proves the topicality of the reported programme.

The Experts' discussions with the employers specifically revealed that there is a great demand for specialists in the field and they admitted the Bachelor's study programme Asian Studies implement a lot to fill the gap in the job market. The graduates' linguistic proficiency has been highly appreciated by the employers. The graduates' employment rate is high as confirmed by the management and teaching staff, although there is no detailed official information confirming this since the Faculty of Humanities has not developed an alumni network to follow their graduates career path, which was identified as a drawback by the graduates since they expressed the willingness to cooperate with the Faculty of Humanities and give their input in the programme's and Faculty's development. All the information concerning the graduates' employment is based on personal contacts between the academic staff and graduates.

According to the SAR (p.112), the total number of students enrolled in the full-time Bachelor's study programme Asian Studies was relatively stable during the reporting period, with a marked increase towards the end of the period and slight fluctuations from year to year. As the Figures on p.113-116 show, the total number of students was 185 (including 6 international students) in 2021/2022

comparing to 2012/2013 academic year when it was 150. Following Figure 3.1.4.6. (SAR p.115), the numbers of international students are still pretty low compared to the numbers of domestic students.

2.1.5.

Not applicable.

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

Conclusions:

The academic Bachelor study programme Asian Studies, is developed in accordance with the requirements of the study field Language and Culture Studies, Mother Tongue Studies and Language Programmes. The content of it is in compliance with the mission and vision of the respective study field as well as the development plan and goals of the study field. As the UL report states on p.110, the Bachelor's study programme Asian Studies is the only Bachelor's study programme in Latvia that is implemented for the training of high-level specialists in linguistics and language programmes with interdisciplinary knowledge, skills and competences in the languages and communication culture of the Middle and Far East regions. The SAR and the on-site visit prove that the noteworthy changes have been made to the content of the reported programme to enhance the quality of it that was also admitted by the employers, especially emphasising the high linguistic proficiency of the graduates that successfully fill the gap in the job market taking into consideration the latest tendencies in business and trade with the Far East. Although there is no statistical data on the employment of the programme's graduates since the cooperation between the Faculty of Humanities and its graduates is not well developed. This must be considered by the management of the faculty since the discussions with the graduates showed their genuine interest in cooperation with the Faculty of Humanities and the study programme to implement into the development of the study programme Asian Studies. Nevertheless, the topicality and the quality of the reported programme can be considered as high, proven by the fact the students' enrolment has not fluctuated a lot during the last years, although, the number of international students is still low compared to the numbers of domestic students.

Strengths:

- 1) The reported programme's topicality is undeniable since this is the only study programme in Latvia that is implemented for the training of high-level specialists in linguistics and language programmes with interdisciplinary knowledge, skills and competences in the languages and communication culture of the Middle and Far East region
- 2) The introduction of internship in the study programme is a considerable improvement in the quality.

Weaknesses:

- 1) The Alumni programme is not developed thus the career path of graduates is not fully followed by the Faculty of Humanities and the graduates' possible input in the programme's and Faculty's development is not fully exploited.

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1.

The full-time study programme “Asian Studies” complies with requirements of the national academic education standard (Regulations No. 240 of the Cabinet of Ministers as of 1 May 2014 “Regulations on the National Standard for Academic Education” (<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/266187-noteikumi-par-valsts-akademiskas-izglitiba-standartu>)). Based on a study plan the Expert Group verified that the full-time study programme complies also with the Regulations of the University of Latvia on Study and Continuing Education Programmes. The study programme consists of 120 CP, study programme is divided into three parts: (1) the compulsory part (consists of 60 CP), which includes “Bachelor Thesis in Asian Studies” (10 CP), “Civil and Environment Protection” courses (2 CP), and “Internship” (2 CP); (2) the restricted elective part, which consists of 56 CP and (3) Elective courses (4 CP). Foreign students must take an additional course: “Latvian Language for Beginners I”, but students who have completed their secondary education in Latvia, take “Basics of the Latvian Scientific Language and Terminology”. Analysing the content of the study programme the Expert Group found out that the study programme consists of a core module offering general background knowledge in the history, societies and cultures of Asia, and elective modules presenting several directions of specialisation (China, Japan, Korea, Middle East). These modules contain extensive language courses that should provide the student with sufficient skills to work in the field as professionals, and a selection of further courses on the societies and cultures of the chosen countries. On the whole, the programme is well balanced, although certain adjustments could be made in the modules. Ideally, the structures of all modules might be similar, offering the students a range of courses on literature, religion/philosophy, society/politics and arts. At the moment, some courses in some modules are far too specific (for example, the study of Chinese dialects is way too early on the BA level), others too general (for example, various Asian literatures are discussed only in three introductory courses covering the whole of the region). There are two courses on Japanese popular culture, named differently, but none on Japanese religion (or Chinese, for that matter) and it is to be doubted whether that area is covered in any depth in the “civilization and culture” course. It is no doubt the availability of a specialist, and not academic considerations, which has prompted the inclusion of three courses on the Levantine dialect of Arabic into the BA curriculum, instead of Arabic literature and the history of Islam. The Expert Group understands that the programme has to operate under significant constraints, however, and while the Expert Group recommends a revision of the course list with the principles of academic coherence in mind, the Expert Group doesn't consider it a serious flaw at this point.

What is not acceptable, however, is the complete absence of India from the map of Asia. Given the paramount influence of Indian culture on East and South East Asian civilizations, an introduction to Indian culture should be mandatory in the programme of this nature, even if no Indian specialisation is currently offered. Given the relatively minor impact of Korea on the whole region, a course on India might be offered instead of the introduction to Korean civilization in the core curriculum, if nothing else can be replaced. The track record of Prof Taivans in South East Asian Studies makes him fully competent to deliver such a course on an introductory level, or if that should prove to be impossible, there are many excellent specialists in Indian Studies working at the universities of Tartu and Vilnius – perhaps one of them could deliver an introductory course via zoom or in a compressed form during the interim week.

2.2.2.

Not applicable.

2.2.3.

The study process is organised efficiently, the continuity between modules is logical and well-founded. Relatively small groups provide the instructors with the opportunity to implement student-

centred, dialogical learning methods. The Expert Group is aware that the several instructors in the programme, notably Ingrida Kleihnoka, have developed innovative teaching methods that should be propagated more widely on the international level. Students have also favourably commented on the student-centred character of the study process. All the instructors the Expert Group met with are fully fluent in English, which left us with the impression that there is no qualitative difference for the students taking the programme in Latvian or English.

2.2.4.

According to the study plan, there is an internship foreseen in the Bachelor's study programme Asian Studies in Mandatory part (A) (2CP) during the 4th semester. According to the SAR (p.126-127.) the aim of the internship is to enhance theoretical and practical knowledge in the context of Asian languages, communication culture and cultural interactions, to provide students with the opportunity to apply the acquired theoretical knowledge of different regions of Asia, their languages and cultures by performing work duties in a real workplace under the supervision of a specialist and summarising the acquired information in a scientific study, as well as to get acquainted with projects, offers and foreign partnerships of a specific non-governmental organisation, state, municipality or company in this field, which is well supported by the activities reflected in the Annex Bachelor's Study Programme Asian Studies Placement Regulations, approved at the meeting of the Department of Asian Studies, Faculty of Humanities, University of Latvia as of 29th April 2022. This shows that the aim and tasks of an internship are related to the outcomes to be achieved. In conformity with the order of the UL Rector on the organisation of internships, and by the instruction of the Dean, a teaching staff member - UL Placement Supervisor - is approved to supervise the internship in accordance with the study programme aims and achievable learning outcomes. At the placement site, the trainee is assigned a Site Placement Supervisor from the organisation, institution or company, who ensures that the placement is run properly (SARS, p. 126). The programme administrator helps students to find the placement, but students may find the placement themselves as well. Although the SAR and Annexes show that there are cooperation agreements with the organisation Red Cross and association Patvērums 'Drošā māja' and a memorandum with Arab Cultural Centre signed concerning the students' placement, no specific information/criteria is provided concerning the selection of organisations that would support the provision of the internship. Although the SAR states that cooperation agreements with a number of public authorities and non-governmental organisations are to be concluded by 31 December 2022 (SAR, p.126), there is no evidence of that provided. The internship conditions are the same for students with Latvian and English language instruction, but there is no specific procedure described concerning the foreign students.

The previously mentioned confirms that the internship complies with the regulatory enactments, but still improvements would be needed concerning the selection of the internship providers and procedure concerning the foreign students. Since the internship has been included in the study plan for the next accreditation period, there is still no detailed information on the outcomes of the internship available.

2.2.5.

Not applicable.

2.2.6.

The students are choosing the topics for their final theses freely, in consultation with their supervisors, which is exactly as it should be. Analysis of the topics of the final theses revealed that they are chosen according to the topical issues of Asian Studies and fully correspond to the aims, objective, expected learning outcomes and content of the study programme.

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

Conclusions:

The study programme is well structured, albeit there is a certain eclecticism visible in the list of courses, which suggests it has been compiled in part on the basis of the availability of specialists rather than the principle of academic coherence. The study process is implemented smoothly, with the use of innovative methods, and by qualified, competent teachers.

Strengths:

- 1) A sound overall structure of the programme provides for both general background knowledge and opportunities for regional specialisation.
- 2) The introduction of the internship will improve the quality of the reported study programme.
- 3) Students of the reported programme have opportunity to participate in ERASMUS+ internships in foreign companies.

Weaknesses:

- 1) The absence of any India-related courses is an area of concern, given the role of India for the cultural history of Asia as a whole.
- 2) The study of dialects (Chinese, Levantine) on the BA level is unwarranted, especially when important areas such as religion and literature remain uncovered.
- 3) No specific criteria designed for the selection of organisations that would support the provision of the internship.
- 4) No specific procedure available concerning the internship of foreign students although the SAR states that the internship conditions are the same for students with Latvian and English language instruction.
- 5) The number of signed contracts with the internship providers is very low (3).

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 resources of the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Latvia are available to students and teaching staff, including the material and technical base and support, also equipment, information networks (Moodle), access to databases in the library, administrative services, computer applications and software. The available scientific and teaching literature is sufficient to provide the study programme for both Latvian and English language students. The Expert Group thinks that resources available in Latvian and English for the implementation of the programme are adequate, especially if the Expert Group also counts the possibility of the students to access the Asian collections of the National Library. This will be even easier after the move of the faculty to the new

premises currently under construction.

2.3.2.

Not applicable.

2.3.3.

According to the SAR (p.130) the revenue of the programme consists of public funding (1630 euros per year per student, with 46 students overall) and tuition fees (2200 euros per year per student, with 143 students overall), yielding a total of 389'580 euros (The tuition fees for foreign students is 2,880 euros. Different tuition fee for local and international students is a common practice in many countries). Only 44.3% of this sum are used for teaching staff personal costs. According to the UL calculations, the programme should be financially self-sufficient at the student number of 110, which is well exceeded. However, in the opinion of the Expert Group, this programme, just as all others in the study field, operates under significant financial pressure, with overworked and underpaid staff, and the situation is unsustainable in the long run. The Expert Group recommends that a considerably larger part of the revenue of the programme should be left at its disposal for the improvement of the salary conditions of the teaching staff.

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

Conclusions:

Under the current circumstances, there are adequate resources for the implementation of the programme.

Strengths:

- 1) The possibility to use the resources of the National Library significantly enhances the quality of the study process.
- 2) Moodle is used as an e-learning environment.
- 3) UL ensures access to the subscribed databases as well as regularly purchase the necessary literature sources.

Weaknesses:

- 1) The staff are underpaid and overworked to the extent that makes the sustainability of the programme questionable.

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 resources, materials and provision of the study programme correspond to the conditions of its implementation and achievement of the learning outcomes.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1.

There are three groups of teaching staff at the UL: teaching staff in elected academic positions, teaching staff at acting elected academic positions (acting and visiting lecturers), and instructors. Selection and recruitment of elected academic positions as well as acting academic positions shall be in accordance with the Regulations on Academic and Administrative Positions at the University of Latvia (the UL Senate Decision No. 11 of 31.01.2022). According to the Statute, the following academic positions exist at the University of Latvia: professor, associate professor, assistant professor, senior researcher, lecturer, researcher, assistant, research assistant. Proportionally, the BSP “Asian Studies” involves 15% professors, 15% associate professors, 30% assistant professors and 25% lecturers. Nominally, 6 professors and 2 associate professors of the University of Latvia are involved in the implementation of the programme. The teaching staff members of the study programme are qualified and dedicated, and meet all necessary requirements defined by regulatory acts. Professors Jānis Priede, Leons Taivans, Kaspars Kļaviņš and Gunta Ločmele, as well as assistant professors Agita Baltgalve and Agnese Haijima are involved in the realisation of the study programme. Other professors and associate professors of the Faculty of Humanities are also involved in teaching certain courses. The official language proficiency of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programme is confirmed to be compatible with the Regulations regarding the extent of knowledge of the official language and the procedures for examining the proficiency in the official language for the performance of their professional duties. However, they have too little time for research and self-improvement. This is possibly one of the reasons why the course list is academically slightly less coherent than necessary – there simply is no time for them to prepare new courses or to familiarise themselves with further aspects of their field. All teaching staff of the study programme have at least a B2 level of English (CEFR).

2.4.2.

According to the SAR, “Since the accreditation of the programme in 2012, there have been changes in the composition of the teaching staff, but these have been continuously harmonised with the recruitment of new teaching staff, a normal, natural process in the evolution of any study programme” (SAR, p. 228). But according to the expert group, under the circumstances, this could be an area of concern, as the number of specialists in this field who would conform to the language requirements is not very big, while the working conditions are less than lucrative. Should any of the core specialists on whom the programme relies finally burn out or decide to leave, it would not be easy to replace them.

2.4.3.

Not applicable.

2.4.4.

Formally, the members of the staff fulfil this criterion, but the overwhelming majority of their publications is local and the few international ones have not appeared in high-ranking journals.

2.4.5.

The teaching staff is working in close cooperation with each other and the integration of the study courses within the programme is achieved. As to the content problems, see above, 2.2.1.

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

Conclusions:

The programme employs some of the best scholars Latvia has in this field. These include versatile

translators, innovative teachers and respected researchers. However, the visibility of these strengths remains very limited. Formally, the teaching staff is compliant with the criteria for research, but unfortunately the majority of their publications are published in University of Latvia publications where there are concerns about the viability of the peer review system. In an underrepresented area such as Asian Studies, it is very easy to identify colleagues by their research topics. Another area of grave concern is the level of salaries and teaching loads, which should be addressed immediately.

Strengths:

- 1) The staff members involved in the programme are dedicated and qualified instructors, popular with the students and working in close cooperation.
- 2) The numbers of teaching staff in the study programme are sufficient, good mutual collaboration and cooperation between the academic staff and the programme director.

Weaknesses:

- 1) The staff is underpaid and overworked, which makes recruitment of new staff difficult.
- 2) The research output of the staff members is restricted mostly to local outlets and the few international publications have not been published in high-ranking journals.
- 3) On the BA level, international cooperation leaves a lot of room for improvement.

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 list of academic staff involved in the implementation of the study programme is included in annex 2023_03_13_ACADEMIC_STAFF_CV_ENG_FINAL8.pdf

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

The SAR and related documentation confirm that the study programme complies with Regulations No. 240 of the Cabinet of Ministers as of 1 May 2014 "Regulations on the National Standard for Academic Education" <https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=266187>.

- 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

The study course descriptions are prepared in English and Latvian that can be accessed under Study course descriptions_21_02.docx. Descriptions comply 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 samples are provided in Latvian as well as English and they comply 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".

- 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 academic staff complies with the requirements set in Law on Higher Education Institutions. Head of study field declaration No.26 - 22/93 COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 55 1-3.docx).

- 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: Fully compliant

According to the Annex, there are 8 teaching staff members with a doctoral degree - 5 elected.

- 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

This is identified in the annex (2023_03_13_ACADEMIC_STAFF_CV_ENG_FINAL8.pdf). It can be concluded that the state language proficiency is compliant with Cabinet Regulation. Nr. 733 " Regulations Regarding the Extent of the Knowledge of the Official Language, the Procedures for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language and the State Fee for Examining the

Proficiency in the Official Language".

- 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

This is identified in the annex (2023_03_13_ACADEMIC_STAFF_CV_ENG_FINAL8.pdf).

- 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 (Studiju līgumi angļu valodā.zip. Annex 2) complies with Cabinet Regulation. 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

This is the only study programme of its kind in Latvia.

Although there is an agreement signed between the UL and Daugavpils University (DU) (Annex), where paragraph 1.2 states the continuation of the implementation of the BSP Asian Studies in the DU BSP Philology (Russian Philology) (43226), this does not seem plausible since the students only have possibility to acquire the knowledge, skills and competencies in Russian philology, not issues related to Chinese, Korean, etc.

- 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: Fully compliant

This is testified by the Refund and Compensation Policy (Annex).

- 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: Fully compliant

The study programme complies with Regulations No. 240 of the Cabinet of Ministers as of 1 May 2014 "Regulations on the National Standard for Academic Education" and other regulatory

enactments. Although the issue mentioned in the Article 11 of the assessment of the compliance of the study programme Asian Studies cannot be underestimated, it would not directly affect the quality of the study programme.

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

The BSP “Asian Studies” is assessed as excellent based on the desk study of the documentation provided, the interviews with different internal and external stakeholders and examining the infrastructure during the onsite visit. The programme content, teaching and assessment methodology, teaching staff qualification and competencies (their education, pedagogical, research and professional experience), student services and infrastructure equally ensure high quality teaching and learning.

This is an intellectually strong and stimulating programme with long traditions, highly valued by students and employers alike, and also the bearer of national responsibility in the area of Asian Studies research and teaching. Working under considerable financial constraints, the faculty involved has achieved remarkable results in providing the Latvian labour market with highly competent professionals, much needed in many fields from business and foreign policy to literary translation and cultural cooperation. What needs to be emphasised most is the uncompromising quality of linguistic instruction, supplemented with necessary cultural competences. What the Expert Group would expect from this programme in the future is a more internationally oriented research profile and a higher visibility in the field.

The BSP “Asian Studies” can be conducted in Latvian and English in the following forms: full time studies (3 years) in the University buildings located in Riga.

The expert group identified the following strengths and weaknesses (The relevant recommendations are presented below in the special section).

Strengths:

- The reported programme's topicality is undeniable since this is the only study programme in Latvia that is implemented for the training of high-level specialists in linguistics and language programmes with interdisciplinary knowledge, skills and competences in the languages and communication culture of the Middle and Far East region.
- The introduction of internship in the study programme is a considerable improvement in the quality.
- A sound overall structure of the programme provides for both general background knowledge and opportunities for regional specialisation.
- The introduction of the internship will improve the quality of the reported study programme.
- Students of the reported programme have the opportunity to participate in ERASMUS+ internships in foreign companies.
- The possibility to use the resources of the National Library significantly enhances the quality of the study process.
- Moodle is used as an e-learning environment.
- UL ensures access to the subscribed databases as well as regularly purchasing the necessary literature sources.
- The staff members involved in the programme are dedicated and qualified instructors, popular with the students and working in close cooperation.
- The numbers of teaching staff in the study programme are sufficient, good mutual collaboration and cooperation between the academic staff and the programme director.

