

# Expert group joint opinion

Evaluation Procedure: Assessment of Study Field

Higher Education Institution: Riga Graduate School of Law

Study field: Law

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# Summary Assessment of the Study Field

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### INTRODUCTION

The main vision of RGSL according to the RGSL Development Strategy 2020-2026 is to establish RGSL as a leading research-intensive center of legal studies in the Baltic area. And the mechanisms that will help to achieve the goals are: establishing continuous professional development of the course offer, continuing and strengthening RGSL involvement in the development of assistance projects, working on RGSL financial sustainability, establishing networks with other universities etc.

The key aspects of the strategy are implemented into the study programme descriptions, study courses, and into the cooperation process between the RGSL and students. RGSL offers interdisciplinary Bachelor and Masters level programmes. According to RGSL documents, RGSL has 20 years of experience in the implementation of programmes of legal education through the study direction "Law" and currently offers six accredited master's and two accredited bachelor's study programmes

During the teaching process, RGSL fosters collaboration across traditional and innovative disciplines such as Law and Technology or Law and Finances, etc. RGSL builds a strong team that consists of visiting professors, lecturers, and national level administrative staff. The positive aspect of the RGSL structure and activities is that the RGSL brings together diverse minds -students, companies, businesses, public, and private sector representatives.

RGSL provides an interdisciplinary teaching approach as well as plenty of other options. Large range of courses allow matching studies with each students' individual ambitions.

Studies are carried out in English, attracting internationally recognised industry experts and highly qualified teaching staff from Latvia and abroad. Teaching staff represents both academic and professional fields. The collaboration between the fields gives a positive impact on the quality of the study programmes and study directions as well. RGSL's excellent cooperation with industry professionals shows that the practical issues can be used in the theoretical field. The practice given by industry professionals is applicable to work on course descriptions, case study creation, etc.

RGSL has a specific niche in Latvia and provides exclusive and impressive education from the international and national student perspective. Because of the multidisciplinary approach and international education-based model, the study process is organized in an unusual way. The study process is well organized and is based on the module system. The module system complies with the RGSL practice to attract visiting lecturers from around the world.

Following the Bologna process, RGSL pursues student-centred learning. The teaching process puts more attention on the student and their needs, rather than being centred around the lecturer input. This approach is highly recognized by RGSL students.

### QUALITY

RGSL constantly screens and evaluates all of its study programmes, the course structure within the study programmes, as well as the individual courses included in the study programmes (see also SAR p 9-13). This evaluation process involves, among other things, analysis of the feedback provided by students, alumni, as well as employers to the programmes as well as courses. Students have the possibility to provide feedback both on the course and programme content as well as on the teaching methods employed in different courses. This feedback is analysed at the end of each academic module and is taken into account to improve the study direction and programmes. The results of the student and alumni survey are available at the RGSL website.

RGSL is flexible in changing the programmes; there are a few changes implemented after the submission of the SAR. There was a concern whether the RGSL is over flexible and whether the programme can change too quickly. The in-site interviews proved that the students know the precise programme structure and requirements before signing the study contract, and any possible changes

in the curriculum do not affect the ongoing programmes.

Central for the development of the study programmes is the RGSL Development Plan, which is not very detailed but sets general goals and objectives for the study direction. It is positive to note that the RGSL used the writing of the self-assessment report as a possibility to evaluate the study direction and the programmes fully with the support of an external evaluator.

RGSL has a quality policy and a well-developed quality assurance system, which contributes to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study direction and the relevant study programmes. Documentation prepared by the experts as well as the evaluation report indicates that there is a local system, which ensures continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study direction and the relevant study programmes.

There are well-structured feedback mechanisms to students, employers, and graduates. This mechanism is available for all stakeholders and was appreciated by RGSL students during the expert's meetings. Statistics were provided by experts on the evaluated study programmes of the study direction.

#### RESOURCES

The study direction and the study programmes are mainly financed by the study fees of the students. The study direction also received external project-based funding; information on such funding received was not included in the self-evaluation report. The dependency on student fees is identified as a risk and the RGSL addressed this issue in its development plan. SAR shows that during the annual RGSL budget planning process, funding is allocated for research activities.

The report provides information that RGSL budget includes participation fees in scientific conferences for academic personnel, preparation of scientific publications, organisation of research seminars and conferences at RGSL, own financing of research projects as well as supplementation of RGSL Legal library's collections with recent scientific literature and databases such as Thomson Reuters Westlaw, Westlaw UK and Hein Online, as well as Science Direct. There is a growing demand for databases such as - Oxford University Press and Kluwer Law, Oxford Handbooks Online, etc. The statistical data provided by the experts shows that the number of readers in the RGSL law library is stable, the library served more than approx. 1600 readers per year, of which more than 700 were RGSL students and teaching staff.

The positive aspect is the cooperation agreement with the Stockholm School of Economics in Riga. This agreement allows RGSL students to use the SSE Riga library for free.

The RGSL Law Library offers students, researchers, and legal professionals' access to a big amount of full text databases. It shall be noted that the access to IP address is limited and authenticated within the RGSL network. RGSL legal Library has very good, expensive, and rare collections of law science literature. The library stock includes more than 8,000 books in all areas of science represented in the graduate school and more than 200 titles of legal journals. Nevertheless, there is a lack of particular literature for some programmes. From the mentioned above, it can be concluded that there is a good technical background for the scientific field.

RGSL academic personnel have the opportunity to participate in scientific conferences, prepare scientific publications, organise research seminars, etc. However, the number of these activities are not appropriate to the RGSL given financial support.

It must be noted that the RGSL has a good academic personnel motivation policy. According to the employment agreements of RGSL academic personnel, there are required research activities. The indicated wages also include funding for research. The activities of the bachelor's and master's degree programmes occur at RGSL premises.

RGSL buildings (Strēlnieku 4 k-2 and Alberta 13) consist of seven auditoriums (W20, W23, W31, W32, W41, W42, A70) and two specially designed study rooms for students. They are available for the study process. The audiences are in good technical condition. There is modern multimedia equipment available for the implementation of the study process and Wi-fi coverage, as well as study rooms, computer classes. RGSL is planning to attract more students, but limited premises

might, prevent the growth of the students' numbers.

#### SUSTANTABILITY

There are 5 main aspects of a sustainable university according to the theory.

1. Education: Empower global citizens for sustainable development
2. Research: Discover answers to important social questions
3. Operations: Achieve a zero footprint for campus operations
4. Community: Empower students and staff to act on sustainability
5. Governance: Make sustainability a priority for your organization

From that perspective, the sustainability of RGSL is on a good level. RGSL provides the following degrees for the education system: Bachelor, Master degrees. The aims of the particular programs provided are identified in RGSL documentation. In common, the modern vision of study programmes is implemented into particular study programme descriptions and study courses. There is good cooperation between students and industry professionals, etc.

According to the RGSL Development Strategy, RGSL, apart from being an important higher educational center in the Baltics, is willing to build its strength as a leading research center as well. The research at RGSL is conducted in the areas of International Law, Human Rights and European Union Law. Those major areas correspond to the overall profile of RGSL, its study direction, and the educational programmes offered which focus mainly on International and European law.

In particular, the connection between the research and study programmes is visible in the context of three programmes - International and European Law, Public International Law and Human Rights, and EU Law and Policy. Due to the international and European law-oriented character of the remaining programmes, the main indicated research directions are also aligned with them. However, there are also a number of courses on technology and business. These areas receive less attention in research. The research is conducted by permanent academic staff, whose overall number is relatively small. There is a big disproportion between the number of permanent academic staff (in the year 2018-2019 - 10 permanent academics) and visiting staff (in the year 2018 -2019, there were overall 162 visiting academics hired for both BA and Master programs). Such a disproportion should be reduced to extend the research activities at RGSL and to embed the research conducted at RGSL into the educational programmes run at the institution.

When analysing the relation between scientific research and the study process, it is noted that in recent years, since 2018 RGSL started a publication series "RGSL Interdisciplinary Studies" within which so far prof. I. Ziemele has published a book "Separate Opinions at the European Court of Human Rights", which is used during the didactic process by students taking courses on "Introductory Foundation", "Litigation at the European Court of Human Rights" and "International Law".

Given the rather limited number of permanent academic staff at RGSL, it should be noted that in the period of 2013-2019 10 permanent academic staff members participated in various international research projects. The study programmes which benefit the most from the active international cooperation in the field of research are: International and European Law, Public International Law and Human Rights and EU Law and Policy, Law and Diplomacy.

In terms of the development of mechanisms promoting the involvement of academic staff in research, RGSL introduces minimum research requirements in the employment contracts for academic staff, indicating the expected number of publications during the employment period. However, during the onsite visit, the assessment team received inconclusive information on the exact number of expected publications (the management of the university mentioned 3 publications in international peer-reviewed journals over 3 years, while professors were not able to give the exact number).

Moreover, in terms of facilitating the participation of the academic staff in international conferences, the management and professors confirmed that RGSL supports its academic staff. However, there

were not given examples of existing internal procedures for applying for the financing of researches. It is worth noting that according to the information given during the on-site visit, there exists a support offered by the RGSL to its staff (free proofreading services, workshops strengthening drafting research proposals for international projects).

In terms of the development of mechanisms promoting students' involvement in research, one can notice that in principle it is expected that the major research done by students shall be conducted during the preparation of the final thesis. The research field is identified as the main aim according to the RGSL Development strategy. To improve the results of the research from the nowadays perspective, more students shall be involved. Students shall be more aware that academic and research activities can be conducted not only through final thesis, but also through more active participation in academic conferences (national/international), research groups, organisation of students seminars and conferences. More systematic approach to this is needed. Academic staff shall be more proactive and be more involved in research that can be brought to the classroom.

## **1. Management of the Study Field**

### **Analysis**

The SAR specifies that the main aim of the study direction "Law" is "to prepare highly qualified specialists in the field of Law able to work successfully in law practices, entrepreneurship, public administration and research fields in the Latvian and international labour market". The study process is organized very well. SAR sets main aim at the general level, but study direction "Law" points to narrower specialisation and preparation of niche professionals. Niche study programs and courses are very valuable from employers view and necessary for specific industries of the economics. Study programmes offer specific knowledge and skills what employers need in nowadays and in the dynamic time of technological development. RGSL management structure is clear and seems to function well, also it's oriented towards the development of the study direction. Aim of the study direction is defined in broad terms as "providing high-quality legal education in an international environment".

The study programme has an interdisciplinary approach. The interdisciplinarity of all the study programmes is clear, however, the interdisciplinary character of the study direction could be more detailed and show what level of legal knowledge can be expected from the graduating students as well as how the different educational backgrounds of the students are mitigated with the promise to provide them mainly legal education.

Structure of the management as explained in the SER (p. 7-10) is clear. All the institutional structures have their clearly defined roles, there are checks and balances systems in place including the academic arbitration panel.

The admission conditions of the students are clearly established. However, it could be further specified, how students are ranked when there are more applicants than available study places. This does not currently pose a problem as the RGSL is able to accommodate the qualified applicants.

RGSL focuses on ethics, academic integrity and honesty in studies. The institution stresses the importance of code of ethics and has zero-tolerance towards plagiarism. It has adopted appropriate guidelines available to students.

## Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

The RGSL is well organised with clear and efficient institutional structure. Students are provided with information that is suitable and detailed. In general the admission and evaluation requirements are clear. RGSL focuses on ethics, integrity and honesty in studies. The interdisciplinary character of the study direction could be more detailed.

Strengths:

1. RGSL is quickly adapting labour market trends and employer demand, creating new study programs and courses.
2. The number of foreign students studying at RGSL increases.

Weaknesses:

1. Limited number of students that can be admitted to RGSL premises.
2. Unclear rules in admission in case of competition.
3. Unclear evaluation criteria.

## 2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System

### Analysis

RGSL constantly screens and evaluates all of its study programmes, the course structure within the study programmes as well as the individual courses included in the study programmes ( SAR p. 9-13). This evaluation process involves, among other things, analysis of the feedback provided by the students, alumni as well as employers to the programmes as well as courses. All these stakeholders also participated in the development of the 2021-2026 Development plan for the study direction "Law".

RGSL has adopted a general Quality policy, that enlists the basic principles of quality assurance, and that is publicly available through the school's website (<https://www.rgsl.edu.lv/data/pdf-files/quality-policy-eng.pdf>). The quality policy stresses RGSL standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and the EFQM Excellence Model. The RGSL has adopted a Code of Ethics for Students, Faculty and General Personnel, Regulations for Review of Complaints and Proposals, its Statute of the Study Programme Council was updated in December 2019. All of these documents are publicly available on the RGSL website. Students have the possibility to provide feedback both to the course and programme content as well as the teaching methods employed in different courses. This feedback is analysed at the end of each academic module and is taken into account together with the analysis of student performance and other observations to improve the study direction and the study programmes. Students complete the programme evaluation after completing their studies. Teaching quality, teaching methods used and the evaluation criteria in particular courses are continuously monitored by the programme directors. The RGSL set the aim to provide education on didactics for all the lecturers through annual seminars, personal discussions, support and teaching feedback. However, participating in such seminars is voluntary. For visiting lecturers permanent staff members and visiting lecturers it is not mandatory. Participation level is low. Nevertheless, all the lecturers receive feedback and support on their teaching and evaluation methods. Feedback from the alumni and employers is mostly collected through informal discussions. In 2019, the RGSL conducted the RGSL Graduate Survey among the alumni. This survey showed high alumni satisfaction with the studies at RGSL. It also showed that most of the students had succeeded in the labour market. The results of the survey are available at the RGSL website. The RGSL is flexible in changing the programmes. There are a few changes implemented after the submission of the SAR. As an example, the study programme International and EU law now has two additional obligatory study courses. There was a concern whether the RGSL is over flexible and whether the programmes can change too quickly. The

on-site interviews proved that the students know the precise programme structure and requirement before signing the study contract, and any possible changes in the curriculum do not affect the ongoing programmes. Central for the development of the study programmes is the RGSL Development Plan, which sets general goals and objectives for the study direction. It is positive to note that the RGSL used the writing of the SAR as a possibility to evaluate the study direction and the programmes with the support of an external evaluator.

### **Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses**

The internal quality assurance system of RGSL is well through and effective. The RGSL follows the internal quality assurance mechanisms as required by the part 1 of the ESG. Quality assurance is part of the strategic planning and all the elements of the quality assurance involve central stakeholders and are publicly available. RGSL follows formally collected feedback in developing its programmes and stress the importance of student-centered learning and programme development. The teaching staff is qualified and the RGSL is keeping up to date with the latest teaching techniques. RGSL has implemented regular seminars focused on teaching methods and monitors the teaching process continuously.

Strengths:

1. The students, alumni and employers are involved in developing the study direction. They have the right to provide general and specific feedback for the study programmes as well as evaluate the courses and the teaching methods employed in the courses.
2. The programmes are evaluated annually and, when necessary, changed.
3. RGSL follows the ESG quality assessment guidelines.

Weaknesses:

1. High number of visiting lecturers makes provision of didactics education for the teaching staff challenging. Both permanent and visiting staff should further be encouraged to participate in such seminars as well as be provided with substantive support for improving their teaching and evaluation methods.

### **3. Resources and Provision of the Study Field**

#### **Analysis**

The study direction and the study programmes are mainly financed by study fees of the students SAR (p 29-32). The study direction also receives external project-based funding; information on such funding received was not included in the SAR. The dependency on the student fees is identified as a risk and the RGSL addressed this issue in its Development plan. The financial performance of RGSL, is within the competency of RGSL Director. As SAR shows, the financial resources necessary for the implementation of the study process are provided from study fees, external funds raised by the graduate school, as fund resources, international projects. But there are lack of information regarding the international projects and the financial impact. The financial resources necessary for the implementation of the study process are provided as well as by leasing real estate owned by RGSL. It must be noted, that Bachelor's and master's degree programmes are separated, considering the different costs for these programmes. SAR (p.11) shows, that during the annual RGSL budget planning process funding is allocated for research activities. SAR provides information that RGSL budget include participation in scientific conferences by academic personnel, preparation of scientific publications, organisation of research seminars and conferences at RGSL, own financing of research projects as well as supplementation of RGSL Legal library`s collections with recent scientific literature. But there is lack of information about the concrete budget for the research. RGSL Library has very good collections of law science literature. But, there are lack of literature

connected to Technology Law programme. The advantage is that the library provides RGSL's teaching staff and students with good research literature and databases<sup>9</sup> SAR p. 35). With the Lawyers' office provided support RGSL got the access to Kluwer Law e-logs and e-books. SAR (p.31-32) shows that RGSL subscribes to the world's largest legal information databases, Thomson Reuters Westlaw, Westlaw UK and Hein Online, as well as Science Direct. RGSL has the access to major legal publishers - Oxford University Press and Kluwer Law, Oxford Scholarly Authorities, Oxford Handbooks Online. RGSL library provides access to the EBSCO, JSTOR etc. publishers and databases. In common, RGSL has good technical background for scientific field. Nevertheless, RGSL shows several publications (last two years) included in databases (Web of science/Scopus). There were several publications in "Jurista Vārds" and the journal is not subject to international review. With the good technical and research based background more scientific activities shall be provided. RGSL academic personnel have the opportunity to participate in scientific conferences, prepare scientific publications, organise research seminars etc. But the number of this activities are not appropriate to the RGSL given financial support. It shall be mentioned that academic staff regularly participates in research and academic activities as well as training and RGSL provides financial support to the academic staff . For instance, provide financial support for participation in scientific conferences, for the inclusion of scientific papers in internationally recognized and cited publications. The regular activities related to the quality assessment of the academic staff is one of the advantages.

There are very strong and professional international teaching staff (guest lecturers), clear attracting procedure. Besides, as SAR shows (p. 137) during the academic year (2018/2019), RGSL actively started attracting guest lecturers under the ERASMUS and Fulbright exchange programme. As well as invitations were sent to individual partner schools, which included a specific list of courses in which RGSL would willingly host guest lecturers. According to the information provided in SAR p.32-35, there is a common system and procedures for the improvement and purchase of the material, technical, methodological provision. It must be noted, that the RGSL has good academic personnel motivation policy. According to employment agreements of RGSL academic personnel there are required research activities. The indicated wages also includes funding for research. The activities of the students as well as academic staff take place at RGSL premises in Riga, Strelnieku Street 4, k 2. The number of premises is mentioned in SAR ( p. 32). The study process is intensive, premises not big enough especially taking into account COVID 19 time and distance restrictions adopted by national government. Nevertheless, all premises are in good technical condition. There are all for modern study process necessary equipment. All study processes are stored electronically. From the mentioned above as well as from the SAR (p.32) follows, that students, academic and administrative staff are able to use RGSL study room, computer class, computer class in the library and other rooms. It must be noted, that there are an email address and access to RGSL internal network based on Moodle available for students and for staff as well. Besides, SAR (p.32) shows, that RGSL study materials are stored electronically and students have access to all student-related documents. Students have unlimited access to RGSL online database resources through a VPN connection, also have a possibility to learn outside the RGSL. RGSL supports students. The SAR and RGSL policy documents show that there are guidance for students available. The given guidelines shows collaboration perspective with potential partners.

### **Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses**

RGSL has developed financial resource system. There is clear financing system for library, for teaching staff motivation, but unclear scientific research financing system. RGSL has good infrastructure resources and the material and technical provision required for the implementation of the study field, its online learning environment is well developed and the relevant information is available for the students and staff online. The library has clear system and procedures for the improvement and purchase of the material, technical, methodological, and informative provision.

Good and modern teaching rooms, computer classes etc. premises, however, in case of student number growth, premises might be limited. Good, modern library and one of the best free accessible online databases for both teaching staff and students. There is good support system for students.

Strengths:

1. Clear budget with the focus on teaching and infrastructure.
2. Limited dependence on project funding.
3. Good, professional, modern library, that provides to RGSL's teaching staff, and students good research possibilities.
4. RGSL has an excellent library with good databases and latest literature.

Weaknesses:

1. High dependence on the study fees and lack of additional resources.
2. Limited premises might, prevent the growth of the students' numbers.
3. Research is one of the RGSL priority. To achieve the goal the number of scientific publications shall be increased.

#### **4. Scientific Research and Artistic Creation**

##### **Analysis**

According to the RGSL Development Strategy, RGSL apart from being an important higher educational centre in the Baltics is willing to build its strength as a leading research centre as well. The research at RGSL is conducted in the areas of International Law, Human Rights and European Union Law. Those major areas correspond with the overall profile of RGSL, its study direction and educational programmes offered which focus mainly on International and European law. In particular, the connection between the research and study programmes is visible in the context of three programmes - International and European Law, Public International Law and Human Rights and EU Law and Policy. Due to the international and European law oriented character of the remaining programmes, the main indicated research directions are also aligned with them. However, there are also number of courses on technology and business. These areas receive less attention in research. The research is conducted by the academic staff whose overall number is relatively small. There is a big disproportion between the number of permanent academic staff (in the year 2018-2019 - 10 permanent academics) and visiting staff (in the year 2018 -2019 there were overall 162 visiting academics hired at both BA and Master programs). RGSL academic personnel in the period of 2013-2019 (as reported in the SAR there were 9 permanent academic staff hired during this period) published 71 publications and participated in 122 scientific conferences. It can be noticed that there is a group of 4-5 leading researchers, who contribute greatly to the vast majority of research outcomes (doc. Tocolovska - 13 publications, 17 conferences, prof. Ziemele - 11 publications, 15 conferences, prof. Zukova - 12 publications, 49 conferences, doc. Fillers - 18 publications, 17 conferences).

Even if many visiting scholars bring their knowledge and research outcomes to RGSL students, such a disproportion in numbers between permanent and visiting academics, should be reduced in order to extend the research activities at RGSL and to embed the research conducted at RGSL into the educational programmes run at the Institution. Also, all members of academic personnel shall be engaged in research activities.

It is worth noting that RGSL has strengthened its research position in recent years: since 2019 RGSL is responsible for editing the Baltic Yearbook of International Law (Brill), which given the international scope and prestige of the publisher, has the potential to disseminate the research run at RGSL at the European and international level.

It should also be acknowledged that 5 members of RGSL academic staff were experts for the Latvian Council of Science.

Also the close cooperation of two RGSL Professors (prof. I. Ziemele and prof. G. Ulrich) with the European Society for International Law allows to assume the more intensified researches and academic activities to be held at RGSL. When analysing the relation between scientific research and the study process, it shall be noted that in recent years, since 2018 RGSL started a publication series "RGSL Interdisciplinary Studies" within which so far prof. I. Ziemele has published a book "Separate Opinions at the European Court of Human Rights", which is used during the didactic process by students taking courses on "Introductory Foundation", "Litigation at the European Court of Human Rights" and "International Law". As is indicated in the SAR, the next publication in the series is being prepared. In general, the SAR and on-site visit has shown that the permanent faculty members were participating in various research projects concerning different aspects of main research fields specific for RGSL. It should be thus recognized that active participation in research projects brings up-to-date legal scholar thought to the courses offered within study programmes. In terms of international cooperation in the field of scientific research, given rather limited number of permanent academic staff at RGSL it should be noted that in the period of 2013-2019 10 permanent academic staff members participated in various international research projects. Also, as it was mentioned above, the close cooperation of two RGSL Professors (prof. I. Ziemele and prof. G. Ulrich) with the European Society for International Law constitutes an important element of international cooperation in the field of scientific research within the study field. The study programmes which benefit the most from the active international cooperation in the field of research are: International and European Law, Public International Law and Human Rights and EU Law and Policy, Law and Diplomacy. In terms of the development of mechanisms promoting involvement of the academic staff in research, RGSL introduces minimum research requirements in the employment contracts with academic staff, indicating the expected number of publications during the employment period. However during the onsite visit the assessment team received inconclusive information on the exact number of expected publications (management of university mentioned 3 publications in international peer reviewed journals over 3 years, while professors were not able to give the exact number).

Also in terms of facilitating the participation of the academic staff in international conferences, the management and professors confirmed that RGSL supports its academic staff. However, there were not given examples of existing internal procedures for applying for the financing of researches. It is worth noting that according to the information given during the on-site visit, there exists a support offered by the RGSL to its staff (free proofreading services, workshops strengthening drafting research proposals for international projects).

In terms of the development of mechanisms promoting students' involvement in research, one can notice that in principle it is expected that the major research done by students shall be conducted during the preparation of the master or BA thesis.

Worth mentioning are new initiatives at BA programmes - students' research paper conference. Such an idea could be also implemented at Master programmes. The research involvement of students outside the Master/BA thesis needs strengthening, since it is mostly done on individual level and there were no examples given of more structured and systemic approach (like enhancement to create students' research groups, more students' seminars and conferences, more students' publications). Based on SAR and on-site visit outcome it was difficult to determine whether RGSL implements truly innovative solutions in the study process, yet it should be acknowledged that students are involved in moot court competitions which is an opportunity to improve both research and practical skills. This important element had been mentioned in the SAR, yet was confirmed by students and professors during onsite visit.

## **Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses**

Overall, it is visible that RGSL has ambitions of becoming the research-intensive university. The results of currently adopted measures and strategies can be visible within few years. Right now the major shortcoming is the limited number of permanent academics, which means that the major research activity, which is relevant for the study programmes is focused on EU law, International Public law and International Human Rights. The most active in this sense are two professors: prof. Ineta Ziemele and prof. George Ulrich. Also students' research activities shall be strengthened.

Strengths:

1. RGSL is editing Baltic Year Book of International Law (Brill)
2. RGSL cooperation with the European Society of International Law
3. RGSL is publishing a series "Riga Graduate School of Law Interdisciplinary Studies"
4. The research in the field of EU Law, International public law and International Human Rights is used in the major programmes - Law in Diplomacy, EU law and policy, International and European Law, Public International Law and Human Rights and EU Law and Policy, Law and Diplomacy.
5. Highly qualified visiting scholars bringing their research to students.

Weaknesses:

1. Limited number of permanent academic staff
2. Research is intensively done by group of just 4-5 professors
3. Research shall be more extensive in the fields covering areas of all study programmes equally (relatively weak research on business law, finance law, technology law in comparison to the EU law, Human rights law)
4. Lack of systemic and more structured approach towards the involvement of academic staff and students in the research activities - mostly it is done on an individual level, case by case, but there are no internal procedures for applying for internal grants
5. Small number of international conferences organised at RGSL

## **5. Cooperation and Internationalisation**

### **Analysis**

RGSL is a member of ERASMUS+ projects and Nordplus Law Network allowing teacher's and students mobility (SAR p. 48). RGSL has agreements with high education institutions in Latvia (SAR p. 48) and agreements with University of Latvia and Stockholm School of Economics in Riga. According to the SAR p. 48 the main criteria for selecting the partners are equivalent high-quality study programmes, the International prestige of the school, similar filed research and geographical location of universities. This cooperation contributes to the achievement of aims and learning outcomes of the study direction, especially considering the international nature of the study field (SAR p. 48). RGSL cooperates closely with the employers in different ways to ensure the developments of the programmes in line with labour market (SAR p. 48, assessment visit meetings). However, RGSL has not named the main and most important employers who are their partners considering every programme and its development. Based on the SAR (p. 48) and the visit meetings the current labour market requirements are: excellent professional English, knowledge in international law, good presentation skills. Employers have noticed that there is a lack of knowledge in Latvian law and Latvian legal language skills (Report, in the meeting employers did not mention this as a problem). Considering the current economy and technology development and specific programmes on a master level as Law and Technology, Law and Finance and Transborder Financial Law it seems to be relevant that there are also additional needs in the labour market like e.g. the knowledge on pan-European financial regulations, Fintech, cyber security, data protection, AI etc. These needs are not mentioned.

Teachers from abroad are attracted by EU-market competitive remuneration and working conditions.

It is programme director's responsibility to recruit foreign teachers (SAR p.49). RGSL has 15-28 foreign teachers in bachelor level and 15-49 teachers in master level (period 2013-2019). Number of foreign teachers has decreased due to the permanent positions of certain qualified teachers. However, this number is rather big and there is no need to increase the number. Number of incoming teachers is moderate (1-8 teachers per academic year), number of outgoing teachers is also moderate (1-7 teachers per year) and teachers have visited the same universities and it can be noticed that there is a same group of teachers who use the mobility option. Still, the number of permanent academic staff should be increased and the number of foreign teachers in academic positions as well. According to the SAR data (p. 49) RGLS has targeted measures to attract students from abroad: "RGSL participates in international exhibitions, prepares and publishes information on study prospects in various portals, is working on a network of foreign agents, and uses the opportunity of the Google search engine to advertise actively in the target region". RGSL target regions for new students are EU (particularly Baltic States and Nordic countries), Eastern Partnership States and Central Asian Countries. New students are attracted by information in various portals, Network of foreign agents and by Google search engine.

Number of foreign students in RGSL is relatively steady, with slight tendency to decrease. In general, in average, half of the group are foreign students in the programmes but still not in all programmes. Number of outgoing students is small (12-16 per academic year) compared to the number of students in the Study Field. Mobility is used mostly by students from the bachelor programmes.

Number of incoming students is good (14-43 students per academic year) considering that the general number of students is 372 and that the number of incoming students has been increased during the assessment period. RGSL should also consider how much exchange students they can receive per year as such students need additional dealing with. In this respect current number is good.

## **Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses**

Current partnership RGSL has selected contributes to the development of the aims and learning outcomes of the study direction in general, however, not all the programmes are involved: RGSL should expand the international partnership based on other projects as well. Mobility needs to be increased, RGSL should motivate students from all the programmes and more teachers to participate in outgoing mobility. A number of foreign teachers in permanent position should be increased. RGSL has determined the target regions but the SAR data about from which states students have come to RGSL shows that in some regions their attempt to attract the students have not been sufficient. RGSL should analyse the situation and decide which regions need elaboration in the marketing and which regions should be left out at all. Also, the policy should be worked out to attract more foreign students in all master programmes. RGSL has close cooperation with employers to develop the programme but this cooperation should be promoted considering more the needs of the specific programmes, specifically e.g in the field of technology and finance. It is positive that employers are involved in teaching.

Strengths:

1. Current partnership supports the development of study field.
2. Good cooperation with employers.
3. Practitioners are involved in teaching.
4. RGSL has targeted measures to attract students from abroad.

Weaknesses:

1. Small outgoing mobility among teachers and students
2. Few foreign students in master programmes
3. Few foreign teachers in permanent positions

4. Cooperation with employers do not consider specific needs of all the programmes

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

### **Analysis**

Recommendation 1 - In order to reinforce the use of the latest developments in higher education, research and methods, in particular to ensure a more accurate and detailed feedback, it would be necessary to formulate the targets and tasks more accurately and to have a more accurate impact assessment of teaching and traineeships. RGSL should be a leader in Latvia not only in the dissemination of best law practice, but also in the propagation of ideas and methods of modern higher education didactics.

Implementation - RGSL teaching staff participate regularly in activities sharing good practice in the use of modern didactic techniques in higher education. For example, Bachelor Programme Director Laura Ratnice, Masters Programme director Waleed Gumaa, participated in the conference "Education and Business - Creating Competencies for the Future" organised by the British Chamber of Commerce in Latvia, where they shared RGSL's experience in ensuring implementation of the student-oriented approach. RGSL also participates in various projects aimed at sharing best practices in the application of different study methods. For example, RGSL is participating in the Nordplus project "InnovaEDU", together with other prominent Northern and Baltic universities, aiming to facilitate a multilevel transfer of knowledge and innovation to teaching methods. The project will create a common repository to share didactic materials, templates, learning tools, good practices in the field of online and mixed learning. Teaching staff also regularly participate in ERASMUS + activities by sharing their experience with partnering graduate schools. Recommendation 2 - Attention should be paid to all legal systems of the world (not only to English-speaking countries).

Implementation - Study courses provide an opportunity to analyse different legal systems of the world. Students are also devoting their final theses to the legal systems of different countries, for instance, legal systems of the Baltic States. Recommendation 3 - More attention should be paid to regulation and legal systems in non-English-speaking countries.

Implementation - Since the majority of RGSL teaching staff are guest lecturers from different countries (e.g. Italy, Germany, Hungary), the study courses also provide a diverse view of different legal systems. Recommendation 4 - Marketing programmes for attracting foreign students should be more extensive and intensive.

Implementation - RGSL is actively engaged in attracting foreign students. EU member states, particularly the Baltic States and Nordic countries, Eastern partnership countries and Central Asian countries have been identified as target regions for attracting students. For example, RGSL participates in international exhibitions, prepares and publishes information on studies in the RGSL in various portals, a network of foreign agents is being created, another tool actively used for promoting the graduate school in our target regions is the Google search engine. Recommendation 5 - Academic staff and students should participate more in scientific conferences. Implementation - Each year, RGSL, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, organizes a conference dedicated to human rights issues. The 2019 conference focused on data protection issues. The best RGSL students and teachers are active participants in the conference.

In 2019, RGSL participated in the 14th Congress of Societas Iuris Publici Europaei (SIPE), organised by the Constitutional Court, which aims to discuss and explain public law in Europe. The topic of this year's congress was "The challenges of digital communication for the country and its democratic statehood".

Similarly, under the Jean-Moné project "Fundamental Rights within the European Union" a cycle of four conferences was organised on several law issues (constitutional law, consumer protection,

competition law, fundamental rights in the EU border area) in which both students and academic staff participated actively.