Weaknesses:

- > The Alumni programme is not developed thus the career path of graduates is not fully followed by the Faculty of Humanities and the graduates' possible input in the programme's and Faculty's development is not fully exploited.
- > The opportunities provided by the Faculty of Humanities concerning the implementation of the study programme if it is terminated, don't consider the rights of the students who study in English.
- > The absence of any India-related courses is an area of concern, given the role of India for the cultural history of Asia as a whole.
- > The study of dialects (Chinese, Levantine) on the BA level is unwarranted, especially when important areas such as religion and literature remain uncovered.
- > No specific criteria designed for the selection of organisations that would support the provision of the internship.
- > No specific procedure available concerning the internship of foreign students although the SAR states that the internship conditions are the same for students with Latvian and English language instruction.
- > The number of signed contracts with the internship providers is very low (3).
- > The staff are underpaid and overworked to the extent that makes the sustainability of the programme questionable and which makes recruitment of new staff difficult.
- > The research output of the staff members is restricted mostly to local outlets and the few international publications have not been published in high-ranking journals.
- > On the BA level, international cooperation leaves a lot of room for improvement.

The BSP "Asian Studies" fulfils the requirements of the Latvian higher education and quality assurance legislation, as well as the local, University and Faculty regulations. There are no deficiencies identified by the expert group which cannot be eliminated during the 2-year accreditation period. The recommendations are provided for further development and improvement and there are no serious weaknesses which may prevent fulfilling the requirements of the accreditation standards.

Evaluation of the study programme "Asian Studies"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Excellent

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Asian Studies"

Short-term recommendations

- 1) The programme should include at least one or two introductory courses on India in order to attain coherent coverage of the region.
- 2) The opportunities provided by the Faculty of Humanities concerning the implementation of the study programme if it is terminated, should be reconsidered to protect the rights of the students who study in English.
- 3) The study of dialects on the BA level should be excluded from the programme, especially as the important areas such as religion and literature remain uncovered.

Long-term recommendations

- 1) Ideally, the salaries of the staff should be doubled and the teaching loads halved.

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| 2) Adjustments indicated in the course list (see 2.2.1. above) should be considered in order to achieve academic coherence. |
| 3) The staff should be given more research time in order to attain a greater degree of visibility on the international scene. Publication in international peer reviewed journals should be rewarded, publication in local journals less so. |
| 4) International cooperation should be increased by inviting guest lecturers, developing ERASMUS exchange programmes with partner institutions in Europe etc. |
| 5) The number of internship programmes should be increased by signing contracts with recipient organisations, for which criteria of eligibility should be formulated, and a procedure for the participation of foreign students in it should be elaborated. |
| 6) Communication with the graduates should be improved by using different forms and approaches. |

II - "English Studies" ASSESSMENT

II - "English Studies" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1.

The academic master's study programme English Studies fully complies with the study field Language and Culture Studies, Mother Tongue Studies, and Language Programmes, since the aim of the study field is to maintain, develop and offer qualitative and versatile as well as globally competitive and research-based studies in the humanities in various languages and cultures, thus ensuring the stability of the level of humanitarian intelligence and Latvian language as well as cultural environment in the present and future Latvian society, to prepare specialists of high academic and scientific qualification in compliance with the long-term goals of the Latvian economy, socio-political strategy , and other goals (SAR, p.17) and the reported study programme's goal is to deliver a body of knowledge, skills and competence in line with the knowledge, skills and competence established for the 7th level of the Latvian Qualifications Framework by providing advanced knowledge, skills and competency in linguistics and literary studies, in the areas pertaining to English studies – English language use, literature, language acquisition, and translation to address the needs of today's changing world and labour market. This is evident that the reported programme's aim complies with the above-mentioned study field aim in a way of developing professionalism and enhancing research competence.

2.1.2.

The title of the programme complies with the defined scientific study field title. The degree- Master's Degree of Humanities in Language Studies and Programmes - to be awarded complies with the regulations (No.240 Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia Regulations Corresponding to National Academic Education Standard). The study programme code 45227 complies with the regulations No.322 of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia Regulations Corresponding to the Classification of Latvian Education (45 - academic education, master's degree; 227 - language studies and programmes). The report indicates and collected information during the on-site visit at UL confirms that the programme design complies with the requirements for the Master's level duration - 2 years (4 semesters of studies), providing for the acquisition of 40 CP per year. The

programme anticipates implementation in English since the courses of the compulsory part and restricted electives part are delivered in it, except for the study course “Stylistics of Latvian” in the sub-programme “Translation and interpreting”, which is delivered in Latvian. According to the comparative analysis of aims, objectives, and learning outcomes of MSP English Studies, its sub-programmes and the study field provided by the SAR, confirms their correlation (see parameters of the study programme, its sub-programmes and Mapping of learning outcomes of MSP “English Studies” and its sub-programmes). The duration and scope of the study programme implementation as well as the implementation language, are reasonable and justified.

Admission requirements are clearly reflected in the UL Admission Requirements and subordinate regulations that determine the procedures for the given academic year. The admission criteria, the formula for calculating the admission score and the admission procedure are published on the UL portal www.lu.lv/gribustudet Since the reported programme contains 2 sub-programmes, namely, English Language, Literature and Language Acquisition and Translation and Interpreting, there are corresponding admission requirements for each (SAR p. 272) That shows that the admission requirements are interrelated with the study programme aims, objectives and learning outcomes.

2.1.3.

Since the licensing procedure (07/05/2021), some qualitative changes in the reported study programme's parameters have been introduced in order to align with the other consolidated programmes in the Faculty of Humanities thus implementing the reduction of study programmes in the above-mentioned faculty. Firstly, two sub-programmes are introduced (SAR, p. 273) that conform to the requirements of the Law on Higher Education Institutions, Article 55, namely, English Language, Literature and Language Acquisition related to the respective sub-branches of linguistics and literary studies and Translation and Interpreting on the basis of which there is the consolidation of translation study programmes and the content of which corresponds to linguistics and literary studies, including elements of sub-branches - comparative and contrastive linguistics.

Secondly, changes are related to the inclusion of free electives (C) part (in the amount of 2 CP) in the study programme. Thirdly, changes have been made to improve the choice of courses related to literary studies based on the Experts recommendations of licensing procedure. Due to the changes in the requirements of the Law on Environmental Protection and the Law on Civil Protection, the courses Environment Protection (1 CP) and Civil Protection (1 CP) were included in the master's study programme in accordance with the requirements if not completed in the previous study period. It is admitted by the Experts that the changes made are qualitative, justified and would be supported.

The Expert Group particularly appreciates the degree of student involvement in the development of the quality of the programme, the regular meetings and gathering of informal feedback, which, in the opinion of the group, has contributed a lot to the quickly rising reputation of the programme among potential applicants.

2.1.4.

The SAR provides superficial economic and social justification for the study programme mainly based on the informative report of the Ministry of Economics (SAR, p. 277) which admits that people with higher education levels are less at risk of unemployment. SAR reflects on employers' opinion and the study of job advertisements/ vacancies, which states that transversal skills are necessary for both public as well as private sector. Table 3.1.3.2. (SAR, p. 278) discloses that demand for English knowledge has increased up to 55%. Since the development of transversal skills such as individual, team and virtual teamwork skills are embedded in the objectives of the reported study programme, it might be concluded that the MSP English Studies have a potential to offer skilled professionals to the job market. However, the topicality of the MSP English Studies could have been better supported by the more grounded arguments.

Since the MSP English Studies was licensed recently (7/05/2021) there is still no data available on the number of graduates. SAR p. 279 claims to reflect the total number of Year 1 and 2 students in the MSP English Studies (Table 3.1.4.), but there is no Table included in the SAR. According to the Annex Statistical data about the students of the Master's programme English Studies, it can be clearly seen that there is a growing tendency of enrolled students (10 students in academic year 2021/2022 whereas 19 students enrolled in academic year 2022/2023), although 4 students have left the studies, consequently there are only 6 2nd year students now in the programme. This can be considered as a sharp drop and the problem needs to be considered through further development of study content since as one of the reasons for not continuing studies, is 'the study content does not correspond to the wishes'. (Annex), more flexible organisation of studies (another reason for not continuing studies - inability to combine studies and work), as well as personal reasons are mentioned for not continuing studies that might be solved with the help of psychological counselling, academic support, etc. As a noteworthy fact should be identified that there are international students in the reported programme, 2 students from Turkey and India enrolled in the MSP English Studies in 2021/2022., but as Table 5 in Annex on statistics of students discloses, there are no international students in the 2nd year of studies, although in 2022/2023 4 students from Turkey, Russia, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan enrolled in the reported study programme. The mentioned numbers are promising, but the range of countries could be more diverse and more attention could be paid to advertising the MSP English Studies in order to attract the international students.

2.1.5.

Not applicable.

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

Conclusions:

All of the indicators of the study programme are in compliance with the existing preconditions of the implementation of the study programme. The academic Master's study programme English Studies complies with the study field indicators, conditions and criteria. In the opinion of the Experts, the title, code, degree to be obtained of the study programme, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation as well as the implementation language, are reasonable and justified. The goals, objectives, learning outcomes are in line and in compliance. There has been a positive trend of student enrolment.

Strengths:

1) Changes made to the parameters of MSP English Studies can be marked as positive since they implement into the quality and effectiveness of the programme that now aligns with other consolidated programmes in the Faculty of Humanities.

Weaknesses:

- 1) Considerably high drop-out rate of students.
- 2) Lack of advertisement to attract international students.
- 3) Insufficient justification of study programme importance and topicality by the SAR and by internal stakeholders as well as negative impact of students' numbers and drop-out rates on popularity of the reported programme.

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1.

The master's study programme "English Studies" complies with the national academic education standard (Regulations No. 240 of the Cabinet of Ministers as of 1 May 2014 "Regulations on the National Standard for Academic Education" (<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/266187-noteikumi-par-valsts-akademiskas-izglitiba-standartu>)). The amount of the academic master's study programme is 80 CP, of which 56 CP is compulsory part (Part A), which includes Master's Thesis (20 CP) and as it is stated in the Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No. 240 of 13 May 2014 "Regulations on the National Standard of Academic Education", 22 CP restricted elective part (Part B) and 2 CP elective part (Part C). In addition, the mandatory part of the academic master's study programme includes 2 CP in civil protection and environmental protection courses for students who have not acquired them in the previous stage of studies. The study programme has a "Basic Latvian for International Students I" study course which is mandatory for international students and is required by the Law on Higher Education Institutions. During the onsite visit academic staff and students of the master's study programme "English Studies" confirmed that the student develops his / her master's thesis under the guidance of a scientist and the aim of the master's degree study programme is to provide research-based internationally recognized academic higher education. The content of the study programme is designed to provide advanced knowledge, skills and competency in linguistics and literary studies, in the areas pertaining to English studies – English language use, literature, language acquisition, and translation to address the needs of today's changing world and labour market. The self-assessment report and related annexes contain exhaustive information about the study programme's compliance to the national education standard, as well as about the topicality and relevance of the programme's content to the English philology needs, labour market and scientific trends. The programme aims to prepare competent, critically thinking, emotionally intelligent and linguistically skilled English philology professionals. In the development of the academic master's study programme "English Studies" requirements of the regulations of the University of Latvia on Study and Continuing Education Programmes are observed.

2.2.2.

Students of the study programme develop research on various English philology issues and language processes, the research orientation of the programme is interdisciplinary. Students do carry out independent research work under the supervision and the reported topics of the Master theses are relevant to the English philology.

2.2.3.

According to the self-assessment report, the programme extensively uses a variety of standard teaching methods such as lectures, seminars, discussions, practical classes, simulations, role plays, literature studies, individual and group consultations, students' independent individual work, presentations, conferences, guest speakers from the industry representatives, for example, Nordtext, Skrivanek Baltic, Tilde. The students the Expert Group met with pointed out the high quality of the studies, individual approach and adjustment to particular interests of the students on part of the teaching staff. The choice of the relevant sub-programme is motivated by the students' career preferences, and supported by counselling if need be. Reasonable amount of interaction between the sub-programmes makes it possible for the students to benefit from the broader range of the intellectual choices on offer. Therefore, the Expert Group concluded that the student-centred learning and teaching principles are implemented by the teaching staff of the programme.

2.2.4.

According to the study plan, there is an internship foreseen in the Master's study programme English Studies in Restricted elective (B) (2CP) during the 3rd semester in both sub-programmes. According to the SAR (p.288) the aim of the internship is to offer students the opportunity to develop and improve their professional competence, applying the knowledge and skills acquired in the study courses, to deepen students' understanding about the application of the competence obtained in the study courses, which is generally linked to the aims of the study programme and sub-programmes. Although it must be admitted that the aims and tasks disclosed by the Internship Regulations (Annex) are too general and superficial, e.g., 'to execute particular internship tasks at the internship place' (point 3.1.), besides that they are not clearly defined, e.g., 'based on the characteristics of the task to be executed, the knowledge and skills in linguistics and literary science obtained during the study programme courses.' (point 3.2). Although the SAR mentions that there are cooperation agreements with the organisations signed concerning the students' placement, no specific information/criteria is provided concerning the selection of organisations that would support the provision of the internship, and it is not revealed how many contracts with which particular organisations are signed.

The internship conditions are the same for domestic and international students where the internship organiser helps students to find the placement, but students may find the placement themselves as well. Taking into consideration that this is the Master's study programme there is a great concern if students will do the internship since many of them have been already working in the field (SAR, p.288) besides that, since one of the reasons of not continuing the studies is difficulty to combine studies with work, adds to the concern a lot. Since the internship has been included in the study plan for the next accreditation period, there is still no detailed information on the outcomes of the internship available.

2.2.5.

Not applicable.

2.2.6.

Topics of the Master theses are relevant to the English philology studies. The process of choosing and approving the topics for the Master's thesis is clear.

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

Conclusions:

This is a new and dynamic programme that is gaining a good reputation among the BSP graduates. The Expert Group particularly appreciates the degree of student involvement in the development of the programme. The content of studies is adequate, the methods of implementation effective and the staff well qualified. All in all, this is an exemplary programme.

Strengths:

- 1) The programme is dynamic and attractive, implemented by dedicated and competent staff and well appreciated by the students.
- 2) It is a noteworthy initiative to introduce an internship in the study plan of MSP English Studies, since it would implement the quality of the reported study programme.

Weaknesses:

- 1) The organisation of the internship system might need some improvements, as many of the

students are already working in professional life and may not need it.

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 staff is competent and dedicated. There is a reasonable amount of academic cooperation between the staff and partner institutions, and though it would be desirable to see more publications in high-ranking academic journals, the level of their current activities is fully appropriate. In general, the teaching and research component of the MP English Studies is based on latest achievements and findings in the respective interdisciplinary field.

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1.

The resources of the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Latvia are available to students and teaching staff, including the material and technical base and support, also equipment, information networks (Moodle), access to databases in the library, administrative services, computer applications and software. The available scientific and teaching literature is sufficient to provide the study programme.

2.3.2.

Not applicable.

2.3.3.

According to the SAR (p.292) the revenue of the programme consists of public funding (2445 euros per year per student, with 61 students overall) and tuition fees (2200 euros per year per domestic student, with 2 students overall, and 3150 euros per year per international student, with 2 students overall)), yielding a total of 159'845 euros. According to the UL calculations, the programme should be financially self-sufficient at the student number of 60, which has been reached. The sub-programmes operate within a joint budget and the tuition fees are equal. In the opinion of the Expert Group, this programme, just as all others in the study field, operates under significant financial pressure, with overworked and underpaid staff, and the situation is unsustainable in the long run. However, this is not an issue that the administration of the programme or the faculty can solve by themselves, therefore the Expert Group will not consider it to be a flaw in their work.

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

Conclusions:

On the whole, the resources allocated to this study programme are adequate, especially as far as the library, IT and other supporting services are concerned. The teaching load and the level of staff remuneration remain areas of concern.

Strengths:

- 1) The programme has reached a sufficient level of popularity in a brief period of time to attract the

prescribed number of students to make it formally self-sufficient in the financial sense.

Weaknesses:

1) As with all other programmes, the teaching loads and the level of remuneration remain areas of concern.

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 programme is economically sustainable, provided with adequate resources and materials and capably administered.

UL provides the study programme with all the necessary tools and resource material, technical as well as informative base for successful implementation of the study programme.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1.

There are three groups of teaching staff at the UL: teaching staff in elected academic positions, teaching staff at acting elected academic positions (acting and visiting lecturers), and instructors. Selection and recruitment of elected academic positions as well as acting academic positions shall be in accordance with the Regulations on Academic and Administrative Positions at the University of Latvia (the UL Senate Decision No. 11 of 31.01.2022). According to the Statute, the following academic positions exist at the University of Latvia: professor, associate professor, assistant professor, senior researcher, lecturer, researcher, assistant, research assistant. The master programme “English Studies” is run by the teaching staff whose educational background, knowledge and skills, pedagogical, research and professional experience correspond to the profile, aims and learning outcomes, research areas of the programme. Clause of the section 55(1)(3) of the Law on Higher Education Institutions, which stipulates that “not less than five professors and associate professors altogether, who are elected to academic positions in the relevant higher education institution, shall take part in the implementation of the compulsory part and the limited elective part of academic study programmes” is fulfilled. 12 professors and associate professors (see study plan), as well as 4 assistant professors who have been elected to the UL participate in the implementation of the compulsory and restricted electives part of the study programme “English Studies”. The academic staff involved in the study programme possess a PhD in philology (11), pedagogy (2), computer sciences (1), biological sciences (1) and chemistry (1). All members of the teaching staff hold Master or PhD degrees, as required by the Latvian legislation and local, University regulations. The representatives of the teaching staff publish both locally and internationally recognised journals, participate in national and international projects, attend international scientific conferences, participate in various seminars, deliver lectures abroad, attend further education programmes in Latvia and abroad, etc. They also attend the professional development programs and courses provided by the UL. All teaching staff of the study programme have at least a B2 level of English (CEFR). Teaching staff of other foreign language courses have certified proficiency in the respective foreign languages at C2 level.

2.4.2.

The data provided by the UL reveals that there were no significant changes in the staff composition of the master programme “English Studies”. One staff member left and another one joined the programme implementation team after getting licenced. Two foreign instructors from Milan and Bern were involved in the programme in 2021-2022, which should be regarded as a very positive development to be followed by other programmes of the study field “Languages and Culture Studies, Mother Tongue Studies, and Language Programmes”.

2.4.3.

Not applicable.

2.4.4.

The CVs and SAR reveals that the academic staff involved in implementation of the master programme “English Studies” has professional/practical experience related to the programmes’ profile and/or regularly publishes in peer-reviewed journals indexed in ERIH PLUS, EBSCO, SCOPUS, Web of Science, etc., but there should be more peer-reviewed international publications in high-ranking academic journals, which should be regarded as an area for further improvement.

2.4.5.

According to the SAR, the implementation of the MSP “English Studies” “is based on cooperation and, above all, on cooperation between teaching staff. It has been implemented since commencing the work on the development of the study programme, continued during the study programme implementation upon receiving the licence, as well as faculty cooperation is the basis for the further implementation of the study programme” (SAR, p. 296). Cooperation during the development of the study programme included faculty participation in the work groups to define the aim and objectives of the study programme, as well as cooperation with the faculty of universities of foreign countries (e.g. Italy, Switzerland, USA etc.). The interviews conducted during the onsite visit proved the information provided in the SAR, that not only Latvian, but also foreign colleagues were involved and participated in all study programme development stages – development of structure, content, description of learning outcomes, as well as evaluation of course descriptions according to the programme concept. The experts confirmed that the working meetings, workshops, and online communication was actively used for successful, efficient and productive collaboration.

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

Conclusions:

The master programme “English Studies” is run by the teaching staff whose qualification is in full compliance with national and local requirements. There are effective mechanisms for smoothly replacing the teaching staff (if necessary) and for fruitful cooperation with the local and international peers for external assessment, updating and developing the courses/curriculum. The teaching staff is actively involved in research, but there is a lack of international publications.

Strengths:

1) Involvement of two foreign instructors in teaching.

Weaknesses:

1) Lack of publications in highly ranked international journals published abroad.

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

CVs, SAR, Latvian legislation and University regulations. The weaknesses indicated in the analysis of the section, doesn't have impact on overall assessment, as the qualification of the teaching staff complies with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and requirements of the UL/Latvian regulatory framework, despite the lack of the publications in internationally recognised journals abroad.

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

Annex (EELBS compliance with standard.docx) confirms that the study programme complies with Regulations No. 240 of the Cabinet of Ministers as of 1 May 2014 "Regulations on the National Standard for Academic Education" <https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=266187> (Available only in Latvian).

- 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

The study course descriptions are prepared in English and Latvian that can be accessed under Study course descriptions_21_02.docx. Descriptions comply 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 samples (Diploma supplements MSP_enl_studies+diploma.Zz. with 2 annexes that differ based on the 2 sub-programmes (1. "English Language, Literature, and Language Acquisition" 2. "Translation and Interpreting") that are implemented in this study programme.

The diploma samples comply 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”.

- 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

Head of study field declaration No.26 - 22/93 certifies that the academic staff involved in the implementation of the study programme complies with the requirements specified in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Annex (HEAD OF STUDY FIELD DECLARATION ON COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 55 1-3.docx)

- 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

This is identified in the annex (2023_03_13_ACADEMIC_STAFF_CV_ENG_FINAL8.pdf). It can be concluded that the state language proficiency is compliant with Cabinet Regulation . Nr. 733 "Regulations Regarding the Extent of the Knowledge of the Official Language, the Procedures for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language and the State Fee for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language".

- 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

As this programme has implementation language English, it is required for the teaching staff to have at least B2 level English. The attached documents: 1.

2023_03_13_ACADEMIC_STAFF_CV_ENG_FINAL8.pdf and 2.B2 LEVEL.rar.

- 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 (Studiju līgumi angļu valodā.zip. Annex 2) complies with Cabinet Regulation. 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

UL has provided confirmation that students will be provided with opportunities to continue their education in another higher education institution if the implementation of the study programme is terminated. The agreements are specified in the annexes under "Agreements in case of SP discontinuation". It is specified that in case of discontinuation of this study programme, students are to be able to continue their studies at Daugavpils University in study programme Master's study programme Philology (English Philology).

- 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: Fully compliant

UL 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. It is ensured based on the "Refund and Compensation Policy Statement" document added to the annexes pursuant to paragraph 13.4 of the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 795 "Regulations Regarding Licensing of Study Programmes".

- 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: Fully compliant

Study programme fully complies with regulatory enactment.

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

This is a programme with an important national mission, given the role that high quality English language education and the preparation of professional translators has for the society at large. It is fulfilling its tasks as best it can under the circumstances. The instructors are qualified and the students highly motivated, in spite of the strain resulting from combining their day job as schoolteachers and their studies, as many of them have to do. The Expert Team was particularly impressed with the level of student involvement in the development activities. However, a flexible attitude is recommended toward students with diverse backgrounds, f. ex. concerning internship, as

those already working in the field should not be required to take it on as an additional burden. The programme also has international potential and could attract students from other countries, including refugees, for whom this could be a good opportunity to hone their skills before returning home after circumstances have stabilised.

The MSP “English Studies” can be conducted in English in the following forms: full time studies (2 years) in the University buildings located in Riga.

The experts identified the following strengths and weaknesses:

Strengths:

- Changes made to the parameters of MSP English Studies can be marked as positive since they implement into the quality and effectiveness of the programme that now aligns with other consolidated programmes in the Faculty of Humanities.
- The programme is dynamic and attractive, implemented by dedicated and competent staff and well appreciated by the students.
- It is a noteworthy initiative to introduce an internship in the study plan of MSP English Studies, since it would implement the quality of the reported study programme.
- The programme has reached a sufficient level of popularity in a brief period of time to attract the prescribed number of students to make it formally self-sufficient in the financial sense.
- Involvement of two foreign instructors in teaching.

Weaknesses:

- Considerably high drop-out rate of students.
- Lack of advertisement to attract international students.
- Insufficient justification of study programme importance and topicality by the SAR and by internal stakeholders as well as negative impact of students' numbers and drop-out rates on popularity of the reported programme.
- The organisation of the internship system might need some improvements, as many of the students are already working in professional life and may not need it.
- As with all other programmes, the teaching loads and the level of remuneration remain areas of concern.
- Lack of publications in highly ranked international journals published abroad.

The MSP “English Studies” fulfils the requirements of the Latvian higher education and quality assurance legislation, as well as the local, University and Faculty regulations.

There are no deficiencies identified by the expert group which cannot be eliminated during the 2-year accreditation period. The recommendations are provided for further development and improvement and there are no serious weaknesses which may prevent fulfilling the requirements of the accreditation standards.

Evaluation of the study programme "English Studies"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Excellent

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "English Studies"

Short-term recommendations

- 1) The internship requirement should be adjusted for relieving those students of it who are already working in the field, and to provide specific criteria for the organisations who are to receive interns.
- 2) The programme should be advertised more effectively in order to attract international students from different countries.

Long-term recommendations

- 1) The teaching staff capacity and supporting mechanisms (including financial incentives) for publishing in highly ranked international journals published abroad should be developed.
- 2) The teaching loads and the level of remuneration of the staff should be improved.
- 3) The considerably high drop-out rate of students should be addressed e.g., through further adaptation of study content and methods, more flexible organisation of studies, psychological counselling, and academic support, etc.

II - "Latvian Language, Literature and Culture Studies" ASSESSMENT

II - "Latvian Language, Literature and Culture Studies" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1.

The academic masters study programme "Latvian Language, Literature and Culture Studies" complies with indicators, conditions and criteria of the study field of "Language and Culture Studies, Mother Tongue Studies, and Language Programmes". The length of the implementation of the study programme, which is 2 years for full-time, is evaluated as sufficient for acquiring the necessary skills and way of thinking to enter the labour market.

2.1.2.

According to the SAR p.138, the title of the study programme is "Latvian Language, Literature and Culture Studies" hereinafter "LLCS" in the study field of "Language and Culture Studies, Mother Tongue Studies, and Language Programmes" with education classification code 45227 with the last 3 numbers (227) standing for language studies and programmes according to the classification of Latvian education which can be accessed here: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/291524-noteikumi-par-latvijas-izglitiba-klasifikaciju>. There is no qualification given after graduating as it is an academic master study programme.

The programme does not have any sub-programmes. According to the SAR p.138, the aim of the programme is to ensure the training of highly academically and scientifically qualified graduates of Latvian linguistics and language technology, literary and culture (folklore and theatre) studies at master's level, who will shape the future cultural and linguistic space of Latvia, will creatively and independently apply scientific theories and methods in academic and professional contexts, will acknowledge the role of and locate their study field in a wide range of issues in the humanities; to prepare graduates for doctoral studies, as well as for work in various scientific, cultural and other institutions in Latvia and abroad.

According to the information provided in the SAR p.139, the admission requirements of this programme differ and there are various options how a student can get enrolled in this study

programme. 1. Bachelor's degree or second-level professional higher education qualification diploma or equivalent in the humanities. 2. Second level professional higher education qualification diploma in arts or teacher education (language, literature and/or culture teacher education) and entrance examination; 3. Bachelor's degree or second level professional higher education qualification diploma or equivalent higher education in another discipline, entrance examination and professional/creative experience in the field of humanities.

According to the SAR p.140, after successful completion of the studies, students are awarded with "Master's Degree of Humanities in Language Studies and Programmes". According to the SAR p.139, the study programme is a full-time study programme with 80 CP to be gathered during the study process of 2 years. The title, code, degree to be obtained of the study programme, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation as well as the implementation language, are reasonable and justified.

2.1.3.

According to SAR p.141, there are various changes made within the study programme parameters. The title of the study programme has been changed from "Baltic philology" to "Latvian Language, Literature and Culture Studies". These changes were discussed on various levels and approved by the Council with a vote of the FH Council on 31 January 2022.

In accordance with SAR p.141, the first substantial change within the study programme parameters since previous accreditation and in line with the amendments to the National Academic Education Standard was that the mandatory part was increased from 20 CP to 24 CP. A new study course "Digital Humanities and Social Sciences" worth 4 CP has been included in the programme starting from academic year 2018/2019.

As specified in SAR p.141, another change that has been implemented is a formation of cooperation with UL Faculty of Social Sciences, on the inclusion and sharing the delivery of digital courses of social sciences and humanities. New courses have been implemented as "Digital Humanities and Social Sciences", "Computer Analysis of Text and Data Visualization" and "Introduction to Computational Linguistics".

Third change introduced in the study programme has been specified in the SAR pp. 141-142. It is specified that due to a small demand, the sub-programme of Baltic Studies and Lithuanian Studies has been closed and the study courses on Diachronic and Synchronic Linguistics were integrated in the linguistics sub-programme so that the programme would continue to provide for the preparation of young researchers in the history of Baltic languages.

In accordance with SAR p. 142, a new study course has been implemented in the mandatory part of the study programme. The course called "Latvian Language and Cultural Academic Practice" (2 CP) was introduced, replacing the "Principles for the Interpretation of Contemporary Theatre", thus reinforcing the set of the study courses oriented at practical application.

Fifth change made in the study programme according SAR p.142, is implementation of courses in the restricted elective part every second year, which has also delivered a positive learning outcome, namely, there is a more intensive cooperation among students within the study course cluster.

There have been various changes prepared for the new accreditation that are also outlined and specified within the SAR.

According to SAR p. 142, a new course clusters of restricted-elective courses – Computer Linguistics – has been created accounting for 20 CP. The objective of the Computer Linguistics course cluster is to educate the new generation of Latvian linguists to enable them to work in the public and private sectors using modern technologies. The computer linguistics course cluster courses will be launched with the help of Investment 2.3.1.1.i. project "Providing high-level digital skills acquisition" (development of new courses, creation of e-courses, training materials procurement, purchase of computer programs, etc.) of Reform and investment direction 2.3 "Digital Skills" of Component 2

“Digital Transformation” of the Plan for the European Recovery and Resilience Facility.

Another change introduced is a study course of 2 CP has been introduced in the free elective section.

Based on SAR p.142, the new cluster division system that is to be implemented supposes that study courses are divided into course clusters - Language (linguistics courses), Literature (courses of literature studies), Culture studies (courses of folklore studies/theatre studies courses) and Computer Linguistics course cluster. Students must choose a course cluster of 20 CP courses in the restricted elective part where they will write their master’s thesis and 14 CP from the complete range of the restricted elective courses of the entire programme. This change is going to fix the previously existing problem of lack of freedom of students to choose their elective courses. As part of the MSP LLLCS, students will be offered wider and more targeted opportunities for combining their courses.

Fourth change planned to be implemented in accordance with SAR p.142, the theatre studies sub-programme and folklore studies sub-programme have been replaced with the course cluster in culture studies.

The new established structure is planning to introduce a clear division between practical and theoretical courses. According to SAR pp.142-143, the study programme will feature the following new courses directed at practical application: Project Management in Humanities and the Creative Industries, Latvian Literary Criticism: Theory and Practice, Theatre Criticism in Practice, Electronic Lexicography.

The study programme will feature new theoretical courses for interdisciplinary and core studies: Cultural Heritage and New Identities, Narrative in Literature, Film and Media, Ethnolinguistics and Language of Latvian Folk Songs, Aesthetics and Functions of Contemporary Theatre, Theories and Research Methods of Theatre.

According to SAR p.143, the programme, in accordance with the study course content requirements set by the Law on Environmental Protection and the Law on Civil Protection, includes additional courses Environmental Protection (1 CP) and Civil Protection (1 CP) for students who have not completed these before studying in MSP LLLCS.

Overall, the Expert Group supports the changes implemented in the content of the study programme.

2.1.4.

According to the information provided at SAR p. 147, the programme is well founded in economic and labour market terms. Based on the data provided at SAR and the evidence gathered at the site meetings, the Expert Group is confident that the programme responds to the needs of the Latvian labour market. Graduates work in public, municipal and private institutions, research institutes, libraries, museums, theatres, publishing and media houses, translation services (SAR p. 148). However, the SAR does not include data on the percentage of employed graduates and graduates developing their own businesses. The programme management is aware of the discrepancy between the philology education and the needs of the labour market dominated by STEM. Considering the level of education and competencies provided by the programme (core groups 1 and 2 according to the classification of professions of the Republic of Latvia), graduates should have solid chances on the local labour market. The statistical data in the appendices of SAR show a moderate decline in both the dynamics of student numbers and enrolment dynamics. The identified reasons for the decline point to the need to reconsider programme promotion and appeal to different target groups.

2.1.5.

Not applicable.

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

Conclusions:

All of the indicators of the study programme are in compliance with the existing preconditions of the implementation of the study programme. The study programme “Latvian Language, Literature and Culture Studies” complies with the study field indicators, conditions and criteria. In the opinion of the Experts, the title, code, degree to be obtained of the study programme, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation as well as the implementation language, are reasonable and justified. The study programme is implemented in Latvian. The goals, objectives, learning outcomes are in line and in compliance. The programme is comparably low in demand, which needs to be addressed.

Strengths:

- 1) The study programme complies with indicators, conditions and criteria of the study field of “Language and Culture Studies, Mother Tongue Studies, and Language Programmes”.
- 2) Main parameters of the study programme are well interrelated. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation are reasonable and justified.
- 3) The interdisciplinary character of the study programme facilitates good employment opportunities.

Weaknesses:

- 1) Low demand of the study programme.
- 2) High dropout rate of the students.
- 3) Lack of graduates’ data collection and analysis.

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1.

The study programme is designed to award students the Master’s degree of Humanities in Language studies and programmes. The structure of the programme includes all obligatory parts: the mandatory part (24 CP), the restricted elective part (34 CP), the elective part (2 CP) and the writing of the master's thesis (20 CP) and fully complies with the national academic education standard (Regulations No. 240 of the Cabinet of Ministers as of 1 May 2014 “Regulations on the National Standard for Academic Education” (<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/266187-noteikumi-par-valsts-akademiskas-izglitibas-standartu>)). In the development of the academic master’s study programme “Latvian Language, Literature and Culture Studies” requirements of the regulations of the University of Latvia on Study and Continuing Education Programmes are observed. According to SAR p. 142, study courses are divided into course clusters - Language (linguistics courses), Literature (courses of literature studies), Culture studies (courses of folklore studies/theatre studies courses) and Computer Linguistics. The interrelation of the clusters is logical and complementary. The programme offers a very small number of free electives. This prevents students from taking advantage of the full range of courses offered by UL. This is especially important for improving graduate employability. The content of the study programme provides a solid foundation for in-depth study in the field and an interdisciplinary approach to language, literature, and culture. The aim, objectives, and learning outcomes of the MSP are fully aligned with the aim, objectives, and learning outcomes of the study field. The mapping of programme-level learning outcomes and subject-level learning outcomes is clear and

appropriate (Appendix MSP LLLCS mapping). Programme content reflects labour market needs - students are provided with up-to-date skills in project management in the humanities and creative industries, knowledge of digital tools and resources (e.g. digital libraries, archives, repositories, social networks, datasets and corpora, geographic information systems (GIS) in Digital Humanities, Palladio, Recogito, Zeemaps, Nodegoat, NLP-PIPE, CATMA Sketch Engine, visualisation tools and others), have the opportunity to acquire and deepen their professional skills in linguistic programming, speech data processing and computational linguistics. The decision to offer new theoretical courses for interdisciplinary and core studies (e.g. Cultural Heritage and New Identities, Narrative in Literature, Film and Media, Ethnolinguistics and Language of Latvian Folk Songs) is admirable. The programme could include even more topics related to cognitive approach to language, e.g. Cognitive Linguistics, Linguistic Worldview and others.

2.2.2.

According to SAR p. 153, the programme follows the current global trends in linguistics, literary studies, folklore studies and theatre studies in Europe and the world. Course descriptions provided in the annexes confirm the programme content is up-to-date. The programme includes the application of technological advances in the field, most notably introduced by the Investment 2.3.1.1.i. project "Providing high-level digital skills acquisition" (development of new courses, creation of e- courses, training materials procurement, purchase of computer programs, etc.) of Reform and investment direction 2.3 "Digital Skills" of Component 2 "Digital Transformation" of the Plan for the European Recovery and Resilience Facility (SAR p. 142). Moreover, the topicality is ensured by comparison with similar programmes in Latvia (Daugavpils University, Liepaja University) and Europe (MSPs at Daugavpils University, Ludwig Maximilian Munich University, Uppsala University, University of Oslo, Vilnius University, University of Tartu) and commitment to best foreign practices, which is commendable. Course descriptions include both structural and cognitive approaches to Linguistics (e.g. Pragmatics and Semantics) to promote a broader overview of the field. Courses cover both synchronic and diachronic language research aspects. According to SAR p. 146, this is the only study programme in the country that consistently sustains the specialised courses in diachronic linguistics and Baltic linguistics. Reading lists provided in course descriptions include essential monographs and periodicals in various languages and research traditions. According to SAR p. 154, research conclusions published in the academic staff have published in their monographies, in the collections of research papers and individual articles are also included in all delivered study courses. The access to Clarivate Analytics and Scopus databases ensures students get acquainted with the latest top-level research in language, literature, and culture. Students are actively involved in research activities, scientific conferences and nationally funded projects (National Culture Capital Foundation and Latvian Council of Science). It can be concluded that the studies are linked to the latest developments in research.

2.2.3.