In addition to the conferences organised by RGSL, the graduate school also provides support for the participation of the best students and RGSL academic staff at various international scientific conferences. It must be noted, that there are approximately just 15 conferences were organized for 5 years which is not enough for the intuition with the research ambitions.

Recommendation 6 - There are too few books in the library in the field of political science.

Implementation - Library stocks are regularly supplemented with scientific literature, including in the field of political science. Recommendation 7 - Financial resources depend on study fees paid by the students, it would be advisable to find other financial sources

Implementation - Partly implemented. The budget of the RGSL is composed of different sources of income (income from real estate, project financing, revenue from study fees).

RGSL is also actively working with various funds and employers to raise funding to support talented students, for example, in the academic year 2019/2020 eight students from Russia received scholarships and had their tuition fees covered. However, the school is still reliant on tuition fees as their main income. Recommendation 8 - Academic staff should focus more on regional interests in their research, namely, include also national level research activities.

Implementation - RGSL participates in various international projects, such as the Nordplus project "InnovaEDU" involving academic staff, which also includes national research activities.

Recommendation 9 - It would be advisable for academic staff to produce more publications in internationally recognised editions. Implementation - Partly implemented. In order to encourage academic staff to produce high-quality scientific publications, the RGSL has included such publications among the application criteria for vacancies, as this would ensure that professionals elected as teaching staff of the RGSL have a solid research base. In addition, the graduate school has a mechanism in place ensuring that elected members of staff get their expenditures covered when attending scientific conferences abroad and their costs for publications in internationally recognised editions are covered. However, most publications are still in national recognised editions, such as "Jurista vārds". Recommendation 10 - The number of students is too small - new ways to attract students should be found.

Implementation: In line with its development goals, the RGSL has set a priority to ensure education of high quality by providing an individual approach to each student, consequently the RGSL does not envisage a significant increase in the number of students as an aim. It is also necessary to consider the relatively limited space at the premises of RGSL. Nevertheless, the graduate school is actively working to attract the most talented local and foreign students.

Recommendation 11 - RGSL should consider developing a policy for recruiting permanent academic staff. Implementation: RGSL is working on increasing the number of permanent academic staff, namely, by announcing of vacancies for permanent teaching staff. On 19 February 2019, the RGSL Statute for academic and administrative posts, setting out procedures for the recruitment of permanent academic staff, was approved. The graduate school is also involved in the EURAXESS network, which would facilitate recruitment of foreign teaching staff.

Recommendation 12 - In order to ensure the competitiveness and employability of RGSL graduates, it should be considered to supplement the study programme with a study course on statistical methods.

Implementation - The study programme "Law and diplomacy" has been supplemented by the study course "Research methods", where students have a possibility to familiarise themselves with statistical methods as well. Recommendation 13 - To carry out a SWOT analysis of the study programme for the purpose of assessing its development perspectives.

Implementation: According to the analysis of student evaluations of the curriculum, as well as the opinions of other stakeholders the main strengths of the RGSL are: recruitment of highly qualified teaching staff, the use of the latest teaching methods in the study process, the wide range of

scientific literature, the linkage with employers' interests. The relatively small percentage of permanent teaching staff as well as space constraints have been given as the main weaknesses. Regarding future opportunities increasing the number of permanent teaching staff, continued improvement of the current study courses and the development of new study courses should be considered in order to follow the demands of the labour market and the technological developments. Negative demographic trends as well as the creation of similar study programmes in other countries could be a threat. Recommendation 14 - Prepare a forecast from which countries students could choose to study at RGSL and how many foreign students might be interested in entering the Latvian labour market and what would be the interest of Latvian employers to employ foreign graduates. Prepare a forecast of the employment prospects of graduates in those foreign countries from which students might potentially choose to enrol into a RGSL study programme.

Implementation: With a growing demand for IT specialists, there will also be an increase in demand for lawyers specialising in e-commerce, cyber security, personal data protection, etc. It is expected that graduates of this programme (both locals and foreigners) will be able to find jobs in the ICT sector, legal offices, financial institutions and public administrations on the local and international labour market.

According to the latest survey of graduates, 96% of graduates are successfully employed.

Since the programme was launched only in 2019 /2020, it is currently difficult to assess the employment of graduates after completing their studies. In view of the development of the knowledge, skills and competences offered by the programme, the graduates will have a great potential to succeed in the labour market both domestically and abroad.

Discussions with employers, organised in June 2019, showed that there was a strong demand for specialists in this programme also domestically. Recommendation 15 - Establish a sustainable strategy for attracting students and ensuring competitiveness with other universities, particularly the University of Tartu.

Implementation: As demonstrated in the comparative analysis of study programmes, the research programme at Tartu University has a much greater emphasis on information and communication technologies, while the RGSL programme focuses on legal science, also addressing the technological development aspect.

RGSL is actively working on attracting motivated, most capable students, and therefore the eligibility criteria are stricter. In particular, the originality of the study programme and the interdisciplinary approach are highlighted. Recommendation 16 - Assess the need to introduce a course in the programme which looks at possible future changes in all law professions, considering technological developments.

Implementation: Several study courses in the study programme address the question of what changes will affect the law professions in the light of technological developments. The "Disruptive Technologies" study course focuses on changes in legal frameworks and practices and challenges in Latvia and the world. This study course includes the topic of anticipated changes in the light of technological developments. The "Digital regulation" study course also focuses on these issues. Recommendation 17 - Develop a concept for a student-centred education approach in RGSL study programmes to improve the quality of studies and the learning process under the EGS.

Implementation - RGSL is actively implementing a student-centred education approach in all its programmes, continuously improving the quality of studies and the learning process. Students have opportunities to participate in the development of the study process by taking an active part. Students are also familiar with how the results of their studies are assessed (a by-law that is publicly available). The study process uses multi-dimensional pedagogical techniques, promotes independent studies, training is adjusted to the circumstances. Since RGSL has a relatively small number of students, an individual approach is provided for each student. Recommendation 18 - Ensure feedback from students on the study programme and its development.

Implementation - In RGSL, the mechanism for feedback from stakeholders, including students, is

constantly being improved, for example, by conducting surveys both after completing each course, in order to identify students' satisfaction with the organisational issues of the course, teaching staff, etc., and on studies in general, in order to ensure the improvement and development of the study programme. Recommendation 19 - It is necessary to continue to supplement the learning material available in the library particularly regarding technology law.

Implementation - Library stocks are regularly supplemented by scientific literature, including on technology law. However, currently there is too few literature in the library about this field of law. Recommendation 20 - Consider the amount of tuition fees as the only part of my earnings, taking into account potential competition in similar programmes abroad, where tuition fees are even three times lower.

Implementation - Much like recommendation 7, it's only partly implemented. Tuition fees are still the main income of the HEI.

## Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

Previously provided recommendations regarding division of financial funds and necessity for academic staff to produce more publications in internationally recognised editions are partially implemented. Otherwise, seems that RSGL have followed recommendations from previous assessment procedures.

Strengths:

1. Increase of the number of international students.
2. Good marketing mechanisms.
3. Participation in many more scientific events.
4. An extremely good system of feedback from students, alumni and employers has been introduced.

Weaknesses:

1. Very reliant on tuition fees as the main and primary income.;
2. While the academic staff has started focusing more on national and regional level research it means that they focus less on international research and publications.
3. Most academic staff publications are still in national recognised editions, such as "Jurista vārds".

## 7. Assessment of the Requirements for the Study Field

- 1 Pursuant to Section 5, Paragraph 21 of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education, the higher education institution/ college shall ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study direction whilst implementing their internal quality assurance systems:

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** The higher education institution ensures continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study direction whilst implementing their internal quality assurance systems. In SAR p. 1.4 it is explained in detail how the HEI complies with the law. Therefore, all necessary criteria established by the Section 5, Paragraph 21 of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education have been met.

However, experts have identified some areas for further improvement. For instance, whether the programmes covers the research of the specific area. To work with academic staff motivation to write more programme-related scientific articles and bring this knowledge into the classroom.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** The higher education institution has established a policy and procedures for assuring the quality of higher education. However, quality policy shall be implemented by all RGSL departments and their personnel, implementing it at both the department and individual level, in line with standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and the EFQM Excellence Model. (SAR - 1.3)

The quality assurance system includes: Regular screening and analysis of programmes and study courses. Annual SA of the SP, The results of the SA of the programmes shall be publicly discussed among RGSL's academic staff, as well as with representatives of the student association and students in this programme. Regular analysis of the student evaluation system, Evaluation of academic personnel, Regular evaluation of learning resources and student support Assessment of the quality and availability of learning resources and student support. Disclosure of information is provided.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** A mechanism for the development and internal approval of the study programmes of the higher education institutions, as well as the supervision of their performance and periodic inspection thereof has been developed. The development, approval, and review of study programmes are described in the Annex 3. RGSL has established a Study Programme Council, to ensure study programme development in accordance with the newest scientific achievements and requirements of the labour market. There are also annual surveys for alumni, students, and employers to keep the content of study programmes relevant.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** The criteria, conditions, and procedures for the evaluation of students' results, which enable reassurance of the achievement of the intended learning outcomes, have been partly developed and made public. The principles for evaluating student achievement are set out in RGSL Student Regulations and RGSL Regulations on Exams and Grading (SAR Annex 3). "However, we have identified some areas for further improvement. In common, all necessary criteria are fulfilled. However, we have identified some areas for further improvement. For instance, to understand and unify what kind of the skills and knowledge are behind every grade, i.e., if there is an essay, what will be the subject of evaluation - scientific discussion, quality of discussion, grammar or something else. Considering the assessment quality and transparency, it can be necessary to assess the need to analyse and report the evaluation methods and criteria.

- 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

**Justification:** Internal procedures and mechanisms for assuring the qualifications of the academic staff and the work quality have been developed. Regulations of Academic and Administrative Personnel Positions of RGSL have been developed to set the necessary qualifications for teaching staff. Best lecturers are chosen by looking at their qualifications, teaching experience, institution they are at, publications, research experience, interviews. Public lectures are held to see how they perform in front of an auditorium. There is a discussion between the management, directors and lecturer. There are a lot of recommendations from existing faculty that are taken into account.

- 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

**Justification:** RGSL 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.

- 7 1.6. The higher education institution/ college shall ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study direction whilst implementing their quality assurance systems.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** RGSL ensures continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study direction whilst implementing their quality assurance systems.

- 8 R2 - The cooperation with different organisations from Latvia and abroad implemented within the study direction ensures the achievement of the aims of the study direction.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** RGSL has entered into agreements with higher education institutions in Latvia regarding cooperation in the field of education and international cooperation. RGSL has entered into agreements with the University of Latvia and the Stockholm School of Economics in Riga, which allows students of RGSL to use the libraries of these two institutions for free. RGSL is a member of the ERASMUS + projects and has partnership agreements with 45 higher education institutions in 22 foreign countries. RGSL also operates in the Nordplus Law Network, which includes 22 universities. However, the international partnership should be expanded because currently it is based on 2 projects. As cooperation involves also mobility then the mobility of teachers and students from all programmes should be increased.

RGSL cooperates closely with employers in order to ensure the establishment and development of high-quality study programmes in line with labour market requirements. RGSL organises regular discussions with employers to identify their needs, and to hear their opinions about each of the study programmes. (SAR - 5.1)

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

**Justification:** Not all programmes are covered with research of this specific area. The research is mostly concentrated around EU law, International law and Human Rights law, Transborder commercial law. There is insufficient intensity of research in the areas of Technology law or Law and finances.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

**Justification:** Elimination of the shortcomings and deficiencies identified during the previous assessment of the study direction, if it has been conducted, or the implementation of the provided recommendations has been partly realised. See more in pt 6 - Implementation of the Recommendations Received During the Previous Assessment Procedures.

## 8. Recommendations for the Study Field

### Short-term recommendations

Keeping the web page updated in terms of the currently offered mandatory courses

### Long-term recommendations

Expand the international partnership.

Increase a number of foreign teachers in permanent positions.

Increase a number of students in master programmes.
Increase a number of publications and other research.
Motivate teachers to write more programme-related research and bring this knowledge into the classroom.
Analyse and evaluate the assessment methods and provide relevant criteria of evaluation. It is recommended that particular assessment methods are linked more to achievement of relevant learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competences)
In programmes descriptions there should be made more clear distinction between learning outcomes in reference to skills and competences
Diversify the sources of income to guarantee the stability and sustainability of the RGSL.
Establish a good support system for students who want to participate in outgoing mobility programmes such as Erasmus. Increase the mobility of students across all of the programmes.
Increase and support the mobility of permanent academic staff.
The interdisciplinary character of the study direction could be more detailed and show what level of legal knowledge can be expected from the graduating students as well as how the different educational backgrounds of the students are mitigated with the promise to provide them mainly legal education.

## II. "Law and Business" ASSESSMENT

### II. "Law and Business" ASSESSMENT

#### 1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

##### Analysis

Academic Bachelor study programme "Law and Business" (43380), provides Bachelor of Laws (LL.B) (Sociālo zinātņu bakalaura grāds tiesību zinātnē), does not provide any professional qualification. The title of the degree in English does not coincide with the title of the degree in Latvian.

This is the first (undergraduate) academic degree, Level 6 of Latvian and European Qualification Frameworks. The programme is full time, 3 years, 122 Credit Points, (183 ECTS) English is the main language of instruction. Nevertheless, there are several courses (B part) that are taught in Latvian (for example, RBE313 Lietu tiesības / Property Law; RBE314 Civilprocess / Civil Procedure; RBE315 Darba tiesības / Labour Law; RBE316 Patērētāju tiesību aizsardzība / Consumer Protection Law).

Extensive admission requirements have been set for the study programme - English language knowledge at least level B2 or higher and average grade in diploma supplement corresponding to ECTS level of C or higher or State Centralized Examination results of the Secondary General Education from candidates from Latvia. These are reasonable requirements and enough to build up knowledge from there. If there are more applicants than study places, the order of application submission, grade averages, results of centralized examinations, relevant activities, and the result of any interviews and entrance exams are taken into account. However, how all these different aspects are considered in ranking the applicants, has not been regulated.

Aim of the programme, objectives and learning outcomes are interrelated, well defined, interrelated and accord to the aim of the Study Field. Programme has interdisciplinary approach and is needed in the contemporary labour market. Name of the study programme accords to the contents of the programme. Degree title in English should be reviewed ensuring that its title corresponds to the title

of the degree in the Latvian language and accords to the legal acts of Latvia.

### **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

The name of the study programme, the degree, the professional qualification and the professional qualification to be acquired, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and admission requirements are interrelated. However, admission procedure needs elaboration in how the provided additional criteria will be considered in ranking to ensure the transparency in the admission process. Programme is useful in current labour market. The title of the degree to be awarded in English does not coincide with the title of the degree in Latvian.

Strengths:

1. The aims, objectives, learning outcomes, the professional qualification and the professional qualification to be acquired, are interrelated.
2. Programme is useful in the labour market.

Weakness:

1. Admission procedure is not transparent.
2. The title of the degree to be awarded in English does not coincide with the title of the degree in Latvian.

## **2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof**

### **Analysis**

Programme components and their volume, including the volume of the final paper accords to the requirements. Volume of contact hour and, mandatory content of the programme accords to the requirements. Programme consists also the courses 'Civil Protection' and 'Environmental Protection'. Contents of the courses support the learning outcomes of the programme, meets the needs of area of law and business. Theses writing system/organisation and the quality of theses is very good. Some optional courses raise a question whether they support granting the knowledge on business law, e.g. European Legal History and Roman Law, Asia Policy Studies, Proceedings before the CJEU, Analyses of Russian Politics, Theories of Justice etc. In a visiting meeting it was explained that the schedules are organised so that students of one programme cannot take any courses they want. However, if the programme itself consists all the Study Field courses as optional courses and the choices are regulated by the schedule then a question of transparency of the programme can be raised. The amount of optional courses should be reduced and they must clearly support the specificity of the programme. Study programme is implemented in such way as to encourage students to play active part in the process of study, for example by regularly organizing surveys and discussions (SAR p. 28, visit meeting). All relevant information for students is available (SAR p. 28 visit meeting). Programme has student-centered learning and teaching principles (visiting meetings).

Course descriptions do consist evaluation methods: essay, assignment, test, but the evaluation criteria are missing. Every course description has a general evaluation table with percentages and according knowledge and skills student must grant but this table is not related to the specific evaluation methods and criteria provided by the percentages of the total grade. There are regularly organized surveys and discussions with students (SAR p. 28). RGSL has quality assurance policy in which both, internal and external stakeholders are involved (SAR p. 28, visit meeting). The number of students is average: 25-39 students from 2013-2019. Number of foreign students has increased, in 2018-2019 there was admitted 15 foreign students. Outgoing mobility is moderate - only 5-7 students every year and Erasmus+ Traineeship opportunity has been used by 1-3 students each year.