The lecturers are free to design course content and choose teaching and assessment methods; there is no overarching study philosophy or prescribed guidelines for teaching methodology. Course content may be updated after delivery based on student evaluation. The use of the e-environment and the LUIS system in the study process enables timely communication with students. The active and collaborative teaching/learning methods (e.g., interactive lectures, problem-oriented lectures, case-studies, essays, debates, project work) meet the essential provisions of student-oriented studies and enable students to achieve the intended study outcomes and to reflect on their performance. The recommendation here would be to introduce more methods when the student is faced with situations similar to those encountered in professional life. The teaching/learning methods foster student creativity, collaboration, research and communication abilities. An example of good practice is the "Field Research in Folklore course, where students spend summers learning

to collect and study modern folklore with representatives from the University of Latvia, other universities, and local governments (SAR p. 156). The involvement of employers, representatives of various institutions, and other stakeholders in the form of guest lectures contributes to the intertwining of theory and practice. The study process benefits from the participation of doctoral students and other researchers. The selection of various assessment methods (e.g. presentations, reports, individual homework, written test, evaluation of a project application, final examination) is based on the subject study outcomes and the assessment criteria. From the information on SAR and the appendices, it can be concluded that students are actively involved in the study process and the role of the lecturers is to facilitate it. Faculty feedback helps students assess their level of achieved learning outcomes. Students are surveyed on a regular basis; the collected student feedback is taken into account when updating the programme. However, considering that the student-centred approach should focus on the needs of the individual student, little information (individual consultations with the faculty facilitated by using e-studies) is provided about individualization of study (students with disabilities, individualised study plans, assessment and crediting the study outcomes achieved through both formal and non-formal and informal learning).

2.2.4.

The mandatory part of the programme includes a practical training course "Latvian Language and Cultural Academic practice" (2 CP). According to the course description the internship comprises two objectives: 1. to perform specific tasks at the placement site; 2. to creatively use the knowledge and skills acquired in the study programme courses in linguistics, literary studies, folklore and theatre studies, according to the specifics of the assigned tasks. The stated internship assignments are closely related to the learning outcomes (Annex LLLCS Course Descriptions pp. 20-21). The internship learning outcomes are consistent with the overall design of the study programme. Interim assessments and final assessment (internship report defence) meet the principles of the student-centred approach. The internship complies with the Internship Regulation approved at the UL Faculty of Humanities (Annex Regulation on practical training). The practice supervisor of the study programme is required to offer the student a placement site in accordance with the agreements for the provision of student practises the faculty has drawn with institutions (Regulation p. 3). According to SAR, the faculty maintains several internship agreements with stakeholders, primarily internal UL institutes and departments, museums, and libraries. A complete list of internship agreements would help paint a clearer picture of the organisations involved. During a meeting with local employers, the Expert Group satisfied itself of the appropriate provision of internships. 26 practical work hours are dedicated to the engagement and participation in the daily work of the host organisation. The number of credits and the amount of practical work hours is low even for an academic Master's programme. Despite this, the faculty took into account the improvement of students' career prospects by introducing practice-oriented courses, e.g. "Literary Editing and Language Practice", "Project Management in Humanities and Creative Industries", Latvian Literary Criticism: Theory and Practice, Theatre Criticism in Practice, Electronic Lexicography.

2.2.5.

Not applicable.

2.2.6.

Sufficient 20 CP (800 contact hours) are available for writing the Master's thesis. According to the course description on p. 23, Master's thesis may be written in one of the sub-branches of science – history of Latvian literature, literary theory, comparative literary studies, Baltic linguistics, Latvian synchronic linguistics, Latvian diachronic linguistics, Latvian folklore studies, theory and history of theatre, general linguistics, mythology - or it can be an interdisciplinary study. This confirms the claim that all sub-branches represented in the programme in a diachronic and synchronic

perspective are covered (SAR p. 160). The typical volume of a Master's thesis is 70-80 pages. The topics of students' final theses address a variety of linguistic, literature and cultural phenomena encompassed by study courses of the programme. It is evident that students analyse both synchronic and diachronic language research aspects, e.g. "Derivation Tendencies of New Toponyms (Oikonyms and Urbanonyms) in Latvia and Lithuania"; "Lexical Changes in Lithuanian-Latvian Dictionaries (19th-21st Century)", cover topics relevant for the labour market, e.g. "Specific Characters of Latvian and Lithuanian Legal Texts", "The pragmatic aspect of headlines in mass media", "The Functions and Character of the Theatre's Music: the 21st century's Experience of Latvia" and others. The student thesis topics reflect the major research areas of the study field. Final Thesis Evaluation Sheet (Annex) to be completed by a reviewer is comprehensive. The proportion of good to excellent evaluations (from 8 to 10 in 90% of cases) is quite high, but does not indicate grade inflation. On the contrary, it testifies to the dedication of students to their research interests and to adequate supervision by the lecturers.

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

Conclusions:

The content of the study programme is well structured and interconnected. The needs of the labour market are taken into account in the design of the course content. Students benefit from the interdisciplinary approach to language, literature, and culture. The aim, objectives, and learning outcomes of the MSP are fully aligned with the study field. The study programme is comparable with similar domestic and foreign programmes. The programme reflects the latest research trends in linguistics, literary studies, folklore studies and theatre studies. The active and interactive study methods comply with student-centred learning and teaching principles. Student feedback is considered when updating the programme. Topics of Master's thesis are diverse and do not overlap.

Strengths:

- 1) Content of the study programme is up-to-date, incorporates the use of modern digital tools, and is based on the latest research in the Humanities.
- 2) The introduction of practice-oriented courses facilitates students' career prospects.
- 3) The topics of students' theses are relevant to the field and demonstrate successful application of the subject knowledge and research skills acquired during the studies.

Weaknesses:

- 1) Lack of students' opportunities to individualise their studies.
- 2) The small number of credits for the internship.

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 study programme content includes the latest technological advances in the humanities and is linked to current developments in research.

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1.

According to SAR p.161, the study base, informative provision, material technical base and financial base correspond to the specifics of the study programme, implementation conditions, create prerequisites for achievement of the learning outcomes and testify to the possibility of ensuring a quality study process.

According to the SAR p.162-163, along with the provided e-study environment at UL and the tools offered there, the faculty also use other online tools in their study courses – the tools that are specific for modern linguistics and literature studies (e.g., the tools for the selection of the samples of various genres, e.g. literary texts and spoken texts, as well as for marking and analysis of the samples on various levels and from various perspectives, e.g., the tools for the acquisition and testing the data on the language use). The Computer Linguistics course cluster comprises the course “Speech Data Processing and Analysis”, where the free-of-charge software ELAN and Praat will be used, however for courses 163 “Corpus linguistics” and “Introduction to Computational Linguistics” the licence for SketchEngine software will be repeatedly acquired. For the course purposes, also the free-of-charge tools AntConc and #LancsBox will be used as well as other software products.

Regarding the informative and methodological support, the system is the same generally for all of the study programmes implemented within the study field and it is analysed under Resources and Provision of the study field in great detail.

2.3.2.

Not applicable.

2.3.3.

According to the SAR p. 163, for ensuring the funding for the Master’s Study Programme “Latvian Language, Literature and Culture Studies”, UL uses the allocation from the state budget from the Ministry of Education and Science, which in academic year 2021/2022 accounted for 2 445 for full-time studies. According to the SAR p.164, the estimated income of the study programme per year is 88 020. If analysing total costs and total revenue based on the data provided in the SAR p.165, the numbers are even without any surplus or any losses. The results of the programme shows that there are 36 students that are all funded by the state. According to the data analysed on the cost of the study programme shows that to meet the costs and to provide for a qualitative study process for the students, the number of fee-paying students in the programme (in all years together) must be 44, but if there were only the state-funded students, their number must be at least 36. So, it proves that with the implementation of the study programme there are no financial benefits but the numbers even out in the expenses and costs of the programme.

The Expert Group believes that the programme, just as all others in the study field, operates under significant financial pressure, with overworked and underpaid staff, and the situation is unsustainable in the long run, but this is not an issue that the administration of the programme or the faculty can solve by themselves, therefore the Expert Group will not consider it to be a flaw in their work.

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

Conclusions:

The UL has established well-equipped resource base for comfortable study process for students, which includes e-study environment, library resources as well as databases of extensive variety. The UL ensures accessibility for their students to tools that are specific for modern linguistics and literature studies. The existing resource base is sufficient for a successful provision of the study

process but it has to be noted that the resource base is going to significantly improve with the new premises the university is moving to in the near future. Financially, the study programme needs improvements and stabilisation as currently the programme is even in its total costs against revenues. Ideally, there is some revenue from the implementation of the study programme.

Strengths:

- 1) Self-take and self-return of the library books.
- 2) Well-established and understandable e-study environment.
- 3) Large variety of accessible databases and platforms for students.
- 4) Provision of access to tools that are specific to modern literature and linguistics studies.

Weaknesses:

- 1) Lack of the financial sustainability of the 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

UL provides the study programme with all the necessary tools and resource material, technical as well as informative base for successful implementation of the study programme. However, this programme needs to improve financial sustainability and find extra financial support.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1.

There are three groups of teaching staff at the UL: teaching staff in elected academic positions, teaching staff at acting elected academic positions (acting and visiting lecturers), and instructors. Selection and recruitment of elected academic positions as well as acting academic positions shall be in accordance with the Regulations on Academic and Administrative Positions at the University of Latvia (the UL Senate Decision No. 11 of 31.01.2022). According to the Statute, the following academic positions exist at the University of Latvia: professor, associate professor, assistant professor, senior researcher, lecturer, researcher, assistant, research assistant. The master programme “Latvian Language, Literature and Culture Studies” is run by the teaching staff whose educational background, knowledge and skills, pedagogical, research and professional experience correspond to the profile, aims and learning outcomes, research areas of the programme. Clause of the section 55(1)(3) of the Law on Higher Education Institutions, which stipulates that “not less than five professors and associate professors altogether, who are elected to academic positions in the relevant higher education institution, shall take part in the implementation of the compulsory part and the limited elective part of academic study programmes” is fulfilled. In the study programme “Latvian Language, Literature and Culture Studies” are involved 12 professors and associated professors, who have been elected at the University of Latvia. The faculty also involved their doctorates in philology (16), as well as doctorates 2 in computing and 2 in arts. All members of the teaching staff hold Master or PhD degrees, as required by the Latvian legislation and local, University regulations. The representatives of the teaching staff publish both locally and

internationally recognised journals, participate in national and international projects and international mobility, attend international scientific conferences, participate in various seminars and international mobility (including virtual one), attend further education programmes in Latvia and abroad, etc. Development of professional skills and qualification of the teaching staff is supported by the following courses provided by the University: "Didactics of Higher Education: modern theories and practices", "Pedagogical aspects of the development of study programmes in higher education", "The professional development of the competence of the student trustee", etc. All teaching staff of the study programme have at least a B2 level of English (CEFR). Teaching staff of other foreign language courses have certified proficiency in the respective foreign languages at C2 level.

2.4.2.

According to the SAR, the changes in the academic staff of the master programme "Latvian Language, Literature and Culture Studies" have been due to the following four reasons: 1) retirement, resigning due to personal reasons, 3) death; 4) election to academic positions. The administration of the study programme managed to resolve the changes quickly and smoothly (by changing the academic staff, introducing new courses, e.g., the course "Child and Youth Literature" in cooperation with FPPA), however, the passing away of the only Professor in Theatre resulted in major changes - Culture Studies course cluster was created where there are just a few study courses in theatre studies that can promote interest about the programme (SAR, p. 169). Such flexibility in curriculum development and finding pragmatic solutions - adjusting the learning outcomes and structure of the programme to the available human resources - is highly appreciated.

2.4.3.

Not applicable.

2.4.4.

The CVs and SAR reveals that the academic staff involved in implementation of the master programme "Latvian Language, Literature and Culture Studies" has professional/practical experience related to the programmes' profile and/or regularly publishes in peer-reviewed journals indexed in ERIH PLUS, EBSCO, SCOPUS, Web of Science, etc., but there is a lack of international publications, which should be regarded as an area for further improvement.

2.4.5.

Cooperation and interaction between the teaching staff of the master programme "Latvian Language, Literature and Culture Studies" is ensured using the following mechanisms and activities: organising the general departmental meetings and discussing developmental and specific issues of the courses, teaching courses by several lecturers, jointly developing and updating the courses, discussions on study process and learning outcomes, etc.

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

Conclusions:

The master programme "Latvian Language, Literature and Culture Studies" is run by the teaching staff whose qualification is in full compliance with national and local requirements. There are effective mechanisms for smoothly replacing the teaching staff (with some exceptions due to objective reasons) and for fruitful cooperation on curricula development, updating and joint teaching. The teaching staff is actively involved in research, but there is a lack of international publications.

Strengths:

- 1) Flexibility in curriculum development and finding pragmatic solutions - adjusting the learning outcomes and structure of the programme to the available human resources.

Weaknesses:

- 1) Lack of publications in highly ranked international journals published abroad.

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

CVs, SAR, Latvian legislation and University regulations and the information obtained ensure compliance with this requirement.

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

Annex (MSP_LVLKS_Compliance_with_National_Education_Standard.docx) confirms that the study programme complies with Regulations No. 240 of the Cabinet of Ministers as of 1 May 2014 "Regulations on the National Standard for Academic Education"
<https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=266187> (Available only in Latvian).

- 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

The study course descriptions are prepared in English and Latvian that can be accessed under LLLCS course descriptions.docx. Descriptions comply 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 samples (MDP LLLCS Diploma.docx). The 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.

- 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

Head of study field declaration No.26 - 22/93 certifies that the academic staff involved in the implementation of the study programme complies with the requirements specified in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions. Annex (HEAD OF STUDY FIELD DECLARATION ON COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 55 1-3.docx)

- 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

This is identified in the annex(2023_03_13_ACADEMIC_STAFF_CV_ENG_FINAL8.pdf). It can be concluded that the state language proficiency is compliant with Cabinet Regulation. Nr. 733 "Regulations Regarding the Extent of the Knowledge of the Official Language, the Procedures for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language and the State Fee for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language".

- 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 (Studiju līgumi angļu valodā.zip. Annex 2) complies with Cabinet Regulation. 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

UL has provided confirmation that students will be provided with opportunities to continue their education in another higher education institution if the implementation of the study programme is terminated. The agreements are specified in the annexes under "Agreements in case of SP discontinuation". It is specified that in case of discontinuation of this study programme, students are to be able to continue their studies at Daugavpils University in study programmes based on the sub-programmes that they have chosen to study.

- 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: Fully compliant

UL has provided confirmation that students are guaranteed compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the study programme's licence is revoked. It is ensured based on the "Refund and Compensation Policy Statement" document added to the annexes pursuant to paragraph 13.4 of the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 795 "Regulations Regarding Licensing of Study Programmes".

- 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: Fully compliant

Study programme fully complies with regulatory enactments.

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

The MSP "Latvian Language, Literature and Culture Studies" fully lives up to its aim of training academically and scientifically highly qualified graduates in Latvian linguistics and language technology, literature and culture, and provides a solid foundation for doctoral studies in the same field. Main parameters of the study programme are well interrelated. The well-grounded, modernly equipped programme is linked to the latest research trends in the Humanities. Its interdisciplinary nature and tight relations to local partners helps to ensure that graduates have prosperous employment opportunities. Courses are taught by dedicated professors, but there is a need to

further build the capacity of the teaching staff and develop support mechanisms for publishing in international journals abroad. The weaknesses identified do not affect the current implementation of the study programme and can be addressed during the accreditation period.

The MSP "Latvian Language, Literature and Culture Studies" is assessed as excellent based on the desk study of the documentation provided, the interviews with different internal and external stakeholders and examining the infrastructure during the onsite visit.

The MSP "Latvian Language, Literature and Culture Studies" can be implemented in Latvian, in full time studies (2 years) in the University buildings located in Riga.

The expert group identified the following strengths and weaknesses (The relevant recommendations are presented below in the special section).

Strengths:

- Full compliance of the study programme with indicators, conditions and criteria of the study field of "Language and Culture Studies, Mother Tongue Studies, and Language Programmes".
- Well interrelated main parameters of the study programme; Reasonable and justified duration and scope of the study programme implementation.
- The interdisciplinary character of the study programme as a facilitator of good employment opportunities.
- Up-to-date content of the study programme, incorporating the use of modern digital tools, based on the latest research in the Humanities.
- The introduction of practice-oriented courses as a facilitator of students' career prospects.
- The topics of students' theses - relevant to the field and demonstrating successful application of the subject knowledge and research skills acquired during the studies.
- Self-take and self-return of the library books.
- Well-established and understandable e-study environment.
- Large variety of accessible databases and platforms for students.
- Provision of access to tools that are specific to modern literature and linguistics studies.
- Flexibility in curriculum development and finding pragmatic solutions - adjusting the learning outcomes and structure of the programme to the available human resources.

Weaknesses:

- Low demand of the study programme.
- The high dropout of students.
- Lack of regular collection and analysis of graduate employment data.
- Insufficient opportunities for students to individualise their studies.
- The small number of credits for the internship.
- Lack of financial sustainability of the programme.
- Lack of publications in highly ranked international journals published abroad.

The MSP "Latvian Language, Literature and Culture Studies" fulfils the requirements of the Latvian higher education and quality assurance legislation, as well as the local, University and Faculty regulations. There are no deficiencies identified by the expert group which cannot be eliminated during the 2-year accreditation period. And there are no serious weaknesses which may prevent fulfilling the requirements of the accreditation standards. The recommendations are given not to fulfil the requirements, but for further improvement and development.

Evaluation of the study programme "Latvian Language, Literature and Culture Studies"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Excellent

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Latvian Language, Literature and Culture Studies"

Short-term recommendations

Long-term recommendations

1) The teaching staff capacity and supporting mechanisms (including financial incentives) for publishing in international journals abroad should be developed.
2) Students' decreasing number and high dropout rates should be addressed at the faculty or institutional level, e.g., through further adaptation of the study content and methods, more flexible study organisation, psychological counselling, and academic support.
3) Data on graduate employment should be collected and analysed regularly to ensure a successful transition of graduates into the labour market.
4) Students should be given more opportunities to individualise their studies, e.g. individualised study plans, crediting the study outcomes achieved through both formal and non-formal and informal learning.
5) The number of credits for the internship should be increased to enable the full development potential of the interns' skills.
6) The financial sustainability of the programme should be improved with an increase of the revenues.

II - "Linguistics, Literature and Regional Culture Studies" ASSESSMENT

II - "Linguistics, Literature and Regional Culture Studies" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1.

The academic masters study programme "Linguistics, Literature and Regional Culture Studies" complies with indicators, conditions and criteria of the study field of "Language and Culture Studies, Mother Tongue Studies, and Language Programmes". The length of the implementation of the study programme, which is 2 years for full-time, is evaluated as sufficient for acquiring the necessary skills and way of thinking to enter the labour market.

2.1.2.

According to the SAR p.360, the title of the study programme is "Linguistics, Literature and Regional Culture Studies" in the study field of "Language and Culture Studies, Mother Tongue Studies, and Language Programmes" with education classification code 45227 with the last 3 numbers (227) standing for language studies and programmes according to the classification of Latvian education which can be accessed here: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/291524-noteikumi-par-latvijas-izglitiba-klasifikaciju>. There is no qualification given after graduating as it is an academic master study programme.

According to SAR pp. 368-369, the programme has 5 sub-programmes: 1. Classical Studies; 2.

Germanic Studies; 3. Romance Studies; 4. Russian and Slavic Studies; 5. Baltic Sea Region Studies. According to the SAR p.360, the aim of the programme differs based on the sub-programme. The aim of the master's study programme is to provide a high-level academic education in the dominant languages and culture environments of the European geographic area both from a historic and modern perspective.

The aim of the sub-programme "Classical Studies" is to provide a high-level academic education in the field of European ancient cultural environment from the historical perspective and in terms of modern reception.