### **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

Courses accord to the requirements in general: descriptions of the study courses are well structured, their content is relevant and innovative. The content complies with the aims of the study programme. The quality of final theses are very good. Research part and methodology of the theses are in good level, a good-quality sources are used. Programme has student-centered learning and teaching principles.

There are some weaknesses considering the optional courses and evaluation methods and criteria. It is suggested to consider the changes in the too many optional courses, keeping only those which support directly the learning outcomes of the specific programme. Course outlines need elaborations in evaluation criteria to every evaluation method and grades according to these criteria. Students' outgoing mobility needs promotion.

Strengths:

1. Descriptions of the study courses are well structured, their content is relevant and innovative. The content complies with the aims of the study programme.
2. Student-centered learning and teaching principles.
3. Good quality of final theses: research part and methodology are in good level, a good-quality sources are used.

Weaknesses:

1. Too many optional courses, not all support directly the learning outcomes of the specific programme.
2. Unclear evaluation criteria for evaluation methods.
3. Moderate students outgoing mobility.
4. The title of the degree to be awarded in English does not coincide with the title of the degree in Latvian.

### **3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme**

#### **Analysis**

RGSL has an excellent library with latest literature, access to good databases. All necessary infrastructure and resources are available for the study programme. There are the latest business literature available in RGSL library. However, most books are in only one copy each so if multiple students need the same book they can only have it for a short period of time. RGSL has all the necessary infrastructure - lecture rooms, study rooms, computer room, leisure rooms, a library (with computers available). The top floors are accessible for people with disability issues - they are supplied with special keys to call a special elevator. All auditoriums are in very good technical condition and equipped with multimedia equipment and all other necessary equipment for the implementation of the study process. Wi-fi coverage is available in the RGSL building. RGSL students can also use Stockholm School of Economics' library as the buildings are joined. Students can also order books from partner-universities if they need to. A large digital database collection is available that is mostly used by bachelors students and is especially helpful in writing their thesis. All this indicates the possibility to ensure a high-quality study process.

### **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

In general, RGSL has an excellent library with latest literature, access to good databases. However, as most books are only in one copy each then if multiple students need the same book they can only have it for a short period of time, a day, which is not enough for thorough work and examination.

RGSL has necessary infrastructure. All classrooms are in a very good technical condition and equipped with multimedia equipment. The bright and comfortable lecture and study halls. There are

a lot of places for self study. The library has computers with shortcuts to all important databases. It is also quiet and comfortable. There is a quiet room that students can reserve if needed.

Strengths:

1. Contemporary infrastructure with bright and comfortable lecture and study rooms, computers in the library with shortcuts to all important databases, a separate quiet room that students can reserve if needed.

Weaknesses:

2. Few copies of the books in the library, but books are available online as well upon request.

#### **4. Teaching Staff**

##### **Analysis**

RGSL supports teachers in many ways to avoid negative effects on the quality of the implementation of the study programme. Main tool is regular meetings about teaching. (visit meeting). The qualification of the teaching staff members involved complies with the requirements for the implementation of Study programme and requirements set forth in the regulatory enactments enabling the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the Study programme and the relevant Study courses. Also, students can acquire knowledge from different specialists who apply diverse study methods (SAR p. 75). Students feedback is taken into consideration also when replenishing the teaching staff (SAR p. 75). Academic staff have several workshops during the year. RGSL attracts teaching staff who present a high-level English language proficiency, a PhD degree, as well as legal practitioners in the area of law, highly skilled professionals who do not have significant academic experience (SAR, p. 76). Division of teachers with master or doctoral degree in compulsory courses (Daja A) is average: 18 to 20, i.e more courses are taught by the teachers with doctoral degree. According to the SAR (p. 76) in total, 45 lecturers are involved in the implementation of the programme, of which 2 lecturers, 2 assistant professors, 3 associate professors, 2 professors. The rest are guest lecturers. The number of teachers with permanent position is small. According to the SAR (p. 76) according to the accreditation process, the work is being done to create more academic positions, thus the number of academic staff could increase in the academic year 2020/2021 - one professor and two associate professors. SAR p.77 states that academic staff of the programme is actively involved in research activities. It is also claimed that RGSL supports research and participation in the conferences. However, only half of the teachers of compulsory courses have scientific publications and only half of those teachers have published in high-ranking journals and in considerable amount. Report and visiting meeting did not give evidence how much information obtained from the research has been used in the teaching. There is good synergy between industry representatives, for instance practicing lawyers, judges, business and academic personnel, there are a lot of visiting lecturers (SAR p. 75). Teacher's outgoing mobility was not given in SAR based on the programmes, therefore it is not possible to evaluate the teacher's activity in the mobility. Also, it is not clear whether visiting lecturers also participate in ERASMUS exchange programme and Fulbright programme. Based on the visit meeting teachers collaborate with each other, discuss the developments of the programs and the needs of labour market.

##### **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

The qualification of the teaching staff members involved complies with the requirements for the implementation of study programme and regulations and enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses. Practitioners are involved in teaching - who bring in a classroom actual cases but unfortunately not so much of current research based knowledge. Even though the SAR states that "academic staff of the

programme is actively involved in research activities", the data collected during the assessment shows that only half of the teachers of compulsory courses have scientific publications and only half of those teachers have published in high-ranking journals and in considerable amount. Report and visiting meeting did not give evidence how much information obtained from the research has been used in the teaching.

There was missing the data of Law and Business teacher's outgoing mobility. Good practice is the appropriate workshops to the teachers. The number of teachers with permanent position is very small compared to the number of visiting teachers. In years 2020/2021 1 professors and 2 associate professors positions are planned to create. There is no clear mechanism for mutual collaboration between the teaching staff. It has been mentioned that there are workshops for the staff and that courses are interrelated but it is unclear how good and cultivated is the communication between the staff.

Strengths:

1. Teachers are supported with appropriate workshops.
2. There are several possibilities to improve research work, good motivation policy from RGSL for academic staff.
3. Visiting lecturers are practitioners.

Weaknesses:

1. Few programme-specific publications.
2. Small number of teachers with permanent academic position.

## 5. Assessment of the Compliance of the Study Programme "Law and Business"

### Requirements

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** According to the Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers no. 202 almost all criteria are fulfilled. RGSL provided Diploma sample shows that the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme Law and Business complies with the procedure by which state-recognised documents of higher education are issued. Technical clarification is needed that does not directly affect compliance - the translation of degree (ENG version) is different from Latvian version.

2. Documents confirming that the higher education institution/ college will provide the students with the options to continue the acquisition of education in another study programme or at another higher education institution/ college (a contract with another accredited higher education institution/ college), in case the implementation of the study programme is discontinued.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** An agreement with University of Latvia has been signed. This agreement ensures that should the programme "Law and business" be discontinued, the students will be able to keep studying in University of Latvia, programme "Law". Document Nr. 9.2.5./2019/02 (8 of November, 2019) Article 1

3. Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college guarantees to the students a compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the higher education institution/ college (actions or failure to act) and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** According to RGSL Letter (Nr. 2.15n/119/19) from December 16, 2019 "On compensation guarantee to students" addressed to Quality Agency for Higher Education RGSL guarantees to the students a compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the higher education institution and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** According on Law of Riga Graduate School of Law section 25 -"The personnel of the School shall not be subject to the statutory requirements concerning proficiency in the official language. " Annex 19 confirms that all academic staff have English language knowledge from B2 to C2 levels.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** Annex 19 confirms that all academic staff have English language knowledge from B2 to C2 levels.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

**Justification:** N/A

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** It is completely compliant as seen in the annex

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** The sample of the study agreement complies with the mandatory requirements. Technical clarification is needed that does not directly affect compliance - the translation of degree (ENG version) is different from Latvian version.

- 9 9. The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in all languages in which the study programme is implemented, and they comply with the requirements set forth in Section 56.1, Paragraph two and Section 56.2, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** Descriptions are prepared in English language, which is the study language. They are compliant with the said paragraphs of the Law. Course outlines need elaboration in evaluation criteria for each evaluation method and grade.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

**Justification:** N/A

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** Council of Higher Education had decided (August 22 2019) to support the implementation of study programme Law and business in accordance with the law.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** It meets the standards and criteria as shown in annex no. 13

13 13. The joint study programmes comply with the requirements prescribed in Section 551, Paragraphs one, two, and seven of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (if applicable).

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

**Justification:** N/A

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** According to the provided annexes and CV, the requirements are fulfilled. But, it shall be noted, that the scientific activity of the teachers (as well as visiting lecturers) can be higher. Only half of those teachers have published in high-ranking journals and in a considerable amount. The topics of teachers publications might be more relevant to represented course

15 P5 - Overall rating

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** In general, the programme is compliant with the requirements.

## Requirements (R6-R8)

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** Everything necessary to achieve the learning outcomes has been provided. The only exception is books in the library that are mostly in one copy each, so if more than one student wants the book, each student can have it only for a short period of time, for example, one day. But there is option for the students to order the scan copy of necessary division of the book.

Some students also commented that now that more students are joining RGSL, the premises are becoming too small.

Admission procedure needs elaboration how applicants are ranked in case of competitions to ensure the transparency of the admission. Optional courses should be analysed and those which do not support directly the learning outcomes of the programme should be left out. In general, provided information complies with the requirements.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** To be hired, the possible academic staff goes through a thorough evaluation done by existing staff, management, directors. According to the SAR (p. 76) in total, 45 lecturers are involved in the implementation of the programme, of which 2 lecturers, 2 assistant professors, 3 associate professors, 2 professors.

- 3 R8 - The study programme leading to the master or doctoral degree is based on the advances and findings in the relevant field of science or artistic creation.

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

**Justification:**

### Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The programme is compliant to the requirements prescribed in the Law on Institutions of Higher Education and other regulatory enactments. There are some needs for development in programme-specific research, admission procedure, in optional courses, evaluation criteria and number of students. However, none of them is deficiency, which cannot be eliminated within the two-year accreditation term.

Strengths:

1. Programme is useful in a labour market
2. Appropriate compulsory courses
3. Student-centered teaching
4. Good library and access to databases.
5. Teachers are supported with teaching development workshops.

Weaknesses:

1. Admission procedure is not transparent as there are no rules how applicants are evaluated in case of competition.
2. Too many optional courses, some do not support the knowledge in business law.
3. Few students, little outgoing mobility.
4. Limited programme-based research.

### Evaluation of the study programme "Law and Business"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

### 6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Law and Business"

#### Short-term recommendations

Admission procedure needs elaboration how the applicants are ranked in case of competition to ensure the transparency of the admission.

Course outlines need elaboration: add clear evaluation criteria to each method and grade.

Optional courses should be analysed and those which do not support directly the learning outcomes of the programme should be left out.

The sample of diploma should be changed concerning the HEI logo and the title of the degree to be awarded in the study programme in English should be revised, aligning it with the title of the degree in Latvian.

### Long-term recommendations

Increase the number of students and their outgoing mobility

Increase the number of teachers' publications, specifically in programme-field topics.

Increase the number of the books in the library students use in their studies.

## II. "Law and Diplomacy" ASSESSMENT

### II. "Law and Diplomacy" ASSESSMENT

#### 1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

##### Analysis

Academic Bachelor study programme "Law and Diplomacy" (43380), provides Bachelor of Laws (LL.B) (Sociālo zinātņu bakalaura grāds tiesību zinātnē), does not provide any professional qualification. This is the first (undergraduate) academic degree, Level 6 of Latvian and European Qualification Frameworks. The programme is full time, 3 years, 122 Credit Points, English is the basic language of instruction, but there are several courses (B part) that are taught in Latvian as well.

Extensive admission requirements have been set for the study programme - English language knowledge at least level B2 or higher and general grade average at least 7 (out of 10, Latvian grading system). State Centralized Examination results and activity outside of school is also taken into account. These are reasonable requirements and enough to build up knowledge from there.

The main aim/goal of this study programme is to provide skilled young law and diplomacy professionals. Overall, the tasks of this study programme are focused on having students learn what is necessary to work with law and diplomacy - in international organisations and companies, public administration etc. This course is mainly focused on teaching students various research methods that can be later used to work in the field as well as communication and theoretical skills.

The goals of the programme correspond to the tasks, name of the programme and degree, however, to make sure that the degree to be awarded in English coincides with the title of the degree in Latvian, it should be renamed - Social science bachelor's degree in law.

#### Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The name of the study programme is "Law and diplomacy" and the aims are to provide skilled young law and diplomacy professionals. The tasks correspond to the set goals by having students learn the necessary things to work in both law and diplomacy fields. The programme teaches students both theoretical and practical knowledge in both fields as well as improves their critical thinking and teaches them advanced research skills. Admissions requirements are: great English and great academic results in high school, which is necessary for students to be able to follow what they're taught in this programme. The title of the degree to be awarded in English should be reviewed, making sure that it corresponds to the degree to be awarded in Latvian.

Strengths:

1. Even though the degree is in law, by completing this programme, students will have earned good knowledge in not only law but also diplomacy. This provides them with many work opportunities not

only in Latvia but also in international/foreign companies.

2. One of the tasks of this study programme is to motivate students to continue their education and study in masters and doctoral programmes. That is very important so that young lawyers/diplomats can continue their education and bring more to the table in their workplace as well as do more research.

Weaknesses:

1. The tasks/aims of the study programme are heavily research and theoretical knowledge oriented, paying less attention to practical knowledge.

2. In results, it's mentioned various times that students have earned "good" or "basic" knowledge (Study programmes - Law and diplomacy - parameters - Study programme results) which might be enough if they go on to study in masters level later but might not be enough if they look for work only with their bachelors knowledge.

3. The title of the degree to be awarded in English does not coincide with the title of the degree in Latvian.

## **2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof**

### **Analysis**

Information - descriptions of study courses and modules are very informative, including study aims and finer description of course plan, literature etc.

The content of the study courses complies with the aims of the programme.

"The development of the study programme ensured active involvement of employers and other social partners" (SP - LD - SA - 2.1) and is developed in line with the needs of labour market.

Both practicing and academic professionals are involved in the study process (as teaching staff) so it's ensured that the programme keeps up with newest practical and academic developments.

Each year there is a survey of graduates to find out how the study programme ensured compliance with the labour market, what skills and knowledge were necessary. All of this keeps the content of study programme relevant and necessary. The director regularly reminds all teaching staff of the aims, objectives and outcomes of the programme, thereby ensuring that the study process is organised in such a way as to achieve the results of the study programme. The settings of the study programmes are clarified at the beginning of the academic year by organising a workshop for lecturers (same place, 2.2). In RGSL there is a plurality of teaching activities. The goal is to ensure both theoretical knowledge and deep insight into practical sides of the work.

In study process there are academic presentations, individual and group work, use of internet during research process, lectures, seminars, practical workshops, project presentations, plenary discussions, case analysis, moot courts. The methods are chosen individually for each course, taking into account its specifications. The study courses have individual evaluation methods taking into account active participation in classes, presentations, term papers and examinations, which are considered when determining the overall assessment of the student performance in the course (same place, 2.3). Before each course starts, students are given the opportunity to fill a form giving their expectations for the course and what they would like to learn. That is usually implemented. Students are also given regular questionnaires, evaluate their professors and the courses. The feedback is anonymous and is always taken into account. There are regular alumni and stakeholder questionnaires. All student complaints are taken into account, students are able to just knock on the door to administration or send an email and get a quick answer and help in solving their problem, whatever it may be. The study programme does not entail a traineeship. "On average 12-16 students use outgoing mobility options each year, most of them bachelors students. 4 - 12 students use Erasmus traineeship options each year. There are more incoming mobility students. The biggest number in 2017./2018. - 44 students in all study programmes (HEI other annexes - annex 9).

Some students admit that they are reluctant to use the Erasmus programme because of the following main reasons:

- 1) many students have already found work and they are afraid to lose it;
- 2) students would like to stay connected to their friends and family;
- 3) students are not sure if the time spent abroad would not negatively impact their studies (e.g. create academic debt at RGSL) ((SP - LD - SA - 2.7)".

RGSL is a good choice for incoming students, because mostly all courses are taught in English, except several courses (B part) that are taught in Latvian (for example, RBE313 Lietu tiesības / Property Law; RBE314 Civilprocess / Civil Procedure; RBE315 Darba tiesības / Labour Law; RBE316 Patērētāju tiesību aizsardzība / Consumer Protection Law)..