The aim of the sub-programme "Germanic Studies" is to provide a high-level academic education in the field of Germanic studies in the context of modern philological disciplines (contact linguistics, comparative literature etc).

The aim of the sub-programme "Romance studies" is to provide a high-level academic education in the field of Romance languages (French, Italian, Spanish) and cultures.

The aim of the sub-programme "Russian and Slavic Studies" is to provide a high-level academic education in the field of Russian and Slavic studies both in the historical and modern perspective.

The aim of the sub-programme "Baltic Sea Region Studies" is to provide a high-level academic interdisciplinary education in the field of culture and social processes of the Baltic Sea region countries in the historic, comparative, and digital society terms based on the principles of sustainability, such as inclusion of diversity, civic responsibility and involvement, social and environmental justice.

According to the information provided in the SAR p.362-365, the admission requirements of this programme differ based on the sub-programme students wish to enrol in. For the study programme implemented in Latvian the admission requirements are: 1) Bachelor's degree or second-level professional higher education qualification diploma or equivalent in the humanities or 2) Second-level professional higher education qualification diploma in arts or teacher education (language, literature and/or culture teacher education) and entrance examination; or 3) Bachelor's degree or second-level professional higher education qualification diploma or equivalent higher education in another discipline and entrance examination, professional/creative experience in the field of humanities. For studies in English, in addition to the previous admission requirements, B2-level English language skills are required. In sub-programme "Classical Studies" - at least one classical language (Latin/Greek) of 4 CP. For sub-programme "German Studies", B2-level German language skills are required. For sub-programme "Romance Studies" - B2-level French, Spanish or Italian language skills are required in accordance with student choice of studies of either of the three. For sub-programme "Russian and Slavic Studies" - B2-level Russian language skills are required as the language is the language of studies.

According to the SAR p.365, after successful completion of the studies, students are awarded with "Master's Degree of Humanities in Language Studies and Programmes". According to the SAR p.365, the study programme is a full-time study programme with 80 CP to be gathered during the study process of 2 years. The title, code, degree to be obtained of the study programme, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation as well as the implementation language, are reasonable and justified.

2.1.3.

According to SAR p.366, on 2 July 2021, the University of Latvia received licence No. 04047-127 on the right to implement the academic master's study programme. No changes have been made in the parameters of the MSP since receiving the licence.

2.1.4.

The solution to comprise five already established programmes ("Classical Philology", "Russian

Philology", "Romance Language and Culture Studies", "Germanic Philology" and "Baltic Sea Region Studies") into one interdisciplinary Master's degree creates a solid foundation for the sustainability of the study programme and ensures prosperous employment opportunities. In addition, consolidation may have a positive impact on cost efficiency and better allocation of the program's combined resources.

According to SAR p. 372, graduates are in demand in various sectors, such as higher education institutions and schools, research institutions, libraries, editorial offices and publishing houses, media institutions and advertising agencies, the EU and other international institutions, diplomatic missions of Latvia and other countries, Latvian and European translation institutions, language training centres, tourism agencies, companies with different profiles in Latvia and abroad. Based on the SAR and information gathered during interviews with employers in the field, the Expert Group concluded that the programme meets the needs of the labour market. However, the positive feedback from employers is clouded by the lack of data on the percentage of employed graduates, graduates who start their own businesses, or those who continue their studies at other universities in Latvia or abroad from the five previously implemented programmes.

The 2-year trend in enrolments is positive, indicating that the programme has significant potential to grow both nationally and internationally. The high proportion of state-funded students provides economic stability for the programme. The dropout rate is moderate, but needs to be addressed not isolated for one programme, but throughout the whole study field, e.g., through further adaptation of study content and methods, more flexible organisation of studies, psychological counselling, and academic support.

2.1.5.

Not applicable.

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

Conclusions:

All of the indicators of the study programme are in compliance with the existing preconditions of the implementation of the study programme. The study programme "Linguistics, Literature and Regional Culture Studies" complies with the study field indicators, conditions and criteria. In the opinion of the Experts, the title, code, degree to be obtained of the study programme, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation as well as the implementation language, are reasonable and justified. The study programme is implemented in various languages based upon the sub-programme (Russian, Latvian, English, Italian, Spanish or French). The goals, objectives, learning outcomes are in line and in compliance. The programme is in demand and there is a flow of incoming students every study year. There has been a positive trend of student enrolment due to sufficient amounts of state budget places.

Strengths:

- 1) The study programme complies with indicators, conditions and criteria of the study field of "Language and Culture Studies, Mother Tongue Studies, and Language Programmes".
- 2) Main parameters of the study programme are well interrelated. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation are reasonable and justified.
- 3) The interdisciplinary character of the study programme facilitates good employment opportunities.
- 4) The positive trend in enrolment shows that the study programme has significant potential for

growth, both nationally and internationally.

Weaknesses:

- 1) High drop-out rate of students;
- 2) Lack of data collection and analysis on graduates' employment.

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1.

The study programme is designed to award students the Master's Degree of Humanities in Language Studies. The study programme includes 5 sub-programmes ("Classical Studies," "Germanic Studies," "Romance Studies," "Russian and Slavic Studies," and "Baltic Sea Region Studies") covering critical competencies obligatory for highly qualified professionals in the fields of language, literature, and culture. The structure of the programme includes all obligatory parts: the mandatory part (24 CP), the restricted elective part (30 CP), the elective part (6 CP) and the writing of the master's thesis (20 CP and fully complies with the national academic education standard (Regulations No. 240 of the Cabinet of Ministers as of 1 May 2014 "Regulations on the National Standard for Academic Education" (<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/266187-noteikumi-par-valsts-akademiskas-izglitiba-standartu>)). In the development of the academic master's study programme "Linguistics, Literature and Regional Culture Studies" requirements of the regulations of the University of Latvia on Study and Continuing Education Programmes are observed. The programme offers a small number of free electives. The current set-up is comprehensive, but it prevents students from taking advantage of the full range of courses offered by UL. This is especially important for better employability of graduates. The content of the study programme is well structured and interconnected (Annex MSP LLRCS study plan model). The solution of combining five previous study programmes creates a structure that provides a solid foundation for in-depth study in the subject area, and an interdisciplinary approach to language, literature, and culture. The aim, objectives, and learning outcomes of the MSP are fully aligned with the aim, objectives, and learning outcomes of the study field. The mapping of the learning outcomes of the programme to the learning outcomes of the sub-programmes is reasonable (annex MSP LLRCS Mapping). The content of the study courses reflects labour market needs - students are provided with topical competencies in Project Development in the Field of Humanities, knowledge of digital tools (e.g. digital resources of language and culture, digitalisation of cultural heritage digital Media in Foreign Language Acquisition), have the possibility to deepen their professional foreign language skills.

2.2.2.

According to SAR p. 379, the programme follows the current global trends in Humanities. Course descriptions provided in the annexes confirm the programme content is up-to-date. It covers both synchronic and diachronic language research aspects (e.g. "Regional language and culture contacts", "Language contacts in the Baltic Sea region", "Diachronic Perspective on the Word and the History of Lexicography"), includes the application of technological advances in the field (e.g. "Digital resources of language and culture", "Sound environment and society", "Digital Environment for Classical Studies"), provides knowledge on multilingualism and multiculturalism, and considers the impact of various linguistic, interlingual and non-linguistic factors on language formation and development (SAR p. 379). Moreover, the topicality is ensured by comparison with similar programmes in Europe (MSPs at University of Tartu, University of Gothenburg, University of Marburg) and commitment to best foreign practices, which is commendable. Course descriptions include both structural and cognitive approaches to Linguistics (e.g. "Language Theories and

Diversity of Languages”, “Regional Language and Culture Contacts”, “Ethno-Psycholinguistics and Political Linguistics of the Russian and Slavic Languages”, “Ethnocultural Stereotypes in Slavic Languages, Literature and Folklore”) to promote interdisciplinarity and a broader overview of the field. Reading lists provided in course descriptions include essential monographs and periodicals in various languages and research traditions. The access to Clarivate Analytics and Scopus databases ensures students get acquainted with the latest top-level research in language, literature, and culture.

2.2.3.

The lecturers are free to design course content and choose teaching and assessment methods; there is no overarching study philosophy or prescribed guidelines for teaching methodology. Course content may be updated after delivery based on student evaluation. The active and collaborative teaching/learning methods (e.g., interactive lectures, problem-oriented lectures, case-studies, essays, debates, project work) meet the essential provisions of student-oriented studies and enable students to achieve the intended study outcomes and to reflect on their performance. The teaching/learning methods foster student creativity, collaboration, research and communication abilities. The involvement of employers, representatives from various institutions and other stakeholders in the form of guest lectures contribute to the interrelation of theory and practice. The recommendation here would be to introduce more methods when the student is faced with situations similar to those encountered in professional life. The selection of various assessment methods (e.g. presentations, reports, individual homework, written test, evaluation of a project application, final examination) is based on the subject study outcomes and the assessment criteria. From the information on SAR and the appendices, it can be concluded that students are actively involved in the study process and the role of the lecturers is to facilitate it. However, considering that the student-centred approach should focus on the needs of the individual student, no information is provided about individualization of study (students with disabilities, individualised study plans, assessment and crediting the study outcomes achieved through both formal and non-formal and informal learning).

2.2.4.

According to SAR p. 376, the students are offered practice-oriented courses that deliver the professional knowledge and make them competitive in the labour market. The introduction of internships could elevate the applied profile of the programme to a higher level and let the students face professional situations before they get employed.

2.2.5.

Not applicable.

2.2.6.

Due to the newly launched programme no information on the final thesis is available in the SAR.

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

Conclusions:

The content of the study programme is based on the latest research trends in Humanities. The decision to combine five previous study programmes into one MSP makes sense not only economically but also in terms of content. Students benefit from the interdisciplinary approach to language, literature, and culture. The needs of the job market are taken into account when designing the course content. The aim, objectives, and learning outcomes of the MSP are fully

aligned with the study field. The study programme is comparable to similar domestic and foreign programmes. The active and interactive study methods are consistent with the principles of student-centred learning and teaching. Stakeholders are actively involved in the implementation of the study programme.

Strengths:

- 1) Well-structured and interconnected content of the study programme.
- 2) Considering the labour market needs in the design of the course content.
- 3) The latest research in the field of Humanities reflected in the content of the courses, comparable to similar study programmes at renowned universities in Europe.
- 4) The involvement of stakeholders in the study process as a contributor to the interrelation of theory and practice.

Weaknesses:

- 1) Insufficient opportunities for students to individualise their studies.
- 2) Lack of internships to assist in the development of students' practical skills.

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 study programme content includes the latest technological advances in the humanities and is linked to current developments in research.

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1.

According to SAR p.386, the study base, informative provision, material technical base and financial base correspond to the specifics of the study programme, implementation conditions, create prerequisites for achievement of the learning outcomes and testify to the possibility of ensuring a quality study process.

According to the SAR p.386, the academic staff composition depends on each of the sub-programmes. The Classical Studies sub-programme is mainly implemented by the faculty of the Department of Classical Philology (1 professor, 1 assoc. professors, 2 assistant professors). The Germanic Studies sub-programme is mainly implemented by the faculty of the Department of Germanic Studies (1 professor, 1 assoc. professors, 1 researcher, 3 lecturers). Romance Studies sub-programme is mainly implemented by the faculty of the Department of Romance Studies (1 professor, 1 assoc. professor, 3 assistant professors, 7 lecturers). The Russian and Slavic Studies sub-programme is mainly implemented by the faculty of the Department of Russian and Slavic Studies (2 professors, 2 assoc. professors, 6 assistant professors). Baltic Sea Region Studies sub-programme is mainly implemented by the academic staff of the Department of Latvian and Baltic Studies (3 professors) in cooperation with the specialists of the relevant fields from other UL faculties/institutes.

Regarding the informative and methodological support, the system is the same generally for all of

the study programmes implemented within the study field and it is analysed under Resources and Provision of the study field in great detail.

2.3.2.

Not applicable.

2.3.3.

According to the SAR p.388, for ensuring funding for the study programme the UL uses: 1. The allocation from the national budget from the Ministry of Education and Science that in the academic year 2021/2022 was set as 2 445 for full-time studies; 2. Study fee, which was set for academic year 2021/2022 as follows: For full-time studies in presence as 2 200 per year; For foreign students for full-time studies in presence as 3 150 euros.

Based on the data provided in the SAR p.388, the expected income of the study programme annually is 145 200, which constitutes 50 full-time state funded students, 9 full-time self-funded students and 1 foreign student. According to the data provided in the SAR p.390, the total costs of the programme exceed the total revenue by 48 000. According to the SAR p.389, the calculation shows that in order for the programme to be profitable and for students to have a high-quality study process, the number of students who pay study fee in the programme (all courses together) should be at least 115 students. On the other hand, if the programme was limited to the budget-funded students, the number should reach 100 students (the study programme has been allocated 66 budget places according to the Agreement Document between the UL and Ministry of Education and Science). It means that there is a need for extra 34 budget places to make this study programme sustainable. Taking into account that first admission to the MSP LLRCS was announced (in 4 sub-programmes) and the implementation of the MSP started in the autumn semester of academic year 2021/2022 only 25 students were admitted to the whole study programme: Classical Studies 5, Germanic Studies 3, Romance Studies 6, Russian and Slavic Studies 11, Baltic Sea Region Studies 0. During the onsite visit Experts were informed that Covid-19 pandemic and unstable geopolitical situation affected the number of foreign students. In the academic year 2022/2023 number of students who were admitted to the study programme increased up to 33, and 3 students were admitted to the Baltic Sea Region Studies. The Experts Group agrees with the Management of the Faculty of Humanities and Study programme director that for the cost-effectiveness of the study programme it is necessary to increase the number of students, 2 sub-programmes: Germanic Studies and Baltic Sea Region Studies, are with very low number of students. Besides, the University of Latvia should work more on promotion of Classical Studies as a fundamental University study field. Very positive aspect is that the Faculty of Humanities receives financial support for the development of the programme from the Embassy of Italy and the Government of Spain. The Expert Group believes that the programme, just as all others in the study field, operates under significant financial pressure, with overworked and underpaid staff, and the situation is unsustainable in the long run, but this is not an issue that the administration of the programme or the faculty can solve by themselves, therefore the Expert Group will not consider it to be a flaw in their work.

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

Conclusions:

The UL has established well-equipped resource base for comfortable study process for students, which includes e-study environment, library resources as well as databases of extensive variety. The existing resource base is sufficient for a successful provision of the study process but it has to be noted that the resource base is going to significantly improve with the new premises the university is moving to in the near future. Financially, the study programme needs improvements and

stabilisation as currently the programme has higher costs than revenues that results in losses, which is not a positive trend.

Strengths:

- 1) Self-take and self-return of the library books.
- 2) Well-established and understandable e-study environment.
- 3) Large variety of accessible databases and platforms for students.

Weaknesses:

- 1) Insufficient budget places to ensure financial stability of the 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

UL provides the study programme with all the necessary tools and resource material, technical as well as informative base for successful implementation of the study programme. However, this programme needs to improve financial sustainability and find extra financial support.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1.

There are three groups of teaching staff at the UL: teaching staff in elected academic positions, teaching staff at acting elected academic positions (acting and visiting lecturers), and instructors. Selection and recruitment of elected academic positions as well as acting academic positions shall be in accordance with the Regulations on Academic and Administrative Positions at the University of Latvia (the UL Senate Decision No. 11 of 31.01.2022). According to the Statute, the following academic positions exist at the University of Latvia: professor, associate professor, assistant professor, senior researcher, lecturer, researcher, assistant, research assistant. The master programme "Linguistics, Literature and Regional Cultural Studies" is run by the teaching staff whose educational background, knowledge and skills, pedagogical, research and professional experience correspond to the profile, aims and learning outcomes, research areas of the programme. Clause of the section 55(1)(3) of the Law on Higher Education Institutions, which stipulates that "not less than five professors and associate professors altogether, who are elected to academic positions in the relevant higher education institution, shall take part in the implementation of the compulsory part and the limited elective part of academic study programmes" is fulfilled. In realisation of the study programme involved all together 48 academic staff, incl. 10 UL professors, 6 UL associated professors, 12 UL assistant professors, 11 UL lecturers (incl. 4 doctoral students), 3 senior researchers, 1 researcher, 1 instructor (with a doctorate degree), 1 scientific assistant (with a doctorate degree), 3 guest lecturers. 35 teaching staff have a PhD (25 in Philology (one of them holds the habilitated doctorate), 2 in History, 1 in Philosophy, 2 in Arts, 2 in Pedagogy, 2 (one of them holds the habilitated doctorate) in economics, 1 in geography) and 13 Master's degree in Humanities. 6 members of the academic staff study in a doctoral study programme. Guest lecturers are involved in teaching sub-programmes, including elected lecturers, for whom the profiling

language in the particular course is their mother tongue. All members of the teaching staff hold Master or PhD degrees, as required by the Latvian legislation and local, University regulations. The implementation of the master programme “Linguistics, Literature and Regional Culture Studies” involves highly qualified academic staff from Latvia, Spain, France, Italy, Sweden and Finland, which should be regarded as the main strengths of the programme. The representatives of the teaching staff publish both locally and internationally recognised journals, participate in national and international research and other projects, attend international scientific conferences, participate in various seminars and conferences both nationally and internationally, organise international events, attend further education programmes in Latvia and abroad, etc. All teaching staff of the study programme have at least a B2 level of English (CEFR). Teaching staff of other foreign language courses have certified proficiency in the respective foreign languages at C2 level.

2.4.2.

There were no changes in the teaching staff of the master programme “Linguistics, Literature and Culture Studies” since licensing.

2.4.3.

Not applicable.

2.4.4.

The CVs and SAR reveals that the academic staff involved in implementation of the master programme “Linguistics, Literature and Culture Studies” has professional/practical experience related to the sub-programmes’ profile and/or regularly publishes in peer-reviewed journals indexed in ERIH PLUS, EBSCO, SCOPUS, Web of Science, etc., but there is a lack of international publications, which should be regarded as an area for further improvement.

2.4.5.

The cooperation is updated and implemented both through regular individual communication among the academic staff of the relevant study courses (on-site and remotely (MS Teams, Zoom, etc.) and in meetings, consultations and in e-mail correspondence, WhatsApp) and through regular collegial reviews of topical issues relating to the implementation of the sub-programmes and by evaluating the learning outcomes of study courses in the FH departments responsible for their implementation; Joint MSP management meetings take place at least twice in the semester (inviting, where appropriate, the relevant academic staff) (SAR, p. 394). It should be underlined that interaction and intensive communication is important for any study programme, but it’s essential in case of such a multidisciplinary curriculum, which provides in-depth theoretical knowledge in linguistics, literature, and culture studies and at the same time to ensure synergy among the five sub-programmes.

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

Conclusions:

The master programme “Linguistics, Literature and Culture Studies” is run by the teaching staff whose qualification is in full compliance with national and local requirements. There are effective mechanisms for smoothly replacing the teaching staff in the institution, but they have not been implemented as there were no changes in the composition of the teaching staff. Effective communication and cooperation have been achieved through regular offline and online meetings, discussions and consultations. The teaching staff is actively involved in research, but there is a lack of international publications.