### **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

The descriptions of the study courses/ modules, the traineeship, and the final thesis are of high quality and comply with the provisions set forth in the regulatory enactments. The content is relevant and complementary, and it complies with the aims of the study programme, ensures the achievement of the learning outcomes, and meets the needs of the relevant industry and the scientific trends. In RGSL plurality of teaching activities is used - there are lectures, seminars, research projects, presentations, individual and group projects etc. which corresponds to achieving the aims of the study programme "Law and Diplomacy" set forward in the previous chapter. The outcomes of the surveys conducted among the students, employers, and graduates are used to improve the quality of studies. Some students admit that they are reluctant to use outgoing mobility options for various reasons, one of them being academic debt. There are many incoming mobility and foreign students as RGSL is a very attractive place for them.

Strengths:

1. In RGSL there is a plurality of teaching activities. The goal is to ensure both theoretical knowledge and deep insight into practical sides of the work.
2. The feedback system - the school is in constant touch with students and students are allowed to express their opinions and expectations before and after every course. The same goes for the constant feedback from alumni and employers - this also helps to keep the courses relevant and the graduates appealing to employers.
3. The detailed course outlines that ensure transparency and understanding from all parties involved.
4. Both practicing and academic professionals are involved in the study process (as teaching staff) so it's ensured that the programme keeps up with newest practical and academic developments.
5. Good content of the study programme as well reach content from the study course perspective.

### **3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme**

#### **Analysis**

RGSL has all the necessary infrastructure - lecture rooms, study rooms, computer room, leisure rooms, a library (with computers available). The top floors are accessible for people with disability issues - they are supplied with special keys to call a special elevator.

"All auditoriums are in very good technical condition and equipped with multimedia equipment and all other necessary equipment for the implementation of the study process. Wi-fi coverage is available in the RGSL building (SER - 3.2)". RGSL students can also use Stockholm School of Economics' library as the buildings are joined. The latest literature is provided and the head librarian herself is constantly restocking the shelves, ordering the newest books. The library is very up to date with books correlating to each study course. "For the purposes of this programme the latest literature in diplomacy, political science and international relations is regularly purchased (SP -LD -

SA- 3.1)".

Students can also order books from partner-universities if they need to. A large digital database collection is available that is mostly used by bachelors students and is especially helpful in writing their thesis.

Each student has an email address and access to RGSL internal network based on Moodle. All study materials — course descriptions, lesson schedules, lecture presentations and other study materials — are stored electronically.

Students can access RGSL online database resources through a VPN connection, thereby also having a possibility to learn when outside the RGSL (SER - 3.2)".

## **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

The study provision, scientific support, informative provision, material and technical provision, and financial provision comply with the specific features and the conditions for the implementation of the study programme. There is enough study spaces for all students, the academic staff provides all the support they can and the library has books for all the topics that students need thorough their study process. There is also a great academic database to help students with additional information and research paper writing.

Strengths:

1. The bright and comfortable lecture and study halls. There are a lot of places for self study. The library has computers with shortcuts to all important databases. It is also quiet and comfortable. There is a quiet room that students can reserve if needed for their individual studies.
2. Students can also order books from partner-universities if they need to.
3. A large digital database collection is available.
4. Each student has an email address and access to RGSL internal network based on Moodle. All study materials are stored electronically.
5. The top floors are accessible for people with disability issues.

Weaknesses:

1. Most books are in only one copy each so if multiple students need the same book they can only have it for a short period of time, for example, a day, which in most cases is not enough for thorough work and examination. In common, this do no affects the quality of the programme, the books (if necessary) are available online.

## **4. Teaching Staff**

### **Analysis**

Regulations of Academic and Administrative Personnel Positions of RGSL have been developed to set the necessary qualifications for teaching staff.

Best lecturers are chosen by looking at their qualifications, teaching experience, institution they are at, publications, research experience, interviews. Public lectures are held to see how they perform in front of an auditorium. There is a discussion between the management, directors and lecturer. There are a lot of recommendations from existing faculty that are taken into account. A preference is given to candidates with excellent English proficiency (C1 or C2 level) a PhD degree, as well as international experience in teaching and research (SP - LD - SA - 4.2). Research activities that teaching staff has participated in (same place, 4.5) - "Judicial EU Competition Network" (JEUCON) project (which contributed to improving the study process in competition law), InnovaEDU (provides an opportunity to try out different pedagogical methods, thereby improving the quality of education). Natalja Tohelovska who is a study "Ex-ante Evaluation of Market Failures in Support of the European Union Structural and Cohesion Funds Programming Period 2021-2027 in the form of Financial Instruments" (thus extending her competences and research results in the course

"Financial Economics" ), Alexander Filler is preparing three scientific articles in English, which will be published in international journals. In addition, he is preparing several publications in Latvian, aimed specifically at Latvian researchers and practitioners. "The sequence of study courses has been established in such a way as to ensure connection and a logical sequence between study courses. Joint coordination and cooperation sessions are also being developed for teaching personnel. For instance, at the beginning of the academic year, a workshop for lecturers is organised to introduce with the RGSL teaching standards, to present the objectives, tasks and planned outcomes of the study programme, mutual communication and to discuss cooperation between teaching staff (the same place, 4.6)."

### **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

The higher education institution doesn't have set measures in a target-oriented manner to avoid negative effects on the quality of the implementation of the study programme and the compliance of the study programme with the requirements set forth in the regulatory enactments, as a result of the changes in the composition of the teaching staff. The qualification of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements set forth in the regulatory enactments, and it enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses. The academic staff is involved in scientific research both at national and international level. However, the national level publications are mostly in popular - science publications such as "Jurista vārds". There could also be more international level publications. The obtained information is used in the study process. There doesn't seem to be a mechanism for mutual collaboration between the teaching staff members in place, which contributes to the improvement of the study courses/ modules and their correlation.

Strengths:

1. Good professionals involved in teaching process.
2. A great and transparent mechanism to choosing the best academic staff.
3. Both academic and professional, visiting and permanent lecturers are employed. There are also many lecturers from abroad. This provides students with a great scope of experiences from their teachers.

Weaknesses:

1. There are no clear measures/procedure to avoid negative effects on the quality of the implementation of the study programme as a result of the changes in the composition of the teaching staff. In the meeting with Directors it was said that the quality doesn't change when teaching staff does because all of them are qualified and hand picked.
2. The academic staff is not very involved in academic research. In the SER only one lecturer is mentioned to be working on publications on international and national level. During the visit it was clarified that not much of the staff make publications on international level and/or on scientific periodicals.

## **5. Assessment of the Compliance of the Study Programme "Law and Diplomacy"**

### **Requirements**

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** According to the Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers no. 202 all criteria are fulfilled. RGSL provided Diploma shows that the sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme Law and Diplomacy complies with the procedure by which state-recognised documents of higher education are issued. Technical clarification is needed that does not directly affect compliance - the translation of degree (ENG version) is different from Latvian version.

2. Documents confirming that the higher education institution/ college will provide the students with the options to continue the acquisition of education in another study programme or at another higher education institution/ college (a contract with another accredited higher education institution/ college), in case the implementation of the study programme is discontinued.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** An agreement with University of Latvia has been signed. This agreement ensures that should the programme "Law and diplomacy" be discontinued, the students will be able to keep studying in University of Latvia, programme "Law". Document Nr. 9.2.5./2019/02 (8 of November, 2019) Article 2

3. Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college guarantees to the students a compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the higher education institution/ college (actions or failure to act) and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** According to RGSL Letter (Nr. 2.15n/119/19) from December 16, 2019 "On compensation guarantee to students" addressed to Quality Agency for Higher Education RGSL guarantees to the students a compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the higher education institution and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme .

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** According on Law of Riga Graduate School of Law section 25 -"The personnel of the School shall not be subject to the statutory requirements concerning proficiency in the official language. "Annex 19 confirms that all academic staff have English language knowledge from B2 to C2 levels.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** Annex 19 confirms that all academic staff have English language knowledge from B2 to C2 levels.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

**Justification:** N/A

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** It is completely compliant as seen in the annex. Not less than five professors and associated professors, who have been elected to academic positions at the relevant university, shall participate in the implementation of the compulsory part of academic programmes and the limited part of the choice.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** It is completely compliant as seen in the annex. The contract entails: the name, surname, personal identity number of the student and address of the declared place of residence; the name, legal address, registration number of the institution of higher education or college in the register of educational institutions, credentials (date and number of registration of the accreditation sheet), bank properties, given name, surname, position and authorisation of the rector, college director or authorised person of higher education, in accordance with which the person acts, the name, duration, amount in credits, degree to be obtained of the study programme; type of study, principal duties of the HEI, the duties of a student to observe internal regulatory enactments regulating the activities of an institution of higher education or college. Technical clarification is needed that does not directly affect compliance - the translation of degree (ENG version) is different from Latvian version

- 9 9. The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in all languages in which the study programme is implemented, and they comply with the requirements set forth in Section 56.1, Paragraph two and Section 56.2, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** Descriptions are prepared in English language, which is the study language. They are compliant with the said paragraphs of the Law.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

**Justification:** N/A

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** Council of Higher Education had decided (August 22 2019) to support the implementation of study programme Law and diplomacy in accordance with the law.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** It meets the standards and criteria as shown in annex no. 13

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

**Justification:** N/A

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** According to the provided annexes and CV, the requirements are fulfilled. But, it shall be noted, that the scientific activity of the teachers (as well as visiting lecturers) can be higher. Only half of those teachers have published in high-ranking journals and in a considerable amount. The topics of teachers publications might be more relevant to represented course

15 P5 - Overall rating

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** In general, the programme is compliant with the requirements.

## Requirements (R6-R8)

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** Everything necessary to achieve the learning outcomes has been provided. The only exception is books in the library that are mostly in one copy each, so if more than one student wants the book, each student can have it only for a short period of time, for example, one day. But there is option for the students to order the scan copy of necessary division of the book.

Some students also commented that now that more students are joining RGSL, the premises are becoming too small.

Admission procedure needs elaboration how applicants are ranked in case of competitions to ensure the transparency of the admission. Optional courses should be analysed and those which do not support directly the learning outcomes of the programme should be left out. In general, provided information complies with the requirements.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** To be hired, the possible academic staff goes through a thorough evaluation done by existing staff, management, directors.

3 R8 - The study programme leading to the master or doctoral degree is based on the advances and findings in the relevant field of science or artistic creation.

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

**Justification:** n/a

## Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The programme "Law and Diplomacy" complies with all the requirements set forward by the Law. All necessary requirements are fulfilled. Very strong academical staff and guest lecturers who involved in the programme realization and have a lot of research articles related to study programme topic. Qualitative and well-thought-out study programme as well as study courses of the programme. Good-quality consent based on review of literature, case law etc.

## Evaluation of the study programme "Law and Diplomacy"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Excellent

## 6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Law and Diplomacy"

### Short-term recommendations

Admission procedure needs elaboration how the applicants are ranked in case of competition to ensure the transparency of the admission.

The title of the degree to be awarded in the study programme in English should be revised, aligning it with the title of the degree in Latvian.

### Long-term recommendations

Obtain more library books so that there is enough for students when it is necessary to use them and students can use books for a longer period of time even if another student needs the same book.

Develop a mechanism for mutual cooperation between the academic staff. Have more events, workshops, training for all the staff together.

Develop a system to ensure that the changing of academic staff does not affect the quality of study programmes and courses.

Interdisciplinarity of the programme should be further detailed

## II. "EU Law and Policy" ASSESSMENT

### II. "EU Law and Policy" ASSESSMENT

#### 1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

##### Analysis

Name of the Study programme EU Law and Policy corresponds to the goal and curriculum of the programme. Programme is offered as 1-year full time studies (60 ECTS), and as 2-years part time studies (60 ECTS). After graduation the degree acquired is Masters of law LL.M. Goal of the programme and learning outcomes are interrelated and correspond to the aim of the Study Field. In defining the general scope of learning outcomes, while knowledge outcomes are clearly indicated, there is a problem with clear distinction between skills and competences. In particular there is a problem with formulation of outcomes 2-4 (p. 98 of the SAR). Learning outcome no 2 states that students have acquired knowledge of research methodology and methods and are able to use them - such a formulation is mixing both concepts - knowledge and skills. It is suggested that learning outcome no 2 is reformulated in order to stress the research skills. Also second sentence of the learning outcome no 2 refers to the competences which is a readiness to transfer skills acquired within academic process into practical work field. It is suggested to move it to the separate learning outcome relating solely to competences.

Programme has interdisciplinary approach and is needed in the contemporary labour market. General admission requirements for the programme are clearly set, both in reference to a

mandatory level of acquired education and knowledge of English which is a language of instruction. Admission procedure does not have rules for the situations when there is a competition between applicants. Even

though the Rules of Admission and Order of Matriculation (Academic Year 2020/2021) article 3.12. provides that the Admissions Committee reserves the right to invite applicants for individual interviews and article 4.1 that the final decision for admission is taken by the Admissions Committee, there are no clear criteria set based on which the Admissions Committee chooses successful candidates.

### **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

Overall the indicators are consistent. The programme is needed in current labour market. Name of the study programme corresponds to the aim of the study programme and its content. Aims, objectives and learning outcomes are interrelated, yet the better distinction between skills and competences is needed. Admission procedure needs elaboration on rules applied to the situation when there is a competition between applicants.

Strengths:

1. Interdisciplinary character of the programme
2. Programme responding to labour market's needs

Weaknesses:

1. Blurred line between skills and competences in defining learning outcomes, in particular skills and competences
2. Lack of admission procedures applied in the situation of competing candidates
3. The title of the degree to be awarded in English does not coincide with the title of the degree in Latvian

## **2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof**

### **Analysis**

The content of the programme is relevant, and complies with the aims of the study programme. The aim as defined in the programme description is to provide students with the in-depth knowledge in the field of EU law and policy, which would allow them to gain advanced theoretical and practical understanding of the interplay between EU and its policies. The programme has the potential of meeting the needs of the labour market for high end specialists in the area of EU law and policy. The structure of the programme is following: there are two foundation courses (Introductory course and Legal Research), which are horizontal for all master programmes and are intended to introduce students without proper legal background to the theoretical concepts and general knowledge about law, state and constitutionalism together with foundations on legal research. There are 6 mandatory courses which correspond to the main field of the study programme balancing knowledge on EU law and its policies. Here however there is a discrepancy between the information on the courses available on the webpage of RGSL, the information on the programme structure provided in the self-assessment and the information on the programme structure given by the master programmes director during the onsite meeting. On the website among mandatory courses there is a course on Company Law, while in the self-assessment report it is replaced by the course on Monetary Policy, whereas during the onsite meeting we were informed that starting from current academic year the mandatory course on EU constitutional law was added. Such a change in a curriculum shall be assessed positively since such a course is pertinent to the understanding of the complexity of the functioning of EU, its legal system and policies. It should be noted that the webpage shall reflect the current curriculum of the programme, thus it needs to be updated regularly. On the top of mandatory courses, students can in a flexible way choose two more elective courses from the

extensive offer available for other master study programmes. Foundation, mandatory and elective courses cover half of the credits necessary to complete the programme. Remaining half is assigned to research on master thesis.

It is recommended that the course on the litigation before Court of Justice of the European Union is included in the curriculum, which would allow students to better understand the fundamental role of CJEU caselaw and its impact on the development of EU law and policies. In terms of learning outcomes, it should be recommended that in the description of the study programme the clear distinction between competences and skills is drawn. Overall the course descriptions provide such a clear distinction (European Political Economy course description needs better and more detailed setting of skills and competences outcomes). Evaluation methods used in the programme take into account various ways of assessment of students' performance . They include - active participation, essays, quizzes, oral presentations, open and closed book exams and assessments. Lecturers combine formative assessment with summative assessment. It would be desirable if lecturers indicated which learning outcomes are assessed in which way. Overall it results both from the SAR and on-site visit that RGSL is implementing student-centered teaching and learning approach, taking into consideration students' needs and priorities. One of the examples is the schedule, which allows students at Master level to combine their professional activities (most of students work already) with studying. Also, it was confirmed that during pandemic outbreak in spring 2020 students' needs were properly met and the swift change to online classes took place. It should be stressed that during an on-site visit it was confirmed by the management of the university, programmes directors, academic staff, students and alumni, that outcomes of the surveys conducted among students and graduates are taken into consideration in order to improve the quality of studies. Possible changes and amendments of the programme are introduced based on the results of surveys. Also, as state in the SAR ( p. 102) programme director is in close cooperation with the Student Association. Students' representatives take part in the RGSL Senate meetings.

Erasmus + outgoing mobilities in this programme are not used, since as indicated in self-assessment report students of 1 year long master programmes prefer to spend the whole year at RGSL. Incoming mobilities occur, yet are not programme specific, since incoming students are able to choose from the joint catalogue of courses offered at RGSL.

### **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

Overall, assessed program is coherent and provides students with knowledge which is needed at the labour market. It contains balance between policy-making knowledge and legal knowledge relating to the functioning of the EU. In general, courses comply with the requirements: descriptions of the study courses are well structured, their content is relevant and insightful. The content complies with the aims of the study programme. The quality of final theses is very good. Research part and methodology of theses are at good level, a good-quality sources are used, which is related to the high quality library services provided to students. Programme is characterized by the student-centered learning and teaching approach.

Strengths:

1. Programme is a well-balanced combination of theoretical knowledge and practical approach.
2. Programme promotes student-centered approach
3. Outcomes of the surveys conducted among students and graduates are taken into consideration in order to improve the quality of studies.

Weakness:

1. There is a blurred line between skills and competences to be acquired by students, as is described in the programme description.

### **3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme**

#### **Analysis**

RGSL has an excellent library with latest literature, access to good databases and big collection of books on EU Law and policy.

RGSL has all the necessary infrastructure - lecture rooms, study rooms, computer room, leisure rooms, a library (with computers available). The top floors are accessible for people with disability issues - they are supplied with special keys to call a special elevator.

All audiences are in a very good technical condition and equipped with multimedia equipment and all other necessary equipment for the implementation of the study process. Wi-fi coverage is available in the RGSL building. RGSL students can also use Stockholm School of Economics' library as the buildings are joined. Students can also order books from partner-universities if they need to. A large digital database collection is available and is especially helpful in writing students' thesis, which is of particular importance during pandemic on-line teaching reality.

#### **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

All criteria regarding the resources and programme provision have been met. It has been confirmed by students during an on-site visit that during an outbreak of COVID pandemic the online access to data bases, resources and materials was of great importance and help to assure continuity of teaching and learning.

Strengths:

1. The bright and comfortable lecture and study halls. There are a lot of places for self study. The library has computers with shortcuts to all important databases. It is also quiet and comfortable. There is a quiet room that students can reserve if needed.

2. Very rich collection of digital resources - RGSL offers to its students access to the most important international legal databases

Weaknesses:

1. Most books are in only one copy each so if multiple students need the same book they can only have it for a short period of time, for example, a day, which in most cases is not enough for thorough work and examination. But this do not affects the study process directly, books can be ordered or copies can be received.

### **4. Teaching Staff**

#### **Analysis**

There are no clear measures/procedures to avoid negative effects on the quality of the implementation of the study programme as a result of the changes in the composition of the teaching staff. Yet, at the meeting with Directors it was said that the quality doesn't change when teaching staff does because all of them are qualified and hand-picked. During recruitment processes candidates are assessed based on their competence, research activities and teaching experience in the field of EU law and its policies. Teaching staff is well qualified to lecture on topics covered by the programme curriculum. The major shortcoming is that the vast majority of teaching staff are visiting professors and lecturers. According to the SAR, the programme is delivered by 34 guest lecturers and 8 permanent academics (1 lecturer, 2 assistant professors, 2 associate professors and 3 professors). Such a relatively small number of permanent academic staff impacts the research potential of the RGSL.

In terms of the needed qualifications, it is assured that all professors have high-level of English language proficiency. Within the scientific field covered by the assessed programme, the research at

international level is done primarily by two professors - prof. Ziemele and prof. Ulrich. EU law and Policy programme is one of the programmes, in which research outcomes of permanent academic staff (ex. Prof. Ziemele, Prof. Ulrich) is used extensively by students. Thus there is a correlation between teaching process and research process. According to the SAR, there are joint coordination and cooperation sessions in place which are intended for teaching staff as a platform to disseminate knowledge on teaching standards, methods and modalities. However as it turned out during on-site visit, not all visiting professors were aware of such sessions and there are some doubts on how well the communication between teaching staff is.

Also, in order to increase the quality of teaching, RGSL should improve the engagement of academic staff in Erasmus+ mobilities.

### **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

The qualification of the teaching staff members involved complies with the requirements for the implementation of study programme and enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses.

Strengths:

1. Highly qualified professionals involved in teaching process

Weaknesses:

1. There are no clear measures/procedure to avoid negative effects on the quality of the implementation of the study programme as a result of the changes in the composition of the teaching staff.

2. The academic staff is not very involved in academic research. In the SAR only two lecturers are mentioned to be working on publications on international and national level. During the visit it was clarified that not much of the staff make publications at international level and/or in scientific periodicals.

3. There is no clear mechanism for mutual collaboration between the teaching staff. It has been mentioned that there are workshops for the staff and that courses are interrelated but it is unclear how good and cultivated is the communication between the staff.

4. Very low number of permanent academic staff involved in teaching at EU Law and Policy programme.

5. Very limited number of incoming and outgoing teaching staff mobilities within Erasmus+ at RGSL

## **5. Assessment of the Compliance of the Study Programme "EU Law and Policy"**

### **Requirements**

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** According to the Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers no. 202 all criteria are fulfilled. RGSL provided Diploma shows that the sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme EU law and policy complies with the procedure by which state-recognised documents of higher education are issued. Technical clarification is needed that does not directly affect compliance - the translation of degree (ENG version) is different from Latvian version.

2. Documents confirming that the higher education institution/ college will provide the students with the options to continue the acquisition of education in another study programme or at another higher education institution/ college (a contract with another accredited higher education institution/ college), in case the implementation of the study programme is discontinued.
- Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant
- Justification:** Students are provided with the options to continue the acquisition of education in another study programme/ another higher education institution according to Agreement between the University of Latvia and Riga Graduate School of Law. Document Nr. 9.2.5./2019/02 (8 of November, 2019) Article 7
3. Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college guarantees to the students a compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the higher education institution/ college (actions or failure to act) and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme.
- Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant
- Justification:** According to RGSL Letter (Nr. 2.15n/119/19) from December 16, 2019 "On compensation guarantee to students" addressed to Quality Agency for Higher Education RGSL guarantees to the students a compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the higher education institution and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme.
4. The teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme are proficient in the official language in accordance with the regulations on the level of the official language knowledge and the procedures for testing official language proficiency for performing professional duties and office duties.
- Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant
- Justification:** According to Letter from 2019 (Annex 19) "On language skills of RGSL teaching staff" and in SAR provided information 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. Annex confirms that all academic staff have English language knowledge from B2 to C2 levels.
5. The teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language, if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language.
- Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant
- Justification:** The teaching is conducted in English. The qualifications of the academic staff (permanent and visiting) comply with the required level. Annex 19 confirms that all academic staff have English language knowledge from B2 to C2 levels.
6. At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of an academic doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field of science. At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a professional doctoral study programme in arts.
- Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant
- Justification:** N/A
7. The academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements set forth in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.
- Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant
- Justification:** According to the provided annexes, the academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements set forth in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.
8. The sample of the study agreement complies with the mandatory provisions to be included in the study agreement.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** The sample of the study agreement complies with the mandatory requirements. Technical clarification is needed that does not directly affect compliance - the translation of degree (ENG version) is different from Latvian version.

- 9 9. The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in all languages in which the study programme is implemented, and they comply with the requirements set forth in Section 56.1, Paragraph two and Section 56.2, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** The requirements are fulfilled. The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in English. and they comply with the requirements set Section 56 of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

**Justification:** N/A

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** Council of Higher Education had decided to support the implementation of study programme Law and technology in accordance with the law. Document from 22.08.2019 in the annexes.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** The study programme complies with the State Academic Education Standard.

- 13 13. The joint study programmes comply with the requirements prescribed in Section 551, Paragraphs one, two, and seven of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (if applicable).

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

**Justification:** N/A

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** According to the provided annexes and CV, the requirements are fulfilled. But, it shall be noted, that the scientific activity of the teachers (as well as visiting lecturers) can be higher. Only half of those teachers have published in high-ranking journals and in a considerable amount. The topics of teachers publications might be more relevant to represented course

- 15 P5 - Overall rating

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** In general, the programme is compliant with the requirements.

## Requirements (R6-R8)

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** RGSL has a very good library with extensive access to online databases, materials and resources. There are sufficient resources on international law and on European and EU law. Everything necessary to achieve the learning outcomes has been provided. The only exception is books in the library that are mostly in one copy each, so if more than one student wants the book, each student can have it only for a short period of time, for example, one day. But there is option for the students to order the scan copy of necessary division of the book.

Some students also commented that now that more students are joining RGSL, the premises are becoming too small.

Admission procedure needs elaboration how applicants are ranked in case of competitions to ensure the transparency of the admission. Optional courses should be analysed and those which do not support directly the learning outcomes of the programme should be left out. In general, provided information complies with the requirements.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** The qualifications of the academic staff (permanent and visiting) comply with the conditions. The teaching staff has the necessary academic and practical experience

- 3 R8 - The study programme leading to the master or doctoral degree is based on the advances and findings in the relevant field of science or artistic creation.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** EU law and policy is the programme in which research outcomes of RGSL professors are used extensively

## Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The programme provides the students with the knowledge on the most important policy areas of EU and foundations of EU law. Overall, assessed program is coherent and responds to the labour market needs. Courses descriptions are well structured, their content is relevant and insightful. The content complies with the aims of the study programme. Programme has student-centered learning and teaching principles. The qualification of the teaching staff members involved complies with the requirements for the implementation of study programme and enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses.

Strengths:

1. Programme is a well balanced combination of theoretical knowledge and practical approach.
2. Programme promotes student-centered approach
3. Outcomes of the surveys conducted among students and graduates are taken into consideration in order to improve the quality of studies.
4. Interdisciplinary character of the programme
5. Programme responds to labour market's needs
6. The programme benefits from a very good library. The bright and comfortable lecture and study halls. There are a lot of places for self study. The library has computers with shortcuts to all important databases. It is also quiet and comfortable. There is a quiet room that students can reserve if needed.

## 7. Good professionals involved in teaching process

Weakness:

1. There is a blurred line between skills and competences to be acquired by students, as is described in the programme description.
2. lack of admission procedures applied in the situation of competing candidates
3. Most books are in only one copy each so if multiple students need the same book they can only have it for a short period of time, for example, a day, which in most cases is not enough for thorough work and examination.
4. There are no clear measures/procedure to avoid negative effects on the quality of the implementation of the study programme as a result of the changes in the composition of the teaching staff. In the meeting with Directors it was said that the quality doesn't change when teaching staff does because all of them are qualified and hand picked.
5. The academic staff is not very involved in academic research. In the SAR only two lecturers are mentioned to be working on publications on international and national level. During the visit it was clarified that not much of the staff make publications on international level and/or on scientific periodicals.
4. There is no clear mechanism for mutual collaboration between the teaching staff. It has been mentioned that there are workshops for the staff and that courses are interrelated but it is unclear how good and cultivated is the communication between the staff.
5. There should be more permanent academic staff involved in teaching at EU Law and Policy programme.
6. There should be more incoming and outgoing teaching staff mobilities withing Erasmus+ at RGSL

## Evaluation of the study programme "EU Law and Policy"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

## 6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "EU Law and Policy"

### Short-term recommendations

Update of the list of mandatory courses available at the RGSL webpage so they correspond to the current curriculum of the programme

Admission procedure needs elaboration how the applicants are ranked in case of competition to ensure the transparency of the admission.

Increase the number of copies of books used for the courses of the programme

Introduce clear measures/procedure to avoid negative effects on the quality of the implementation of the study programme as a result of the changes in the composition of the teaching staff.

Introduce better and clearer mechanism for mutual collaboration between the teaching staff.

The title of the degree to be awarded in the study programme in English should be revised, aligning it with the title of the degree in Latvian.

### Long-term recommendations

Increase the number of permanent academic staff

Introduce the course on litigation before the Court of Justice of the EU
Incentivate the Erasmus+ mobillities (for students and teaching staff)
Better deifinition of learning outcomes, in particular skills and competences
Ensure that students without legal academic background gain academic knowledge of law and legal research.
More intensive research in the field of EU Law and Policy shall be done by the permanent academic staff

## II. "Transborder Commercial Law" ASSESSMENT

### II. "Transborder Commercial Law" ASSESSMENT

#### 1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

##### Analysis

Academic master study programme "Transborder Commercial Law" (LL.M) (45380) corresponds to the degree to be obtained – the degree of a Master of Laws (LL.M.), indicating in the supplement of the diploma main field of studies "Transborder Commercial Law". It shall be noted, that the title of the degree in English does not coincide with the title of the degree in Latvian. The name of the study programme and degree, as well as professional qualification or the degree are interrelated with the aim, objectives, learning outcomes. The aim of the study programme is to provide depth understanding of main issues in the field of TCL , as well as to give to the students a comprehensive theoretical and practical understanding of the interplay between commercial law. From the Self-evaluation report p. 126 follows, that the programme prepares high-level specialists in this cross-cutting field able to work in law firms, public administration, international organisations, NGOs and academic institutions in Latvia and worldwide. This fact is confirmed by the content of study courses (content analysis of courses). There are several objectives mentioned in study programme description (Self-evaluation report p. 126 - 127 ). One of them are to provide students with in-depth theoretical knowledge of TCL to develop scientific research skills, to ensure that students acquire skills (including 'soft skills') that enable them to be successful and competitive in the field of TCL , both in the private and public sector, in line with the highest standards etc. This objectives completely coincide with the aims, professional qualification of the program. But, it must be noted, that the part of the research in particular field resulting from the content analysis of TCL shall be improved. TCL programme is available to individuals with bachelor or masters degree in law or related fields if basic knowledge in law or corresponding work experience is acquired, obtained in at least four years long studies; second-level professional higher education, professional bachelor or masters degree in law or other related fields, if basic knowledge in law or corresponding work experience is acquired (at least 160 KP = 240 ECTS). According to the admission procedure in shall be noted that the question about the transparency of particular process. There are no rules identified how applicants are evaluated in case of competition.

#### Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The name of the study programme and degree, as well as professional qualification or the degree are interrelated with the aim, objectives, learning outcomes of the programme. The quality of research part according to the tasks of the study programme shall be improved.

Strenghts:

1. Interdisciplinary and unique programme
2. The programme responding to labour market's needs in Latvia and abroad
3. The programme includes a high level of flexibility. The students can choose their study content from a range of areas.

#### Weaknesses

1. The title of the degree to be awarded in English does not coincide with the title of the degree in Latvian

## 2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

### Analysis

The content of the programme is relevant and it complies with the aims of the study programme. The content meets the main needs of the TCL main issues and modern scientific trends. The descriptions of the study courses are of good quality and include all the required information e.g. course aims, learning outcomes, course content and planned hours, recommended literature and additional sources of information, organization of the independent studies, assessment structure and course value in credit points and ECTS. All study courses are relevant and complementary, they comply with the aims of the study programme and ensure the achievement of the learning outcomes. The study implementation methods are diverse. Alumni approved that 100% lecturers use the Moodle in variety of ways and pedagogical methods are diverse and interesting. Evaluation methods of each study course are indicated in the course descriptions as well. Both formative and summative assessments are used. All assessment activities are related to and cover course learning outcomes. Composition of the evaluation is specified in the course description. Course descriptions show that the study courses encompass different assessment techniques. The teaching activities promote self-evaluation of the students. Evaluation methods take account of active participation in classes, oral presentations, term papers and in class examinations. It shall be noted, that students are assessed according to the evaluation criteria and methods which are published in the description of each course and internal Student regulations. But, it shall be noted, that the grading criteria system not always consequent and may have very different approach. For instance, in study course Cybercrime and Cybersecurity (3 ECTS) there is just one grading criteria- Essay (100%), Contracts and Information and Communications Technology (3ECTS) Exam - In Class Open Book (100%), International Humanitarian Law and Responsibility (3ECTS) criteria are: Participation in seminars (International Humanitarian Law part), Participation in seminars (International Criminal Law part), Paper for the International Humanitarian Law part, Exam for the International Criminal Law part. But, for instance in course Monetary Policy (3 ECTS) there are specified information about the content of the exam - Written take-home exam. The exam consists of 3 open questions, all to be answered in an essay style. It shows, how different is approach to clarify the grading criteria. The director of the programme seems to be very motivated and passionate and have good contact with all the students. Student-centered education principles seem to be implemented, especially because the number of students in the programme is still quite low. Annexes 12 shows that The number of students in the study program during the reporting period was variable - from 7 to 18 students. RGSL conducts regular surveys on the knowledge and skills of graduates after completion of the programme and holds discussions with employers and other relevant stakeholders. The student surveys take place after each study course and academic year. The results of the surveys are discussed with academic staff and in faculty. As meeting with the employers shows, the content of the programme is developed in collaboration with the professionals. Making research of the final thesis during the expert visit, it must be noted, that the quality as well as the novelty of the final thesis is on good level. In general, the content of the programme is competitive on EU level. The advantage of the programme is that this programme provides added value by offering in-depth law courses relating also to recent relevant legal and

policy developments on international level. The qualification of the of the teaching staff is advantage as well.