Strengths:

- 1) Involvement of foreign instructors in implementation of the master programme.

Weaknesses:

- 1) Lack of publications in highly ranked international journals published abroad.

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

CVs, SAR, Latvian legislation, University regulations and the information obtained ensure compliance with this requirement.

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

Annex (MSP_LLRCs_Compliance_with_National_Education_Standard.docx) confirms that the study programme complies with Regulations No. 240 of the Cabinet of Ministers as of 1 May 2014 "Regulations on the National Standard for Academic Education"
<https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=266187> (Available only in Latvian).

- 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

The study course descriptions are prepared in English and Latvian that can be accessed under MSP_LLRCs_course descriptions.zip. Descriptions comply 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 samples (MSP LLRCs Diploma and Supplements.zip). The 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.

- 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

Head of study field declaration No.26 - 22/93 certifies that the academic staff involved in the implementation of the study programme complies with the requirements specified in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions. Annex (HEAD OF STUDY FIELD DECLARATION ON COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 55 1-3.docx).

- 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

This is identified in the annex(2023_03_13_ACADEMIC_STAFF_CV_ENG_FINAL8.pdf). It can be concluded that the state language proficiency is compliant with Cabinet Regulation . Nr. 733 " Regulations Regarding the Extent of the Knowledge of the Official Language, the Procedures for Examining the Proficiency in the Languages.

- 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

As this programme has implementation language English as one of the main implementation languages, it is required for the teaching staff to have at least B2 level English. The attached documents: 1. 2023_03_13_ACADEMIC_STAFF_CV_ENG_FINAL8.pdf and 2.B2 LEVEL.rar.

- 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 (Studiju līgumi angļu valodā.zip. Annex 2) complies with Cabinet Regulation. 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

UL has provided confirmation that students will be provided with opportunities to continue their education in another higher education institution if the implementation of the study programme is terminated. The agreements are specified in the annexes under "Agreements in case of SP discontinuation". It is specified that in case of discontinuation of this study programme, students are to be able to continue their studies at Daugavpils University in study programmes based on the sub-programmes that they have chosen to study.

- 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: Fully compliant

UL has provided confirmation that students are guaranteed compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the study programme's licence is revoked. It is ensured based on the "Refund and Compensation Policy Statement" document added to the annexes pursuant to paragraph 13.4 of the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 795 "Regulations Regarding Licensing of Study Programmes".

- 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: Fully compliant

Study programme fully complies with regulatory enactments.

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

Conclusions:

The MSP "Linguistics, Literature and Regional Culture Studies" is fully in line with its intended aim and is economically and socially sound. It provides a high-level academic education in the dominant languages and culture environments of the European geographic area both from a historic and modern perspective. Main parameters of the study programme are well interrelated. The content of the study programme, including that of its sub-programmes, is well structured, connected and up-to-

date. The five sub-programmes already in place provide a strong foundation for the study programme's future viability. The involvement of stakeholders in the study process has a favourable impact on the interrelation of theory and practice and future employability of graduates. The comprehensive resource base guarantees that students may study comfortably. The programme is run by highly capable and committed academic staff, however there is a lack of international publications, which should be regarded as the main area of improvement. The overall excellent characteristics of this study programme is rounded out by its multidisciplinary nature and student-centred approach. The weaknesses identified can be addressed during the accreditation period and do not influence how the study programme is currently being implemented. The study programme can be carried-out in all declared implementation languages.

The MSP "Linguistics, Literature and Culture Studies" is assessed as excellent based on the desk study of the documentation provided, the interviews with different internal and external stakeholders and examining the infrastructure during the onsite visit.

The MSP "Linguistics, Literature and Culture Studies" can be implemented in Latvian and in English, in full time studies (2 years) in the University buildings located in Riga. The sub-programme German Studies can be implemented in German, the sub-programme Romance Studies in French, Spanish and Italian, the sub-programme "Russian and Slavic Studies" in Russian.

The expert group identified the following strengths and weaknesses (The relevant recommendations are presented below in the special section).

Strengths:

- Full compliance of the study programme with indicators, conditions and criteria of the study field of "Language and Culture Studies, Mother Tongue Studies, and Language Programmes".
- Well interrelated main parameters of the study programme. Reasonable and justified duration and scope of the study programme implementation.
- The interdisciplinary character of the study programme as a facilitator of good employment opportunities.
- The positive trend in enrolment as an indicator of the significant potential for growth, both nationally and internationally.
- Well-structured and interrelated content of the study programme.
- Consideration of the needs of the labour market in the design of the course content.
- The latest research in the field of Humanities reflected in the content of the courses, comparable to similar study programmes at renowned universities in Europe.
- The involvement of stakeholders in the study process as a contributor to the interrelation of theory and practice.
- Self-take and self-return of the library books.
- Well-established and understandable e-study environment.
- Large variety of accessible databases and platforms for students.
- Involvement of foreign instructors in implementation of the master programme.

Weaknesses:

- High drop-out rate of students.
- Lack of data collection and analysis on graduates' employment.
- Insufficient opportunities for students to individualise their studies.
- Lack of internships to assist in the development of students' practical skills.
- Insufficient budget places to ensure financial stability of the programme.
- Lack of publications in highly ranked international journals published abroad.

The MSP "Linguistics, Literature and Culture Studies" fulfils the requirements of the Latvian higher education and quality assurance legislation, as well as the local, University and Faculty regulations. There are no deficiencies identified by the expert group which cannot be eliminated during the 2-year accreditation period. And there are no serious weaknesses which may prevent fulfilling the requirements of the accreditation standards. The recommendations are provided not for fulfilling the requirements, but for further development and improvement.

Evaluation of the study programme "Linguistics, Literature and Regional Culture Studies"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Excellent

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Linguistics, Literature and Regional Culture Studies"

Short-term recommendations

Long-term recommendations

- | |
|--|
| 1) The teaching staff capacity and supporting mechanisms (including financial incentives) for publishing in highly ranked international journals published abroad should be developed. |
| 2) Student drop-out should be addressed at the faculty or institutional level, e.g., through further adaptation of the study content and methods, more flexible study organisation, psychological counselling, and academic support. |
| 3) Data on graduate employment should be collected and analysed regularly to ensure a successful transition of graduates into the labour market. |
| 4) Students should be given more opportunities to individualise their studies, e.g. individualised study plans, crediting the study outcomes achieved through both formal and non-formal and informal learning. |
| 5) An internship should be introduced to support the development of practical skills. |
| 6) A higher number of state budget places should be allocated to ensure financial stability of the programme with the support of the government. |

II - "Asian Studies" ASSESSMENT

II - "Asian Studies" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1.

The compliance of the academic master's study programme Asian Studies fully complies with the study field Language and Culture Studies, Mother Tongue Studies, and Language Programmes, since the aim of the study field is to maintain, develop and offer qualitative and versatile as well as globally competitive and research-based studies in the humanities in various languages and cultures, thus ensuring the stability of the level of humanitarian intelligence and Latvian language as well as cultural environment in the present and future Latvian society, to prepare specialists of high

academic and scientific qualification in compliance with the long-term goals of the Latvian economy, socio-political strategy, and other goals (SAR, p.17) and the reported study programme's goal is to deliver a body of knowledge, skills and competence in line with the knowledge, skills and competence established for the 7th level of the Latvian Qualifications Framework, by preparing locally and internationally competitive specialists who know Asian languages and possess in-depth understanding of the cultures of the Asian region and global civilization processes. This is evident that the reported programme's aim complies with the above-mentioned study field aim in a way of developing professionalism in east-west intercultural relations and enhancing research competence. The reported study programme is meeting the requirements of the study field mostly focusing on intercultural aspects in communication and languages as well as scientific perfection.

2.1.2.

The title of the programme complies with the defined scientific study field title. The degree- Master's Degree of Humanities in Language Studies and Programmes - to be awarded complies with the regulations (No.240 Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia Regulations Corresponding to National Academic Education Standard). The study programme code 45227 complies with the regulations No.322 of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia Regulations Corresponding to the Classification of Latvian Education (45 - academic education, master's degree; 227 - language studies and programmes). The report indicates and collected information during the on-site visit at UL confirms that the programme design complies with the requirements for the Master's level duration - 2 years (4 semesters of studies), providing for the acquisition of 40 CP per year. The programme anticipates implementation in Latvian and English. The study programme objectives, tasks and learning outcomes are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation as well as the implementation language, are reasonable and justified.

Admission requirements are clearly reflected in the UL Admission Requirements and subordinate regulations that determine the procedures for the given academic year. The admission criteria, the formula for calculating the admission score and the admission procedure are published on the UL portal www.lu.lv/gribustudet. To be specific, as the SAR p. 204 reveals, the admission requirements to the MSP "Asian Studies" provide that the weighted average grade of bachelor's level studies is not lower than 600 and the total final examinations grade is not lower than 400, while graduates of the BSP "Asian Studies" with an undergraduate thesis grade of no lower than 6 (almost good) are eligible for out-of-competition registration. An additional prerequisite is the proficiency in at least one of the Asian languages offered in the master's programme at the intermediate level (two to three years of study). That shows that the admission requirements are interrelated with the study programme aims, objectives and learning outcomes.

2.1.3.

Significant and noteworthy changes have been made to the reported programme. Firstly, the title of the study programme has been changed from Oriental Studies to Asian Studies in order to more accurately reflect the content of the programme and to be in line with the contemporary practice and current terminology in Asian studies worldwide (SAR, p.198). Secondly, a new module on Korean Studies has been introduced in Part B (restricted elective part) in the context of the establishment of Korean Studies as a distinct discipline in the world. Besides that, the wording of learning outcomes and the titles of 22 study courses are clarified and updated.

For the MSP to comply with the State Education Standard - Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 240 of 13 May 2014 Regulations on the State Academic Education Standard, the mandatory (A) part of the programme was increased, with a corresponding reduction in the restricted elective (B) part. What relates to Part B, it is created symmetrically in 4 modules of advanced regional studies. Besides the previously mentioned new module on Korean Studies, also the Middle East module has been expanded to include courses in Turkish language studies, a course in the Levantine dialect of Arabic

needed for communication, and a course in Farsi, a colloquial Persian language. New advanced regional study courses according to the field/specialisation have been developed as well, which can be seen on p. 199 in SAR.

All changes made to the reported programme are well justified and would be supported.

2.1.4.

The topicality of the MSP Asian Studies cannot be underestimated. As the SAR states and the on-site discussions with the employers and graduates confirm, the reported study programme contributes to the needs of job market in Latvia a lot by providing high-level specialists in Asian cultures with advanced Asian languages skills and a thorough knowledge of the literature, culture, and social traditions of the Asian region, who are needed in the private sector as well as non-governmental organisations, local governments and public administration. Besides that, the graduates have high quality research skills that help them to perform successfully in different kinds of international projects related to Asian languages and cultures as well as to continue their PhD studies in China, Japan and elsewhere (SAR, p. 206). Besides that, the current students of the reported programme as well as the graduates work as educators in Asian languages in secondary schools and HEIs in Latvia. Although, it must be mentioned that there is no Alumni programme developed by the Faculty of Humanities that would help to follow the career path of the graduates more thoroughly and to benefit from the graduates' input into the further development of the programme. It was also admitted by the graduates of the programme that they would be very eager to collaborate with the programme on a more structured and permanent basis.

As it can be seen from the Figures provided by the SAR (p.208-209) and the Annex on Statistical data on students, the total number of students enrolled is quite stable with small fluctuations (on average 30 students), although the drop-out rate is very high (approx. 25% every year). The possible reasons for drop-out are mentioned but the actions to be taken in order to rectify the problem are not identified. Another issue to be highlighted is the extremely low number of international students (1 student from Poland in 2015-2017 and one from Russia in 2017-2019). Also the number of graduates has considerably decreased especially during the last years (1 graduate in 2019/2020, 3 - 2020/2021, 5- 2021/2022) if compared to the beginning of the reporting period where there were 12 graduates in 2012/2013, 12 - in 2013/2014, 7 - 2014/2015, 11 - 2016/2017. Concerning the popularity of the MSP Asian Studies among self-funded students, it cannot be considered as highly popular. According to the Table 5 Distribution of the number of students by funding sources in the Annex on Statistical data on students, it is clearly seen that a very few students (1 student in 2022/2023, no self-funded students from 2019/2020 - 2021/2021) choose to pay for their studies in the reported programme.

The 2-year trend in enrolments is positive, indicating that the programme has significant potential to grow nationally, but the international aspect of it should have been considered, especially what relates to attracting international students to the reported programme. The proportion of state-funded students provides economic stability for the programme, although the number of self-funding students is very low and should have been considered. The dropout rate is relatively high and needs to be addressed not isolated for one programme, but throughout the whole study field, e.g., through further adaptation of study content and methods, more flexible organisation of studies, psychological counselling, and academic support.

2.1.5.

Not applicable.

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

Conclusions:

All of the indicators of the study programme are in compliance with the existing preconditions of the implementation of the study programme. The academic Master's study programme Asian Studies complies with the study field indicators, conditions and criteria. In the opinion of the Experts, the title, code, degree to be obtained of the study programme, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation as well as the implementation languages, are reasonable and justified. The goals, objectives, learning outcomes are in line and in compliance. There has been a positive trend of student enrolment due to sufficient amounts of state budget places, although the drop-out rate is relatively high.

Strengths:

- 1) The Academic Master's study programme Asian Studies is a unique one since it is the only master's study programme in Latvia that prepares high-level specialists in Oriental languages, literatures and cultures with interdisciplinary, versatile and humanities-oriented knowledge, skills and competences in Arabic, Japanese, Korean and Chinese cultural regions.
- 2) There is a high demand for the programme's graduates in the job market.
- 3) There is a positive trend of student enrolment due to sufficient amount of state budget places.

Weaknesses:

- 1) Considerably high drop-out rate of the students.
- 2) Lack of the alumni programmes to follow the graduates' career paths and use the benefits of their expertise in the further programme's development process.
- 3) Lack of the programme advertisement to attract international students as well as self-funding students.

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1.

The master's study programme "Asian Studies" complies with the national academic education standard (Regulations No. 240 of the Cabinet of Ministers as of 1 May 2014 "Regulations on the National Standard for Academic Education" (<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/266187-noteikumi-par-valsts-akademiskas-izglitiba-standartu>)). The amount of the academic master's study programme is 80 CP, of which 44 CP is compulsory part (Part A), which includes Master's Thesis development and defence (20 CP) as it is stated in the Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No. 240 of 13 May 2014 "Regulations on the National Standard of Academic Education", 34 CP restricted elective part (Part B) and 2 CP elective part (Part C). In addition, the mandatory part of the academic master's study programme includes 2 CP in civil protection and environmental protection courses for students who have not acquired them in the previous stage of studies. The study programme has a "Basic Latvian for International Students I" study course (2 CP) which is mandatory for international students and is required by the Law on Higher Education Institutions. During the onsite visit academic staff and students of the master's study programme "Asian Studies" confirmed that the student develops his / her master's thesis under the guidance of a scientist and the aim of the master's degree study programme is to provide research-based internationally recognized academic higher education. In the development of the academic master's study programme "Asian Studies" requirements of the regulations of the University of Latvia on Study and Continuing Education Programmes are observed. The programme consists of a core module that is obligatory for all students and regional modules that enable each student to continue

in their own field of specialisation. A large part of each module consists in advanced language studies. On the whole, this is a sound structure and provides the students with a high level of professional competence. Certain remarks should still be made concerning the content of certain modules. For example, the regional studies and special courses section of the Middle Eastern module consists in more than 50% of further language studies, while other modules offer culture and society-related content in this area; the course on Islamic philosophy should perhaps be moved here, as it is primarily relevant for students taking this module. A certain eclecticism can also be noted in the Japanese module, which has courses on the history of gardens and architecture on the one hand and one in 19th-20th century philosophy on the other, but no course on pre-19th century philosophy, without which the latter would remain incomplete. Ideally, all modules might have a similar structure with a certain number of courses dedicated to literature, religion/philosophy, other arts, social phenomena and a region-specific special course (such as the Tibetan culture course in the Chinese module or Chinese writing course in the Korean module). That said, the programme is fully functional also in its present form.

One complaint made by some students was about the overlap in content of several core courses with similar core courses on the BA level. As it is virtually impossible to enrol to this programme without having graduated from the Asian Studies BA programme, it would be advisable to review this part of the core courses in order to ensure the informativity of each course.

2.2.2.

Most of the instructors involved in the implementation of this programme have broad academic interests and there are publications in their bibliography relevant to the courses they teach. However, as in most other programmes, the Expert Group would wish for more international peer-reviewed publications.

2.2.3.

Information provided in the SAR regarding the teaching and learning methodology was proved by the interviews with the teaching staff, students and alumni of MSP "Asian Studies". They repeatedly emphasised the student-centred approach that is predominant in all teaching. The study process is run by traditional and innovative teaching and learning principles, methods and forms. Teaching staff use interactive teaching methods, including independent student work, group work and project presentations in the form of video files and PowerPoint slides. Moreover, student discussions are organised on the challenges and paradoxes of Asian cultures and languages, assessing the degree of credibility of different divergent points of view. Likewise, situational analysis and simulation games are used to simulate different situations and scenarios. The e-learning embedded in the courses enables students to use e-learning methods. The choice of teaching method depends primarily on the specificity of each course. Oral, written and combined methods of study delivery and assessment are used during the study courses and examinations. It can be concluded that the study methods and forms applied in the MSP "Asian Studies" conform to the achievement of the intended learning outcomes and the principles of student-centred education (for more details see: SAR, pp. 214-215).

As it is already mentioned, the programme consists of 12 mandatory (A) courses (including Master Thesis Development and Defence I, II) and 68 restricted elective (B) courses. The restricted elective (B) part of the programme is divided into four regional specialisation modules: China Studies Module, Japan Studies Module, Korean Studies Module, and Middle East Studies Module. The Expert Group supports such a modular structure of the programme, as it provides a good balance between the theoretical and practical knowledge, broader understanding of the cultural context and specialisation in the chosen sub-field/language and culture.

Part (B) of the study programme is delivered in Latvian, English or the language of the relevant Asian region in a face-to-face setting according to the study plan. Studies are conducted mainly in

Latvian or English, except for language and communication culture courses that are conducted in the language of the Asian region (Arabic, Japanese, Korean, Chinese or Turkish) and whose lecturers are native speakers. Neither the SAR, nor the interviews revealed any differences between the teaching and learning methodology in Latvian and English (main languages of instruction), which is appreciated by the Expert Group, as it means that the achievement of the learning outcomes is ensured while teaching in both languages.

2.2.4.

There is no internship foreseen in the academic Master's study programme Asian Studies since the majority of students have been working in the respective field.

2.2.5.

Not applicable.

2.2.6.

The students choose their topics freely, in consultation with their supervisors, exactly as it should be. Analysis of the topics of the final theses revealed that they are chosen according to the topical issues of Asian Studies and fully correspond to the aims, objective, expected learning outcomes and content of the study programme.

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

Conclusions:

On the whole, the programme is structured very well and implemented by competent instructors, but there is a certain amount of overlap with the BA level courses. Adjustments could also be made in the content of particular modules.

Strengths:

1) The structure of the programme enables the students to continue on the track of their specialisation while providing them with a core of regional background.

Weaknesses:

1) Overlap between the courses of BSP and MSP "Asian Studies".

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 scholars implementing the programme belong to the best Latvian specialists in the field. As the SAR, research output of the teaching staff, teaching material, topics of the master theses reveal, the teaching and research component of the MSP "Asian Studies" is based on the latest developments, achievements and findings in the respective specialisation (China, Japan, Korea, Middle East).

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1.

Analysis of the study material available in Latvian and English (as well as the specialisation languages) used in teaching and learning - handbooks, textbooks, monographs, dictionaries, as well as the journals and library databases subscribed by the Library of the UL - are up-to-date and meet the needs of the teaching and research component of the MSP "Asian Studies" with its four modules. It should be mentioned as well, that the students are able to make use of extensive area-related collections in the National Library in addition to the university library, they have access to state-of-the-art IT facilities and are offered opportunities to do fieldwork in the countries they specialise in (although they often need to secure their own means to do so).

2.3.2.

Not applicable.

2.3.3.

According to the SAR (p .221-22) the revenue of the programme consists of public funding (2445 euros per year per student, with 24 students overall) and tuition fees (2200 euros per year per student, with 2 students overall), yielding a total of 63'080 (Tuition fees for international student 3150 euros). The calculations show that attracting international students significantly increases the programme's revenue - by EUR 950 per student compared to local fee-paying students, and by EUR 705 per student compared to state funded students. According to the UL calculations, the programme should be financially self-sufficient at the student number of 25 (as per public funding), which has been compensated for by the tuition-paying students. There is no minimum number of the students for the module as a prerequisite for the module to be implemented, as the modular structure of the programme allows savings for mandatory part of the curriculum (for details see: SAR, pp. 221-224). In the opinion of the Expert Group, however, the programme, just as all others in the study field, operates under significant financial pressure, with overworked and underpaid staff, and the situation is unsustainable in the long run, but this is not an issue that the administration of the programme or the faculty can solve by themselves, therefore the Expert Group will not consider it to be a flaw in their work.

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

Conclusions:

The resources of the programme are adequate, although the teaching loads and salary levels are not. However, since these issues cannot be solved by the administration of this programme, the Expert Group will not consider that as a flaw.

Strengths:

- 1) Good collaboration with the National Library ensures the students access to all the study materials they need.
- 2) Opportunities to spend time in the studied countries are provided to the students who are able to use them.

Weaknesses:

- 1) In many cases, the students need to secure their own means to spend a part of their study time in the studied country.

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

UL provides the study programme with all the necessary tools and resource material, technical as well as informative base for successful implementation of the study programme.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1.

There are three groups of teaching staff at the UL: teaching staff in elected academic positions, teaching staff at acting elected academic positions (acting and visiting lecturers), and instructors. Selection and recruitment of elected academic positions as well as acting academic positions shall be in accordance with the Regulations on Academic and Administrative Positions at the University of Latvia (the UL Senate Decision No. 11 of 31.01.2022). According to the Statute, the following academic positions exist at the University of Latvia: professor, associate professor, assistant professor, senior researcher, lecturer, researcher, assistant, research assistant. The academic MSP "Asian Studies" complies with the requirements laid down in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause three of the Law on Higher Education Institutions that "A total of not less than five professors and associate professors elected to the relevant higher education institution shall participate in the implementation of the mandatory part and the restricted elective part of academic study programmes." Professors at the MSP "Asian Studies": Kaspars Kļaviņš, Gunta Ločmele, Leons Gabriels Taivāns, Harijs Tumans. Associate professors at the MSP "Asian Studies": Agita Baltgalve, Agnese Haijima and Vita Kalnbērziņa. Four professors, three associate professors, five assistant professors, three lecturers, one instructor, two guest lecturers run the MSP "Asian Studies" (for more details see: SAR, 224-228). The programme is implemented by qualified and active scholars, although the Expert Group recommends that they try to publish more in reputable international journals. The programme would also greatly benefit from the involvement of international guest lecturers. All teaching staff of the study programme have at least a B2 level of English (CEFR).

2.4.2.

This is a highly specific field and not very many scholars with sufficient qualifications are available who would also meet the language requirements of the university and be willing to accept unreasonable teaching loads with inadequate salaries, so if any of the current professors would leave the university, the sustainability of the programme might be challenged.

2.4.3.

Not applicable.

2.4.4.

This certainly varies from person to person, but judging by the provided CVs, the criterion is formally fulfilled, even if most of the international publications have not appeared in high-ranking journals or reputable university presses. The Expert Group does understand, however, that this is very likely due to the scandalously low amount of research time allocated to the teaching staff by the faculty.

2.4.5.

The staff is working in close cooperation and the study process is implemented smoothly. According to the SAR, the primary teaching base for the BSP “Asian Studies” is the Department of Asian Studies at the UL FH. The cooperation between teaching staff takes the following forms: meetings of the study centres (Korean Studies Centre, Middle East and North Africa Studies Centre, Japanese Studies Centre, Sinology Centre) and the Department of Asian Studies, regular discussions on the achievements and problems in study work, approval of the themes of bachelor’s theses, analysis of the study process and learning outcomes. The Study Field Council is a platform for discussions on the content of studies and the development of the study programme. The study programme also involves faculty members and professionals from other faculties of the University of Latvia, thus promoting faculty cooperation, exchange of views and enriching the intellectual environment (SAR, p. 135).

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

Conclusions:

The analysis of the CVs provided by the Institution revealed, that the MSP “Asian Studies” is run by the teaching staff whose educational background, knowledge and skills, pedagogical, research and professional experience correspond to the profile, aims and learning outcomes, research areas of the programme. The teaching staff is qualified, but heavily overworked and has too little time for research.

Strengths:

- 1) The teaching staff consists of qualified and dedicated scholars.
- 2) The working relations between individual staff members seem to be adequate and supportive.

Weaknesses:

- 1) Too little research time available, which reflects negatively on the quality of their research.
- 2) Insufficient number of guest lecturers from abroad.

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

CVs, SAR, Latvian legislation, University regulations. Although due to the considerable amount of academic work the staff might have too little time for research, the CVs prove that there is sufficient amount of publications, participation in conferences, etc and teaching staff is highly qualified thus the implementation of the study programme is not affected negatively.

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

The SAR and related documentation confirm that the study programme complies with Regulations No. 240 of the Cabinet of Ministers as of 1 May 2014 "Regulations on the National Standard for Academic Education" <https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=266187>.

- 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

The study course descriptions are prepared in English and Latvian. Descriptions comply 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 samples are provided in Latvian as well as English and they comply 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".

- 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 academic staff complies with the requirements set in Law on Higher Education Institutions. Head of study field declaration No.26 - 22/93 COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 55 1-3.docx).

- 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

This is identified in the annex (2023_03_13_ACADEMIC_STAFF_CV_ENG_FINAL8.pdf). It can be concluded that the state language proficiency is compliant with Cabinet Regulation. Nr. 733 "Regulations Regarding the Extent of the Knowledge of the Official Language, the Procedures for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language and the State Fee for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language".

- 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

This is identified in the annex (2023_03_13_ACADEMIC_STAFF_CV_ENG_FINAL8.pdf).

- 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 (Studiju līgumi anglu valodā.zip. Annex 2) complies with Cabinet Regulation. 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

No other university in Latvia offers a comparable programme.

Although there is an agreement signed between the UL and Daugavpils University (DU) (Annex), where paragraph 1.7 states the continuation of the implementation of the MSP Asian Studies in the DU MSP Philology (Russian Philology) (45226), this does not seem plausible since the students only have possibility to acquire the knowledge, skills and competencies in Russian philology, not issues related to Chinese, Korean, etc.

- 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: Fully compliant

This is testified by the Refund and Compensation Policy (Annex).

- 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: Fully compliant

The study programme complies with Regulations No. 240 of the Cabinet of Ministers as of 1 May 2014 "Regulations on the National Standard for Academic Education" and other regulatory enactments.

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

The MSP "Asian Studies" is assessed as excellent based on the desk study of the documentation provided, the interviews with different internal and external stakeholders and examining the infrastructure during the onsite visit. The master's study programme "Asian Studies" can be conducted in Latvian and English in the following forms: full time studies (2 years) in the University buildings located in Riga.

The expert group identified the following strengths and weaknesses (The relevant recommendations are presented below in the special section).

Strengths:

- The Academic Master's study programme Asian Studies is a unique one since it is the only master's study programme in Latvia that prepares high-level specialists in Oriental languages, literatures and cultures with interdisciplinary, versatile and humanities-oriented knowledge, skills and competences in Arabic, Japanese, Korean and Chinese cultural regions.
- There is a high demand for the programme's graduates in the job market.
- There is a positive trend of student enrolment due to sufficient amount of state budget places
- The structure of the programme enables the students to continue on the track of their specialisation while providing them with a core of regional background.
- Good collaboration with the National Library ensures the students access to all the study materials they need.
- Opportunities to spend time in the studied countries are provided to the students who are able to use them
- The teaching staff consists of qualified and dedicated scholars.
- The working relations between individual staff members seem to be adequate and supportive.

Weaknesses:

- Considerably high drop-out rate of the students.
- Lack of the alumni programmes to follow the graduates' career paths and use the benefits of their expertise in the further programme's development process.
- Lack of the programme advertisement to attract international students as well as self-funding students.
- Overlap between the courses of BSP and MSP "Asian Studies".
- The opportunities provided by the Faculty of Humanities concerning the implementation of the study programme if it is terminated, don't consider the rights of the students who study in English.
- In many cases, the students need to secure their own means to spend a part of their study time in

the studied country.

- > Too little research time available, which reflects negatively on the quality of their research.
- > Insufficient number of guest lecturers from abroad.

Asian Studies are a difficult subject that cannot be fully mastered on the BA level. This programme provides the graduates of the BA programme with a smooth continuation of their study track, offering a further level of linguistic competence and specialised courses in the cultures and societies of the area. All the positive things the Expert Group had to say about the BA programme are also valid here. The Expert Group would nonetheless suggest that the programme administration would revise the course content in order to minimise overlap between the two levels, so that the entire time of studies might be dedicated to the mastering of new material. This, and other minor weaknesses indicated in the recommendations are nonetheless not as weighty as to lower the overall rating of the programme, which, on the whole, is on equal standing with most other programmes in the Study Field. The recommendations should thus not be taken as indications how to remove deficiencies, but recommendations on how to further improve the quality of the programme.

As far as the Expert Group was able to observe, all modules are of equal quality and the programme is equitable for both languages of delivery.

Evaluation of the study programme "Asian Studies"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Excellent

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Asian Studies"

Short-term recommendations

- | |
|---|
| 1) Overlap in the content of MA and BA level courses should be minimised. |
| 2) The opportunities provided by the Faculty of Humanities concerning the implementation of the study programme if it is terminated, should be reconsidered to protect the rights of the students who study in English. |
| 3) The drop-out rate should be addressed, perhaps by adding more flexibility to the requirements of the programme. |
| 4) The programme should be advertised more effectively in order to attract international students as well as self-funding students. |

Long-term recommendations

- | |
|--|
| 1) The content of specialisation modules should be adjusted for relevance and possibly implement a unified structure for them. |
| 2) International cooperation should be strengthened with partners in Europe. |
| 3) A strategy should be developed for making the research of the participating staff internationally more visible, especially by raising the proportion of their research time and rewarding international peer-reviewed publications. |
| 4) Financial support should be secured for students to spend time in the area they study. |

5) Communication with the graduates should be improved by using different forms and approaches.

II - "Language and Culture Studies" ASSESSMENT

II - "Language and Culture Studies" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1.

The compliance of the Doctoral study programme Language and Culture Studies fully complies with the study field Language and Culture Studies, Mother Tongue Studies, and Language Programmes, since the aim of the study field is to maintain, develop and offer qualitative and versatile as well as globally competitive and research-based studies in the humanities in various languages and cultures, thus ensuring the stability of the level of humanitarian intelligence and Latvian language as well as cultural environment in the present and future Latvian society, to prepare specialists of high academic and scientific qualification in compliance with the long-term goals of the Latvian economy, socio-political strategy, and other goals (SAR, p.17) and the reported study programme's goal is to improve the research and academic competence of doctoral students for independent and innovative research activities, to prepare highly qualified specialists capable of independently developing and publicly defending a doctoral thesis containing the results of original scientific research and providing new knowledge in the linguistics and literary studies branch or in the branches of music, visual arts and architecture (in line with the current classifier of science fields). The length of the implementation of the study programme, which is 3 years for full-time, is evaluated as sufficient for acquiring the necessary skills and way of thinking to enhance and prove the research competence.

2.1.2.

According to the SAR p.402, the title of the study programme is Language and Culture Studies in the study field of Language and Culture Studies, Mother Tongue Studies, and Language Programmes with education classification code 51227 with the last 3 numbers (227) standing for language studies and programmes according to the classification of Latvian education which can be accessed here: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/291524-noteikumi-par-latvijas-izglitibas-klasifikaciju> and it is consistent with Ministers Regulation No 322 as of 13 June 2017 "Regulations on the Classification of the Latvian Education", which corresponds to the eighth qualification level of the Latvian Qualifications Framework and the third cycle qualification level in the Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA).

There is no professional qualification given after graduating as it is a Doctoral study programme.

The programme contains 2 sub-programmes, namely, Linguistics and Literary Studies and Folklore Studies. The difference between sub-programmes lies in the doctoral exam in a relevant branch of science and in the restrictive electives that are set for each section of the sub-programmes. The tasks and learning outcomes of both sub-programmes are well aligned with the aim of the study field since the achievability and interconnection of the intended learning outcomes have been assessed by means of mapping of the study programme (see Annex of Mapping of DSP) that improves the quality and efficiency of the reported study programme.

According to the information provided in the SAR p.409, the admission requirements of the reported programme are clearly described and revealed on <https://www.lu.lv/en/admission/study-programmes/doctoral-study-programmes/study-programmes-f>

or-international-students/language-and-culture-studies/ . According to the SAR and UL regulations, the admission requirements do not differ for both sub-programmes. According to the SAR p.140, after successful completion of the studies, students are awarded with Doctoral Degree of Science (Ph.D.) in Humanities and the Arts. According to Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 595 "Regulations on Clusters, Fields and Subfields of Science in Latvia" as of 27.09.2022, Doctor of Science (Ph.D.) is awarded to a cluster of humanities and a <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/335928-noteikumi-par-latvijas-zinatnes-nozaru-grupam-zinatnes-nozarem-un-a-paksnozarem#&pd=1>, available only in Latvian) fields: linguistics and literary studies and music, visual arts and architecture.

According to the SAR p.139, the study programme is a full-time study programme with 144 CP to be gathered during the study process of 3 years. The title, code, degree to be obtained of the study programme, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation as well as the implementation languages, are reasonable and justified.

2.1.3.

Since the licence received on 02/07/2021, some changes have been made such as the change in the title of the awarded doctoral degree due to the changes in the legislation. In accordance with the amendments to the Law on Scientific Activity which entered into force on 29.07.2022, a Doctor of Science degree is conferred: "(2 1) The title of Doctor of Science in Latvia is a Doctor of Science (philosophiae doctor) and its official abbreviation — Doctor of Science (Ph. D.). The doctoral diploma shall indicate the official abbreviation of the Doctor of Science degree, the relevant scientific group and the title of the doctoral <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/334347-grozijumi-zinatniskas-darbibas-likuma>) (available only in Latvian. According to Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 595 "Regulations on Clusters, Fields and Subfields of Science in Latvia" as of 27.09.2022, Doctor of Science (Ph.D.) is awarded to a cluster of humanities and <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/335928-noteikumi-par-latvijas-zinatnes-nozaru-grupam-zinatnes-nozarem-un-a-paksnozarem#&pd=1>, available only in Latvian) fields: linguistics and literary studies and music, visual arts and architecture. (SAR, p. 400).

Secondly, after reviewing the survey results and discussions with the doctoral students there were a couple of decisions made concerning the structure of the study plan which was approved by the Council of Study Field Language and Cultural Studies, Mother Tongue Studies , and Language Programmes and the Council of the Faculty of Humanities (SAR, p.401). Namely, in order to avoid duplication with MA programme the study course Research and Innovation: Development and Management of Language and Culture Projects (4CP) has been moved from Mandatory Part (A) to the Restricted Elective Part (B) and to allocate more CP to the development of the doctoral thesis, the study course's Doctoral Thesis III, volume was increased from 30 to 34 CP, it was included in the Mandatory Part (A) and divided into sub-courses Doctoral Thesis III, Part 1 and Doctoral Thesis III, Part 2.

In Experts' opinion the changes are plausible and well-thought out since they would implement into the DSP's quality and efficiency.

2.1.4.

Shift of values in Europe, ageing academic staff in Europe (SAR, p. 410) determine that the broadest possible representation of doctoral students is essential in ensuring renewal of scientific and academic staff as well as the specialists with high research skills in different organisations. DSP Language and Culture Studies brings some indirect but added value in different spheres of economy, e.g., tourism. According to the Latvian National Development Plan 2021-2027 where it is stated that the core values of the country are its national culture and the Latvian language, the role of the graduates of DSP cannot be underestimated since they have the potential to raise the image of

Latvia by their research skills not only at national level, but also internationally, thus making the national culture understandable and attractive (SAR, p. 410). Based on the previously mentioned, in the Experts' opinion, economic and, mainly, social justification of the reported DSP is well-grounded. Although the SAR emphasises and reveals very general information concerning the employment of researchers with PhD degree and admits that the trend is positive, mentioning some organisations that employ people with PhD degree, e.g., Latvian Writers Union, Union of Latvian Theatre Employees, etc, there is no statistical data provided concerning the employment of the graduates of the reported DSP.

Since the DSP Language and Culture Studies is recently licensed (02/07/2021), there are no graduates of the reported study programme (Annex on Statistical data on students in DSP Language and Culture Studies). In the first year of the implementation of DSP, 9 students were enrolled in the programme and 14 students were transferred from the consolidated doctoral programmes Literature Science, Folkloristic and Arts and Linguistics, who after the alignment of study courses, continued their studies in the 2nd year of the current DSP. Based on this, there were 23 doctoral students in the DSP Language and Culture Studies in the first year of its implementation. At the same time there still were 14 doctoral students in their 3rd year of doctoral studies which they finished following the previous structure of the programme (SAR, p.412) In September, 2022 16 applicants applied to 9 announced state-funded places for studies in the licensed DSP. Since almost all of them had started work on their thesis, performed well in the admission interview and 10 of them had obtained their Master's degree with distinction, the Branch Doctoral Council took a decision to open 6 more state-funded places for the 1st academic year of studies. This initiative can be highly appreciated in Experts' opinion. As the SAR states, there are no drop-outs in the programme, but there are 6 students who are on academic leave, respectively, there are 41 students in the DSP. The Table 3.1.4.1 on p.412 of SAR depicts that the dynamics of students at the reported DSP is positively growing, but there are no international students enrolled.

2.1.5.

Not applicable.