### **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

The descriptions of the study courses and the final thesis are of high quality and comply with the provisions set forth in the regulatory enactments. The content is relevant and complementary, and it complies with the aims of the study programme, ensures the achievement of the learning outcomes, and meets the needs of the relevant industry and the modern scientific trends. As meeting with the employers shows, the content of the programme is developed in collaboration with the professionals. Making research of the final thesis during the expert visit, it must be noted, that the quality as well as the novelty of the final thesis is on good level. The content of the programme is competitive on EU level. The outcomes of the surveys conducted among the students are used to improve the quality of studies.

#### **Strengths**

1. The programme provides added value by offering in-depth law courses relating also to recent relevant legal and policy developments on transborder commercial law.
2. The qualification of the teaching staff
3. Individual, student centered approach on team work-based teaching methods
4. Unique study programme in Latvian and in Baltic states as well.
5. Excellent cooperation (based on industry representatives given information) between the study programme and industry
6. Good cooperation between administration and students in the case of feedbacks and necessary improvements thereof.

#### **Weaknesses**

1. The lack of information on cooperation agreement with the industry
2. Small number of students, but this do not affects the quality of the programme.
3. Different approach to grading criteria identification.

### **3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme**

#### **Analysis**

RGSL has all the necessary infrastructure - lecture halls, study rooms, a computer room, leisure rooms, a library (with computers available). The top floors are accessible for people with physical disabilities - they are supplied with special keys to call a special elevator. All lecture halls are in very good technical condition and equipped with multimedia equipment and all other necessary equipment for the implementation of the study process. Wi-fi coverage is available in the RGSL building. RGSL students can also use the Stockholm School of Economics' library as the buildings are joined. Students can also order books from partner-universities. Some course outlines enlist outdated reading material and older case-law. While using classical cases has its teaching value, the curricula should be reviewed to include state of art teaching materials and most relevant case-law. The latest literature in the field of transborder commercial law are available.

There are important and world's largest legal information databases are available. For instance, Thomson Reuters Westlaw, Westlaw UK and Hein Online, as well as Science Direct. As well as the major legal publishers' papers are available as Oxford University Press and Kluwer Law, access to Kluwer Law e-logs and e-books. The library provides access to the databases subscribed by the University of Latvia, including EBSCO, JSTOR etc.

The Moodle TCL e-study environment are professional and full with the latest academical information (case law, scientific articles etc.).

It was confirmed by students during the on-site visit that during an outbreak of COVID pandemic the online access to databases, resources and materials was of great importance and help to assure continuity of teaching and learning.

## **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

All criteria have been met.

It has been confirmed by students during an on-site visit that during an outbreak of COVID pandemic the online access to data bases, resources and materials was of great importance and help to assure continuity of teaching and learning.

Strengths:

- The bright and comfortable lecture and study halls. There are a lot of places for self study. The library has computers with shortcuts to all important databases. It is also quiet and comfortable. There is a quiet room that students can reserve if needed.
- Bright and comfortable lecture and study halls. There are a lot of places for self-study. The library has computers with shortcuts to all important databases. It is also quiet and comfortable. There is a quiet room that students can reserve if needed.
- During the COVID pandemic, online access to databases, resources and materials was of great importance and help to assure continuity of teaching and learning.
- The scientific and technical support provided for the students, including the internet study environment is of very high quality and support studying.
- The lecturers have high qualifications in the field and are mostly recognised scholars.

Weaknesses:

- Most books are in only one copy each so if multiple students need the same book they can only have it for a short period of time, for example, a day, which in most cases is not enough for thorough work and examination.

## **4. Teaching Staff**

### **Analysis**

The qualification of the teaching staff members involved complies with the requirements for the implementation of Study programme and enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the Study programme and the relevant Study courses. Teaching staff is well qualified to lecture on topics covered by the programme curriculum. The major shortcoming is that the vast majority of teaching staff are visiting professors and lecturers.

A total of 42 lecturers were participated in the implementation of the study programme: 1 lecturer, 2 assistant professors, 2 associate professors, 3 professors and 34 guest lecturers. But, for instance, the number of visiting lecturers in 2018/2019 were 50, but the number of internal staff just 9 (SER p. 136). SAR p.137 states that academic staff of the programme is actively involved in research activities. For instance, professor Ineta Ziemele together with professor George Ulrich, among others, have recently edited the book entitled "How International Law Works in Times of Crisis" published by Oxford University Press. Professor George Ulrich was involved in a study which result was a book „Human Rights Research Methodology: Key Issues and Approaches" published by Oxford University Press (SAR. p.139).

The good practice to attract academic staff from abroad. (SAR p. 137). For example, the positive aspect is that during the last academic year (2018/2019), RGSL actively started attracting guest lecturers under the ERASMUS and Fulbright exchange programme. The teaching staff are

professional from both academic area and as well as professionals from industry. Nevertheless, there are lack of scientific publications of the academic staff. Academic staff contribution to the research-related projects not on good level. There are several persons who are active in research field. As well as the small number of elected lecturers shows lack of good scientific research level (numbers of publications, participation in the projects etc.). There are several lecturers who do not have publications according to the List of academic staff publications for the reporting period, provided by RGSL. For instance, Morten Hansen, Inguss Kalniņš, Tjaco van den Hout, R. Leiser (Mark) etc.

### **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

According to the research of the documents provided by RGSL, it shall be noted, that RGSL undertakes measures in a target-oriented manner with the aim to avoid negative effects on the quality of the implementation of the study programme. As documents show, the qualification of the teaching staff members involved in the study process complies with the necessary requirements. The academic staff mostly is involved in scientific research, but mostly at national level. Based on the on-site visit as well as documents provided by RGSL it can be concluded that there is a mechanism for necessary collaboration between the teaching staff which is mandatory to make improvements of the study courses correlation.

Strengths:

- High level professionals involved in the teaching process;
- High level contribution to the course description. Interesting practical tasks, good, latest literature
- Motivated, highly qualified academic staff
- Good cooperation between academic staff in case of overlapping of information (study courses vs study courses)

Weaknesses:

- The lack of scientific publications in the field of Transborder commercial law.
- Low level of academic staff involved in scientific research projects and other scientific activities

## **5. Assessment of the Compliance of the Study Programme "Transborder Commercial Law"**

### **Requirements**

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** According to the Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers no. 202 all criteria are fulfilled. RGSL provided Diploma shows that the sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme EU law and policy complies with the procedure by which state-recognised documents of higher education are issued. Technical clarification is needed that does not directly affect compliance - the translation of degree (ENG version) is different from Latvian version.

- 2 2. Documents confirming that the higher education institution/ college will provide the students with the options to continue the acquisition of education in another study programme or at another higher education institution/ college (a contract with another accredited higher education institution/ college), in case the implementation of the study programme is discontinued.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** Provide the students with the options to continue the acquisition of education in another study programme/ another higher education institution according to Agreement between the University of Latvia and Riga Graduate School of Law. Document Nr. 9.2.5./2019/02 (8 of November, 2019) Article 8.

- 3 3. Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college guarantees to the students a compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the higher education institution/ college (actions or failure to act) and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** According to RGSL Letter (Nr. 2.15n/119/19) from December 16, 2019 "On compensation guarantee to students" addressed to Quality Agency for Higher Education, as well as according to the Regulation of the Cabinet of ministers no. 795 RGSL guarantees to the students a compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the higher education institution and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme .

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** According to Letter from 2019 (Annex 19) "On language skills of RGSL teaching staff" and in SAR provided information 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. Annex confirms that all academic staff have English language knowledge from B2 to C2 levels.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** According to provided teaching staff CV and Annexes the requirements are met. The documents show that teaching staff have English language knowledge from B2 to C2 level

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

**Justification:** n/a

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** It is completely compliant as seen in the annex.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** According to RGSL Study agreement No M/2019 the sample of the study agreement complies with the mandatory provisions to be included in the study agreement. Technical clarification is needed that does not directly affect compliance - the translation of degree (ENG version) is different from Latvian version.

9 9. The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in all languages in which the study programme is implemented, and they comply with the requirements set forth in Section 56.1, Paragraph two and Section 56.2, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** The requirements are fulfilled. The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in English. and they comply with the requirements set Section 56 of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

**Justification:** N/A

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** From the RGSL annexes follows that On 20 August 2019, the Council of Higher Education received a request from RGSL asking for a CHE opinion about implementation of the academic master's programme "Transborder Commercial Law" for fewer than 250 full-time students. According to 22 august 2019 COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION opinion gave the support the launch of academic master's programme "Transborder Commercial Law", which is designed for fewer than 250 full-time students at RGSL.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** According to Annexs 13 "Compliance of the Transborder Commercial Law study programme" programme fully compliant with the national education standard.

13 13. The joint study programmes comply with the requirements prescribed in Section 551, Paragraphs one, two, and seven of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (if applicable).

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

**Justification:** n/a

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** According to the provided annexes and CV, the requirements are fulfilled. But, it shall be noted, that the scientific activity of the teachers (as well as visiting lecturers) can be higher. Only half of those teachers have published in high-ranking journals and in a considerable amount. The topics of teachers publications might be more relevant to represented course

15 P5 - Overall rating

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** The programme is compliant with the requirements.

## Requirements (R6-R8)

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** The requirements are fulfilled. Students have sufficient scientific material and technical support during their studies.

Everything necessary to achieve the learning outcomes has been provided. The only exception is books in the library that are mostly in one copy each, so if more than one student wants the book, each student can have it only for a short period of time, for example, one day. But there is option for the students to order the scan copy of necessary division of the book.

Some students also commented that now that more students are joining RGSL, the premises are becoming too small.

Admission procedure needs elaboration how applicants are ranked in case of competitions to ensure the transparency of the admission. Optional courses should be analysed and those which do not support directly the learning outcomes of the programme should be left out. In general, provided information complies with the requirements.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** The requirements are fulfilled. The qualification of the academic staff members, visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting docents, visiting lecturers, and visiting assistants met the necessary conditions. A total of 42 lecturers will participate in the implementation of the study programme: 1 lecturer, 2 assistant professors, 2 associate professors, 3 professors and 34 guest lecturers.

- 3 R8 - The study programme leading to the master or doctoral degree is based on the advances and findings in the relevant field of science or artistic creation.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** According to RGSL provided information, as well as SAR, the study programme Transborder commercial law is based on the advances and findings in the relevant field of law, what is assured by lecturers from the work environment (judges, etc.). However, to improve scientific value of the programme in the future, scientific publications in the field of Transborder commercial law should be increased.

## Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The goal and the tasks of the study programme TCL as well as the results of the study programme divided into knowledge, skills, and competences, are listed in detail. The amount of these specifications could be condensed and summarized. The programme compliance with the requirements prescribed in the Law on Institutions of Higher Education and other regulatory enactments. Content of the study programme is kept up-to-date. The premises for the library appeared to be quite moderate. The academic staff and students did not report any major shortcomings in the resources for research and teaching during the on-site visit.

Strengths:

1. The courses are high quality and content-filled
2. Appropriate compulsory courses
3. Student-centered teaching methods are used
4. Professional library and access to all required databases

5. Academical staff is very qualified, committed and engaged
6. Moodle system as a learning environment is highly appreciated by the students and lecturers as well.

Weaknesses:

1. Admission procedure is not transparent as there are no rules how applicants are evaluated in case of competition.
2. Limited programme-based research and low number of scientific publications among the teaching staff.
3. Different is approach to set the grading criteria

### **Evaluation of the study programme "Transborder Commercial Law"**

Evaluation of the study programme:

Excellent

### **6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Transborder Commercial Law"**

#### **Short-term recommendations**

Admission procedure needs elaboration how the applicants are ranked in case of competition to ensure the transparency of the admission.

It is necessary to update the list of mandatory courses available at the RGSL webpage so they correspond to the current curriculum of the programme Transborder Commercial Law

The quality of research part according to the tasks of the study programme shall be improved. The list of literature in at least mandatory courses shall be updated/refreshed. The novelty of the study courses (in the study course description include current information - new case law for example) shall be updated.

The title of the degree to be awarded in the study programme in English should be revised, aligning it with the title of the degree in Latvian.

#### **Long-term recommendations**

Ensure that students without legal academic background gain academic knowledge of law and legal research.

To try work to increase the number of students and their mobility in particular programme.

To work with the students and teaching staff with the aim to increase the number of scientific publications, specifically in the field Transborder Commercial Law (international trade, arbitration, and contract law etc.).

The number of visiting lecturers is high, but the number of permanent teaching staff is very low. Necessary increase the number of permanent academic staff. It will helps to develop the scientific and research part of the study programme.

## **II. "Public International Law and Human Rights" ASSESSMENT**

### **II. "Public International Law and Human Rights" ASSESSMENT**

## 1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

### Analysis

The academic legal masters' programme "Public International Law and Human Rights" (45380, 60 ECTS) provides in-depth understanding and knowledge of public international law and human rights law (SAR 156). It accepts students from various academic backgrounds and gives a well-structured overview of both international law and human rights law. Programme is available both in full-time (1 year) as well as part-time (2 years) mode. The number of students enrolled in the programme has in recent years decreased (SAR Annex 12). Half of the study content is designated for writing the masters thesis.

The title of the study programme corresponds to the degree to be obtained – the degree of the Master of Laws (LL.M.), indicating in the supplement of the diploma main fields of studies "Public International Law and Human Rights". Goals of the programme and learning outcomes are interrelated and correspond to the aims of the Study Field. The programme is interesting, well structured, and gives a balanced insights to both areas of law. Minimum requirements of the programme are clearly defined and appropriate (SAR Annex 13).

The RGSL study programme offers an in-depth intersectional understanding of public international law and human rights and focuses on recent legal developments in these fields. Additionally, the programme pays special attention to academic research and transferable skills (SAR 160). The programme is interdisciplinary (SAR 159). It includes two foundation courses, six mandatory courses and two optional courses. Mandatory courses include three courses dedicated to public international law and three courses focusing on human rights. Human rights courses are leaning towards the European human rights system. Such a balance between the two areas of law is appropriate and allows reaching the minimum study requirements of the programme. All of these courses are law courses. Thus, it remained unclear, what the interdisciplinary elements of the programme are.

The programme admits students from legal or the related background. During the in-site visits, the programme director explained that, when necessary, the students from the non-law background are supported by the faculty and visiting lecturers. However, there should be a more clear policy on how such students are supported to ensure that they receive sufficient knowledge of legal science and skills.

The programme involves well know and highly qualified academics. The teaching content is updated and the teaching methods used are suitable for the legal programme. The programme and the study content is periodically reviewed; there have not been any substantive new developments as compared to the previous evaluation period (SAR 159). Lecturers are encouraged to perform an assessment of the needs of the students at the beginning of the courses aimed, among others, at verifying their level of knowledge, skills and motivation to better tailor the courses according to the actual needs and expectations of the students. Students also complete exit surveys for the courses and the programme.

The programme involves well know and highly qualified academics. The teaching content is updated and the teaching methods used are suitable for the legal programme. Teaching methods used during in the courses vary and include independent work, group work, presentations, case studies, simulations and plenary discussions. Lecturers are encouraged to use case study methods and simulations. E-education methods or support is also used in all of the courses. The teaching methods depends on the specific characteristics of each course.

All the courses indicate the evaluation methods used. These vary between the courses. Evaluation often takes into account participation in classes, oral presentations, in class examinations etc. The course descriptions do not include specific subject related criteria and evaluation process.

The SAR does not indicate how students are selected when there are more applicants than available study places.

### **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

The study programme of "Public International Law and Human Rights" is a legal master's programme. The minimum content of the acquired international law and human rights skills are clearly defined. The programme is based on two introductory courses, six obligatory courses and two elective courses that give a well-balanced insight into both fields of law. The programme includes highly qualified permanent and visiting staff and provides up to date education.

Strengths:

1. This study programme draws together two interconnected fields and gives each student substantive and updated insight into these fields in a wide range of subjects. The program is demanding and interesting.
2. The programme involves highly qualified specialists and professionals.

Weaknesses:

1. There is limited information available on the precise teaching methods (SAR 161-62).
2. Evaluation process in specific courses could be more extensively described.
3. As this is an academic legal programme, the programme could make it more clear how it ensures that students from other backgrounds than the law are sufficiently familiarised with legal science and skills.

## **2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof**

### **Analysis**

The aims of the study programme are clearly defined, albeit remain general. The programme includes obligatory introductory courses, six mandatory and two elective courses on international and human rights law. These courses are clearly connected to the aims of the programme and while the human rights focus of the programme leans towards European human rights protection system, it also provides a good in-depth background to the workings of the international and regional international law and human rights law systems.