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

Conclusions:

The reported DSP fully complies with the study field Language and Culture Studies, Mother Tongue Studies, and Language Programmes. The title, code, degree to be obtained, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation, as well as the implementation language, are reasonable and justified and complies with the state's regulations. The corrections made to the study programme's parameters since its licensing are well-founded and would be supported. The social justification of the reported programme is plausible as well as the positive dynamics of the students' enrolment confirms the popularity and topicality of the reported programme.

Strengths:

- 1) The graduates of DSP give evitable contribution to the formulation of the statehood civic position, the preservation of the Latvian language and the insurance of national culture values.
- 2) The students' enrolment in the DSP can be considered as positive.

Weaknesses:

- 1) There are no international students in the DSP Language and Culture Studies which might be rectified by paying more attention to the programme's advertising in the international education fairs;
- 2) There is no statistical data on DSP graduates' employment and career path that could be rectified by developing an effective Alumni Club/ Society at the UL level.

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1.

The duration of academic doctoral study programme “Language and Culture Studies” in full-time studies is 3 years as it is stated in the Resolution No. 27 of the Senate of the University of Latvia of 28.02.2022. The academic doctoral study programme in-total is 144 CP, from which 114 CP is mandatory part (Part A), 26 CP is restricted electives (Part B) and 4 CP elective courses (Part C). Academic doctoral study programme also has additional part courses (Civil Protection (1 CP) and Environment Protection (1 CP)), this part is for those students who have not taken them in the previous education levels. The mandatory part of the doctoral study programme contains study and promotion work, including literature and sources analysis, research implementation, incl. regular, but not less than once a year evaluation of the progress made by the supervisor, preparation and presentation of the final report at the end of each academic year in accordance with the procedures laid down in the study programme, summarising and analysing the results, preparing publications and participation in scientific conferences. 6 CP is for participation in the UL Doctoral School or an Equivalent Experience in Foreign Higher Education or Research Institutions in the Field of Languages and Cultures. 10 CP for Doctoral examination and complies with the Regulations of the University of Latvia on Study and Continuing Education Programmes, Law on Scientific Activity (<https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/107337-law-on-scientific-activity>) and Procedures and Criteria for the Conferral of a Doctoral Degree in Science (Promotion) (<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/124787-zinatniska-doktora-grada-pieskirsanas-promocijas-kartiba-un-kriteriji>). The programme is well balanced and harnesses the strengths of both the faculty and the closest partners in research. The students are guaranteed enough flexibility to concentrate on their dissertation topics and are able to acquire enough background knowledge. During the onsite visit the Expert Group convinced that studies take place according to an individually prepared study plan for each doctoral student. The doctoral student's individual work plan and report is discussed and evaluated at the meeting of the Doctoral Council of the Field at the beginning and the end of the study year, or more often, if necessary. At the end of studies, the Doctoral Council of the Field organises the pre-defence of the doctoral thesis and makes a decision on the completion of the doctoral study programme.

2.2.2.

The study process is fully integrated with the research activities of the faculty and the students have access to the newest achievements in the field.

2.2.3.

As it is already mentioned, the DSP “Language and Culture Studies” consists of two sub-programmes: “Linguistics and Literary Studies” and “Folklore Studies and Theatre History and Theory”. Each of the sub-programmes includes two sections. Section — a set of lectures and seminar classes intended separately for: a) literary scholars; b) linguists; c) folklorists; d) theatre scholars. It is absolutely logical that the students choose the sub-programme from the beginning of their studies, based on their educational and professional background and research interests (otherwise the quality of the doctoral thesis could not be reached). Admission takes place in the doctoral study

programme, but when applying for studies, the applicant indicates the branch of science and the sub-branch in which the thesis will be developed.

As it is a doctoral programme, the study implementation methods essentially differ from the teaching and learning methodology used on Bachelor and Master Level. The study process is fully student-centred; individual supervision and classwork are balanced adequately. Information the Expert Group got from the interviews with the students and graduates regarding the study implementation methods, proved the information provided in the SAR. Oral, written and combined methods of study and evaluation are used during study courses and tests. In order to promote the development of research and pedagogical competence, doctoral students are involved in conducting the study process of undergraduate or master level courses (peer teaching-learning). Students' speaking, presentation and discussion skills are promoted during the seminars. In general, all that applies to the methods of implementing studies in lower level studies is also applicable to methods in the implementation of doctoral studies, paying more attention to the direct involvement of doctoral students in the development of research and pedagogical competence and paying more attention to students' international mobility (for more details see: SAR, pp. 419-424). Use of study implementation methods doesn't depend on the language of instruction (Latvian and English) and in both cases ensure successful achievement of the intended learning outcomes of the DSP "Language and Culture Studies" with its sub-programmes and sections.

2.2.4.

Throughout the programme, the students are working in close cooperation with research institutions and active researchers.

2.2.5.

There is a clear track of studies, which terminates with the dissertation defence. Their progress is monitored and they have sufficient supervision.

2.2.6.

The dissertations are often parts of larger long-term research projects, to the completion of which they actively contribute. Therefore, the topics of students' final theses are relevant to the field and correspond to the study programme. Analysis of the topics of the final theses provided in the SAR (see: SAR, pp. 425-429) revealed that they are chosen according to the topical issues of Language and Culture Studies and fully correspond to the aims, objectives, expected learning outcomes and content of the interdisciplinary study programme.

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

Conclusions:

The programme is theoretically well-founded and very well implemented in practice, it relies on efficient cooperation with local partner institutions, but would benefit from more international collaboration.

Strengths:

- 1) The doctoral students are integrated into research activities throughout their study, they receive adequate supervision and feel themselves to be valued members of the academic community.
- 2) The dissertations are often contributing to a coordinated, long-term research effort that is a part of the academic strategy of the faculty.

Weaknesses:

1) The students should be exposed to more international cooperation, with opportunities to attend international conferences and to consult international specialists; there are also very few international academic visitors.

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 programme has involved the leading scholars of Latvia in the relevant fields, including specialists working at other universities, which is a good prerequisite to ensure high quality research in the framework of DSP.

Analysis of the teaching component content and methodology, topics of the PhD theses, the bibliographical resources available in English and Latvian, as well as the research output of the teaching staff/potential supervisors reveal that the DSP "Language and Culture Studies" with its sub-programmes and sections is based on the latest achievements and findings in the respective fields (Linguistics, literary studies, folklore, theatre studies).

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1.

The resources available to the students are fully adequate for the implementation of the study process in both languages of implementation.

2.3.2.

The level of local cooperation is excellent, but on the international level there is room for improvement. Certain study areas benefit from the activities of the "Colloquium Balticum", but more could be done on the European level. Some of the students are receiving scholarships that include special funds for research activities, but others do not; it would be desirable to provide all students with access to such funds, even on a minimal level.

2.3.3.

For the implementation of the DSP "Language and Culture Studies", the UL uses: State budget funding for studies - 4890 euros per year; For full-time studies - 2 200 euros per year; Study fee for full-time foreign students - 8 400 euros per year; In view of the above, the total budget of the study programme is expected to be 178.24 thousand euros per year. According to the calculations, provision is sufficient if the number of budget students is 36. Nowadays there are 41 students studying in the programme and student dynamics is characterised as positively growing. There are sufficient funds to run the programme, but the students are not provided with adequate funding by the university. Some students receive scholarships and stipends that alleviate their financial situation somewhat, but they are not able to dedicate themselves to their studies full time.

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

Conclusions:

This is a very strong, integrated programme content-wise and fully bears out the national responsibility that the university needs to bear. Highly motivated students work together with first-rate scholars as their supervisors, forming a vibrant and productive academic community. However, the programme is modelled according to a pattern that would have students working on their dissertations full time, while resources for that are absent, and the level of financial support available for students is clearly inadequate. However, as this is an issue that the programme leadership cannot solve on their own, the Expert Group will not consider it as a flaw.

Strengths:

- 1) The students have access to adequate library materials and other resources necessary for their research.
- 2) The study process is fully integrated with the research activities of the faculty staff and their long-term research projects.
- 3) The level of local cooperation with research institutions is excellent.
- 4) The supervision is organised well, the students are highly motivated and feel themselves to be valued members of the research community.

Weaknesses:

- 1) The level of financial support is insufficient for the students to dedicate themselves to their studies full time.

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 resources of the university as well as the partner research institutions are fully adequate for the implementation of the programme.

UL provides the study programme with all the necessary tools and resource material, technical as well as informative base for successful implementation of the study programme.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1.

The programme is implemented by the top scholars of the University of Latvia as well as researchers working in its partner institutions and represents the highest level of academic excellence available in Latvia in this field. 34 lecturers are involved in the implementation of the doctoral study programme “Language and Culture Studies” — basically the teaching staff of the University of Latvia: 19 professors, 4 associate professors, 2 assistant professors and 1 lead researcher from eight departments of the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Latvia; lecturers of other faculties of the University of Latvia will also be involved in reading individual courses — a professor from the Faculty of Business, Management and Economics of the University of Latvia and an associate professor from the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Latvia; the courses will be also provided by researchers of the institutes of Latvia — lead researcher from the University of Latvia Artificial Intelligence Laboratory of the Institute of Mathematics and Computer Science and two lead

researchers of the Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art of the University of Latvia. All teaching staff of the study programme have at least a B2 level of English (CEFR). Teaching staff of other foreign language courses have certified proficiency in the respective foreign languages at C2 level.

2.4.2.

Flexible schemes of cooperation make it possible to recruit consultants and co-supervisors from partner institutions if needed and the Expert Group has no doubts in the long-term academic sustainability of the programme. This is one of the specific features of the programme – leading scholars can be involved even if they work in other institutions. This flexibility is an asset and not a source of concern.

2.4.3.

As the students are often integrated in long-term research projects, the existing publications of their supervisors often form the theoretical and methodological basis of their own research, contributing to the formation of what the Expert Group might call “Riga schools” in particular fields.

2.4.4.

The programme relies on those scholars of the University of Latvia who have the best publishing records and their bibliographies are formally in accordance with the requirements of the law, however, more publication in top-level international outlets would be desirable.

2.4.5.

According to the observations of the Expert Group, the programme is implemented by the teaching staff in close and constant cooperation both among themselves and with colleagues from partner institutions, the study process flows smoothly and the students feel their coursework to be relevant for their research. As it mentioned in the SAR and proved by the interviews, in order to deepen the cross-disciplinary scope and broaden students' knowledge and competences, the programme includes a series of study courses taught by representatives of several sub-sectors. Examples of positive cooperation between the teaching staff are courses taught by UL Faculty of Humanities and cooperation partners — research institutes (Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art; IMCS Artificial Intelligence Laboratory), professors or lead researchers of the University of Latvia and other universities (LCA, Daugavpils University). This provides a closer link between students with their possible future jobs, as well as allows them to verify the progress of research in linguistics, literature, theatrical science or folklore studies in practice. In the elective choice part of the programme, students are free to apply for courses outside the framework of their specific module, thus offering an optional opportunity to both expand and deepen their knowledge (for more details see: SAR, pp. 439-440).

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

Conclusions:

The teaching staff is dedicated and highly qualified, they work in close cooperation with each other and provide both adequate individual supervision and support in class. The Expert Group would hope for more international exposure for the students, however, through the invitation of guest lecturers or consultants from abroad.

Strengths:

- 1) The teaching staff of the programme consists of highly qualified and active scholars.

- 2) Classwork and individual research of the students are well balanced.
- 3) The programme is implemented in close collaboration with partner institutions, benefiting from the work of the scholars working there.

Weaknesses:

- 1) The level of international cooperation could be higher, in particular, the university should invite either by itself or together with partners, reputable international scholars for guest lectures, workshops and seminars.

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

CVs, SAR, Latvian legislation, University regulations and the information obtained ensure compliance with this requirement.

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

- 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

The study course descriptions are prepared in English and Latvian. Descriptions comply 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 samples are provided in Latvian as well as English and they comply 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".

- 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 academic staff complies with the requirements set in Law on Higher Education Institutions.
Head of study field declaration No.26 - 22/93 COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 55 1-3.docx).

- 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: Fully compliant

According to the Certification of the field director No.26-22/66 (Annex), 34 doctors of science participate in the implementation of the DSP Language and Culture Studies, of which 15 are experts of the Latvian Council of Science.

- 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

This is identified in the annex (2023_03_13_ACADEMIC_STAFF_CV_ENG_FINAL8.pdf). It can be concluded that the state language proficiency is compliant with Cabinet Regulation. Nr. 733 "Regulations Regarding the Extent of the Knowledge of the Official Language, the Procedures for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language and the State Fee for Examining the Proficiency in the Official Language".

- 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

According to the self-assessment reflected by the CVs of the teaching staff members (Annex 2023_03_13_ACADEMIC_STAFF_CV_ENG_FINAL8.pdf), the majority of the teaching staff members foreign language knowledge is at B2 Level or higher.

- 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 (Studiju līgumi anglu valodā.zip. Annex 2) complies with Cabinet Regulation. 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

There is an agreement signed between UL and Latvian Academy of Culture (LAC) (Annex) which states that if the implementation of the DSP is terminated, LAC is committed to providing opportunities for further study in Academic Doctoral Programme in Arts (51212).

- 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: Fully compliant

UL 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. It is ensured based on the "Refund and Compensation Policy Statement" document added to the annexes pursuant to paragraph 13.4 of the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 795 "Regulations Regarding Licensing of Study Programmes".

- 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: Fully compliant

The study programme complies with the Law on Scientific Activity <https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/107337-law-on-scientific-activity> as well as with the Procedures and Criteria for the Conferral of a Doctoral Degree in Science (Promotion) <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/124787-zinatniska-doktora-grada-pieskirsanas-promocijas-kartiba-un-kriteri> ji. The correspondence of the reported study programme is clearly identified by Annex 19.

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: Fully compliant

The study programme complies with the Law on Higher Education Institutions and Education Standard determined by the Cabinet of Ministers, Latvian National Development Plan - 2021-2027 and standards and guidelines for European Higher Education Area. The study programme complies with the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No.322 Regulations on the Classification of the Latvian Education as well as with the Cabinet of Ministers Order No.345 On the Introduction of a New Doctoral Studies Model in Latvia.

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

The DSP “Language and Culture Studies” with its sub-programmes - “Linguistics and Literary Studies” and “Folklore Studies and Theatre History and Theory” - is assessed as excellent based on the desk study of the documentation provided, the interviews with different internal and external stakeholders and examining the infrastructure during the onsite visit. The DSP “Language and Culture Studies” can be conducted in Latvian and English in the following forms: full time studies (3 years) in the University buildings located in Riga.

The expert group identified the following strengths and weaknesses (The relevant recommendations are presented below in the special section).

Strengths:

- The graduates of DSP give evitable contribution to the formulation of the statehood civic position, the preservation of the Latvian language and the insurance of national culture values;
- The students' enrolment in the DSP can be considered as positive.
- The doctoral students are integrated into research activities throughout their study, they receive adequate supervision and feel themselves to be valued members of the academic community.
- The dissertations are often contributing to a coordinated, long-term research effort that is a part of the academic strategy of the faculty.
- The students have access to adequate library materials and other resources necessary for their research.
- The study process is fully integrated with the research activities of the faculty staff and their long-term research projects.
- The level of local cooperation with research institutions is excellent.
- The supervision is organised well, the students are highly motivated and feel themselves to be valued members of the research community.
- The teaching staff of the programme consists of highly qualified and active scholars.
- Classwork and individual research of the students are well balanced.
- The programme is implemented in close collaboration with partner institutions, benefiting from the work of the scholars working there.

Weaknesses:

- Insufficient number of international students in the DSP Language and Culture Studies which might be rectified by paying more attention to the programme's advertising in the international education fairs;
- Lack of statistical data on DSP graduates' employment and career path that could be rectified by developing an effective Alumni Club/ Society at the UL level.
- Insufficient level of international cooperation and insufficient possibilities for students to attend international conferences and to consult international specialists; Low number of international academic visitors, reputable international scholars for guest lectures, workshops and seminars.
- Insufficient level of financial support for the students to dedicate themselves to their studies full time.

This PhD programme is a vibrant hub of academic cooperation between the university and its partner institutions, attracting the best academic talent in the country and serving the long-term needs of Latvian human sciences in the best possible way. Theoretical background studies and hands-on research are well integrated, the supervision functions well, and the opportunities for young researchers to be integrated into the academic community are exemplary. The main concerns the Expert Group has are financial: the programme is built up in a way that implies full-time research work, and yet the PhD students have to support themselves, as scholarships are not

available to all and are insufficient also for those who have them. It should be brought to the attention of decision makers that the current model of doctoral studies implies full time work on part of the students, for which no financial mechanism exists. Another concern is funding of research activities, which, again, is provided only for those students who are receiving EU scholarships. The Expert Group certainly hopes for a change in Latvian education and research budgets that would take care of this issue.

Despite the weaknesses mentioned above, the DSP "Language and Culture Studies" with its sub-programmes fulfils the requirements of the Latvian higher education and quality assurance legislation, as well as the local, University and Faculty regulations. There are no deficiencies identified by the expert group which cannot be eliminated during the 2-year accreditation period. The recommendations are provided for further development and improvement and there are no serious weaknesses which may prevent fulfilling the requirements of the accreditation standards.

Evaluation of the study programme "Language and Culture Studies"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Excellent

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Language and Culture Studies"

Short-term recommendations

- | |
|---|
| 1) International cooperation should be strengthened particularly by guest lecturers, dissertation workshops or theoretical seminars with the participation of foreign scholars, by supporting participation of PhD students in different international scientific events. |
| 2) The programme should market itself internationally in order to attract international students. |
| 3) The possibilities for the development of an alumni club or society at the university level should be investigated in order to keep track of the progress of graduates. |

Long-term recommendations

- | |
|--|
| 1) Junior research fellow salaried positions for PhD students should be established. |
| 2) Funds should be made available for all students, not just the recipients of specific scholarships, for research activities such as mobility, participation in academic conferences etc. |

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:	Fully compliant			University of Latvia has procedures in place to ensure continuous improvement, development and efficient performance of the study field.
R2 - Compliance of scientific research and artistic creation with the level of development of scientific research and artistic creation (if applicable)		Partially compliant		The visibility of the research of the scholars of the study field needs be improved. The teaching load needs to be considerably reduced to allow for time and energy for research.
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			Cooperation and internationalisation activities are systematically developed with numerous institutions from Latvia and abroad. Participation in the European Universities Initiative ensures a solid basis for strategic projects in the study field.
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		The majority of the previous suggestions were implemented, but some of the issues still need attention and further improvement.

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)

No.	Study programme	R5	R6	R7	R8	Evaluation of the study programme (excellent, good, average, poor)
1	English, European Languages and Business Studies (43227)	Not relevant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Excellent
2	East-West Intercultural Studies (43227)	Not relevant	Partially compliant	Partially compliant	Partially compliant	Poor
3	Philology (43227)	Not relevant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Excellent
4	Latvian Studies (43227)	Not relevant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Excellent
5	Asian Studies (43227)	Not relevant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Excellent
6	English Studies (45227)	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Excellent
7	Latvian Language, Literature and Culture Studies (45227)	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Excellent
8	Linguistics, Literature and Regional Culture Studies (45227)	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Excellent
9	Asian Studies (45227)	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Excellent
10	Language and Culture Studies (51227)	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Excellent

The Dissenting Opinions of the Experts

There are no dissenting opinions of the experts.