The descriptions of the content and study outcomes of the study courses and the thesis are generally of high quality and detailed. It is positive, that the courses included in the programme employ a variety of teaching and evaluation methods; often the evaluation of the study outcomes combines different evaluation methods, typically an essay and the exam.

Teaching and assessment methods are modern and appropriate. Students are supported with high-level e-learning environments as well as technical and scientific support. Student feedback is valued and taken into account when developing the curriculum. RGSL should ensure that the teaching materials used in the courses are regularly updated. Some obligatory courses include outdated literature and case-law. While the use of classical texts and case-law is justified in some cases, the teaching materials used in obligatory courses should necessarily reflect state of the art. The course material and case-law should in these cases be updated.

The programme has received fewer applicants in recent years and the programme has not gone through any recent developments (Study programme assessment III 1.1). It might be necessary to review the programme and include a more global approach to human rights in the study programme.

### **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

The aims of the study programme are clearly defined, albeit remain general. The programme includes obligatory introductory courses, six mandatory and two elective courses on international and human rights law.

Strengths:

1. These courses are clearly connected to the aims of the programme and while the human rights focus of the programme is Euro-centric, it provides a good in-depth background to the workings of the international and regional international law and human rights law systems.
2. Teaching and assessment methods are modern and appropriate.
3. Students are supported with high-level e-learning environments as well as technical and scientific support.
4. Student feedback is valued and taken into account when developing the curriculum.

Weaknesses:

1. The programme has received fewer applicants in recent years and the programme has not gone through any recent developments.
2. It might be necessary to review the programme and include a more global approach to human rights in the study programme.
3. Teaching materials and case-law used in some obligatory courses needs updating.

### **3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme**

#### **Analysis**

RGSL has all the necessary infrastructure - lecture halls, study rooms, a computer room, leisure rooms, a library (with computers available). The top floors are accessible for people with physical disabilities - they are supplied with special keys to call a special elevator.

All lecture halls are in very good technical condition and equipped with multimedia equipment and all other necessary equipment for the implementation of the study process. Wi-fi coverage is available in the RGSL building. RGSL students can also use the Stockholm School of Economics' library as the buildings are joined. Students can also order books from partner-universities.

Some course outlines enlist outdated reading material and older case-law. While using classical cases has its teaching value, the curricula should be reviewed to include state of art teaching materials and most relevant case-law.

### **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

All criteria have been met. The study provision, as well as scientific support, informative provision, as well as material and technical provision, financial provision comply with the specific features and the conditions for the implementation of the study programme.

Strengths:

1. Lecture and study halls are bright and comfortable. There are sufficient places for self-study.
2. The library has computers with shortcuts to all important databases. It is also quiet and

comfortable. There is a quiet room that students can reserve.

Weaknesses:

1. Most books have only one copy available so if several students need the same book they can only have it for a short period of time.
2. Some obligatory courses include outdated literature and case law. Such course curricula should be revised to reflect the state of the art.

#### **4. Teaching Staff**

##### **Analysis**

A total of 42 lecturers participate in the implementation of the study programme: 1 lecturer, 2 assistant professors, 2 associate professors, 3 professors and 34 guest lecturers (SAR 166). The study plan indicates that the programme includes different courses, where 31 lecturers have central responsibility. 20 of them have doctoral degrees. RGSL promotes and implements a fair and transparent recruitment and development process for its teaching staff.

According to SAR 166, academic staff participating in the implementation of the study programme are closely examined by assessing their competence, research activities and teaching experience in the relevant field. It is less clear, how such an assessment is conducted. There are some cases, where the scientific articles written by the academic staff are not connected to the study course they teach. This is not a problem for general or introductory courses but might be more relevant for specialised courses.

RGSL aims to promote the professional development of the teaching staff (SAR 166). This is not fully reflected in the scientific results of the academic staff, which could include more recent and extensive research. RGSL stimulates academic initiatives to allow that its teaching staff develops research initiatives and links their outputs to the study process, but the number of publications is small.

##### **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

The teaching staff includes highly qualified legal scholars, most of whom have a doctoral degree. The qualification of the teaching staff members involved complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme and enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses.

Strengths:

1. Lecturers are supported with appropriate workshops.
2. RGSL has a good motivation policy that supports higher involvement and improvement of research of the academic staff.

Weaknesses:

1. Visiting lecturers are not motivated to write scientific publications and bring this scientific knowledge into the classroom.
2. Involvement of the administrative staff in the research process could be more extensive.

#### **5. Assessment of the Compliance of the Study Programme "Public International Law and Human Rights"**

##### **Requirements**

- 1 1. The sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme complies with the procedure by which state-recognised documents of higher education are issued.  
**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant  
**Justification:** According to the Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers no. 202 all criteria are fulfilled. RGSL provided Diploma shows that the sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme EU law and policy complies with the procedure by which state-recognised documents of higher education are issued. Technical clarification is needed that does not directly affect compliance - the translation of degree (ENG version) is different from Latvian version.
- 2 2. Documents confirming that the higher education institution/ college will provide the students with the options to continue the acquisition of education in another study programme or at another higher education institution/ college (a contract with another accredited higher education institution/ college), in case the implementation of the study programme is discontinued.  
**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant  
**Justification:** Provide the students with the options to continue the acquisition of education in another study programme/ another higher education institution according to Agreement between the University of Latvia and Riga Graduate School of Law. Document Nr. 9.2.5./2019/02 (8 of November, 2019) Article 6.
- 3 3. Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college guarantees to the students a compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the higher education institution/ college (actions or failure to act) and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme.  
**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant  
**Justification:** According to RGSL Letter (Nr. 2.15n/119/19) from December 16, 2019 "On compensation guarantee to students" addressed to Quality Agency for Higher Education RGSL guarantees to the students a compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the higher education institution and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme.
- 4 4. The teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme are proficient in the official language in accordance with the regulations on the level of the official language knowledge and the procedures for testing official language proficiency for performing professional duties and office duties.  
**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant  
**Justification:** According on Law of Riga Graduate School of Law section 25 -"The personnel of the School shall not be subject to the statutory requirements concerning proficiency in the official language." Annex 19 confirms that all academic staff have English language knowledge from B2 to C2 levels.
- 5 5. The teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language, if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language.  
**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant  
**Justification:** According to provided teaching staff CV and Annexes, the requirements are fulfilled. The documents show that teaching staff have English language knowledge from B2 to C2 level.
- 6 6. At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of an academic doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field of science. At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a professional doctoral study programme in arts.  
**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant  
**Justification:** N/A

- 7 7. The academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements set forth in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.  
**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant  
**Justification:** The requirements are fulfilled according to the documentation provided.
- 8 8. The sample of the study agreement complies with the mandatory provisions to be included in the study agreement.  
**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant  
**Justification:** The sample of the study agreement complies with the mandatory requirements. Technical clarification is needed that does not directly affect compliance - the translation of degree (ENG version) is different from Latvian version.
- 9 9. The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in all languages in which the study programme is implemented, and they comply with the requirements set forth in Section 56.1, Paragraph two and Section 56.2, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.  
**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant  
**Justification:** The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in English and in Latvian. They are compliant with the said paragraphs of the Law.
- 10 10. The study programme complies with the valid professional standard or the requirements for the professional qualification (if there is no professional standard required for the relevant occupation) provided that the completion of the study programme leads to a professional qualification.  
**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant  
**Justification:** N/A
- 11 11. Academic study programmes provided for less than 250 full-time students may be implemented and less than five professors and associated professors of the higher education institution may be involved in the implementation of the mandatory and limited elective part of these study programmes provided that the relevant opinion of the Council for Higher Education has been received in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.  
**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant  
**Justification:** The requirements are fulfilled. According to the submitted documents, the relevant opinion of the Council for Higher Education has been received in accordance with Section 55(2) of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.
- 12 12. The study programme complies with the State Academic Education Standard or the Professional Higher Education Standard.  
**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant  
**Justification:** According to Annex 13 "Compliance of the study programme, Public International Law and Human Rights with the national education standard" programme is fully compliant with the national education standard.
- 13 13. The joint study programmes comply with the requirements prescribed in Section 55, Paragraphs one, two, and seven of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (if applicable).  
**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant  
**Justification:** N/A
- 14 14. Each member of the academic staff has either publications published in reviewed editions within the last six years, including international editions (if they have worked for a shorter period of time, the number of publications shall be in proportion to the work period), or artistic creation achievements (for instance, exhibitions, films, theatre performances, and concert activity), or a five-year practical work experience (except for the experience in the implementation of the study programme) in accordance with the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.  
**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** According to the provided annexes and CV, the requirements are fulfilled. But, it shall be noted, that the scientific activity of the teachers (as well as visiting lecturers) can be higher. Only half of those teachers have published in high-ranking journals and in a considerable amount. The topics of teachers publications might be more relevant to represented course

15 P5 - Overall rating

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** In general, the programme is compliant with the requirements.

## Requirements (R6-R8)

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** The requirements are fulfilled. Students have sufficient scientific material and technical support during their studies.

Everything necessary to achieve the learning outcomes has been provided. The only exception is books in the library that are mostly in one copy each, so if more than one student wants the book, each student can have it only for a short period of time, for example, one day. But there is option for the students to order the scan copy of necessary division of the book.

Some students also commented that now that more students are joining RGSL, the premises are becoming too small.

Admission procedure needs elaboration how applicants are ranked in case of competitions to ensure the transparency of the admission. Optional courses should be analysed and those which do not support directly the learning outcomes of the programme should be left out. In general, provided information complies with the requirements.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** The requirements are fulfilled. The qualification of the academic staff members, visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting docents, visiting lecturers, and visiting assistants met the necessary conditions. More than half of the teaching staff has a PhD.

- 3 R8 - The study programme leading to the master or doctoral degree is based on the advances and findings in the relevant field of science or artistic creation.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** The requirements are fulfilled. The curriculums of the courses are relevant and include the latest developments in Public international law and Human rights

## Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The programme complies with the requirements prescribed in the Law on Institutions of Higher Education and other regulatory enactments. The programme is well structured and has a clear focus. The SAR notes that this programme is interdisciplinary. This is not evident in the programme structure. The decreasing number of students shows the need to review and update the programme.

Strengths:

- The courses have high quality and are content-filled and updated.
- The programme structure with six mandatory courses give a balanced insight to both areas of law covered in the programme.

- Teaching uses student-centred teaching and evaluation methods.
- RGSL has a professional library and access to all required databases relevant to the two areas of law.
- Academic staff included in the mandatory courses have high

Weaknesses:

- Some of the mandatory courses do not rely on the state of the art and require updating.
- Academic staff included in the programme could be more active in research.
- Aims of the programme could be more elaborated.
- The number of students enrolled in the programme is decreasing. The study programme should be updated to appeal to more future applicants.

## Evaluation of the study programme "Public International Law and Human Rights"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Excellent

## 6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Public International Law and Human Rights"

### Short-term recommendations

Develop more detailed description of the aims of the programme.

Clarify to what extent this programme is interdisciplinary and what additional interdisciplinary knowledge and skills the students acquire.

Admission procedure needs elaboration how the applicants are ranked in case of competition to ensure the transparency of the admission.

Clarify, whether the programme focuses on European law or EU law and use the term consistently throughout the programme related materials.

### Long-term recommendations

Analyse the decreasing interests in the programme and evaluate whether a more global approach to international human rights could benefit the programme.

Ensure that students without legal academic background gain academic knowledge of law and legal research.

Regularly update the course content and ensure that they reflect the latest case-law and the state of the art.

Encourage visiting lecturers to further participate in training programmes as well as conduct research on their subject field.

## II. "International and EU Law" ASSESSMENT

### II. "International and EU Law" ASSESSMENT

#### 1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

## Analysis

"International law and European (EU) law" academic legal master's programme (45380; 60 ECTS) provides in-depth theoretical knowledge of international law and the EU law (SAR p 141). Half of the study content is designated for writing the thesis (30 ECTS). The number of students enrolled in the programme has slowly increased (SAR Annex 12).

The name of the programme in different documents varies - in SAR p 15 and at the RGSL website, the programme's name is "International and European Law", whereas, in the programme description, its name is "International and EU law" (SAR p 141). These different names promise different substance; it is unclear whether the programme covers European law in a wider sense or EU law in a particular sense. RGSL could make it less ambiguous and more clearly define the scope and aims of the programme as relates to European or EU law.

The RGSL study programme offers in-depth law courses relating to recent legal developments, as well as pays additional attention to academic research and transferable skills (SAR 146-47). The programme includes introductory courses and two obligatory courses introducing International Law and EU Constitutional Law (a change that was enforced after the submission of the SAR). The programme includes a high level of flexibility and allows the students to choose the precise content of their studies. During the on-site visit, the students appreciated such flexibility and the possibility to guide their own study process. On the one hand, such flexibility is appealing to students who can tailor the programme according to their interests. On the other hand, the high level of flexibility of the programme does not guarantee consistent and comprehensive knowledge of both areas of law.

Goals of the programme and learning outcomes are interrelated and correspond to the aim of the Study Field. However, the description of the study programme remains general; it is unclear what precise knowledge and skills the students acquire from these combined legal fields and what is the minimum expected level of knowledge of European / EU law after the completion of studies. SAR Annex 13 notes that the minimum content the students receive relates to international law. There is no minimum content indicated relating to EU/European law. The new obligatory course on EU Constitutional law helps to provide a more balanced approach to these subjects and helps to ensure that the students also have a minimum level of knowledge in EU law. Nevertheless, the minimum expected level of knowledge should also include EU/European law.

The programme involves well know and highly qualified academics. The teaching content is updated and the teaching methods used are suitable for the legal programme. Teaching in the courses varies and include independent work of students, group work, presentations, case studies, simulations and plenary discussions. Lecturers are encouraged to use case analyses and simulations of different situations and scenarios. E-education methods or support is also used in all of the courses. The teaching methods depend on the specific characteristics of each course.

All the courses indicate the evaluation methods used. These vary between the courses. Evaluation often takes into account participation in classes, oral presentations, in-class examinations etc. The course descriptions do not include specific subject related criteria and evaluation process.

The programme and the study content is periodically reviewed and developed. As an example, from 2020, the programme includes two new obligatory courses: International law and EU constitutional law. Lecturers are encouraged to perform an assessment of the needs of the students at the beginning of the courses aimed, among others, at verifying their level of knowledge, skills and motivation to better tailor the courses according to the actual needs and expectations of the

students. Students also complete exit surveys for the courses and the programme.

The programme admits students from legal or the related background. As this is an intersectional law programme that does not focus on interdisciplinarity, it could be more clear whether the introductory courses of the programme give sufficient legal background for the students without prior background in law. After the submission of the SAR, the programme has developed further, and it now includes two additional obligatory courses - International law and EU constitutional law. These two courses support the students in gaining further insight into legal methods and law in general. During the in-site visits, the programme director explained that, when necessary, the students from the non-law background are supported by the faculty and visiting lecturers. However, there should be a more clear policy on how such students are supported to ensure that they receive sufficient knowledge of legal science and skills.

The SAR does not indicate how students are selected when there are more applicants than available study places.

### **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

The study programme of "International Law and EU law" is a legal master's programme. While the minimum content of the acquired international law skills is defined, the precise focus of EU / European law is less clearly defined. The programme is based on four introductory courses and two obligatory courses and allows students to tailor their precise study content based on their interests. The programme includes highly qualified permanent and visiting staff and provides up to date education.

Strengths:

1. This study programme draws together two strongly related fields and gives each student insight into these fields in a wide range of subjects. The program is demanding and interesting.
2. The programme involves highly qualified specialists and professionals (I.Rüse, M.Mits etc.).
3. The programme includes a high level of flexibility where the students can choose their study content from a range of areas, provided that they complete the two introductory courses and the two obligatory courses that give an introduction to both international law and EU law.

Weaknesses:

1. The name of the programme differs in documents and should be unified to show whether its focus is on European or EU law.
2. The minimum content of EU/European law should be more clearly indicated.
3. While the high level of flexibility allows the students to tailor their study content, it might not guarantee a consistently high level of knowledge in both of the legal fields included in the programme.
4. There is limited information available on the precise teaching methods.
5. Evaluation process in specific courses could be more extensively described.
6. As this is an academic legal programme, the programme could make it more clear how it ensures that students from other backgrounds than the law are sufficiently familiarised with legal science and skills.

## **2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof**

### **Analysis**

The descriptions of the content and study outcomes of the study courses and the thesis are generally of high quality but for some courses, they remain general in their nature. As the

programme is an academic legal masters programme, all the study outcomes should also reflect the legal knowledge, competencies and skills the courses provide. It is positive, that the courses included in the programme employ a variety of teaching methods; often the evaluation of the study outcomes combines different evaluation methods, typically an essay and the exam.

The programme is constantly evaluated and as of 2020, it guarantees that the programme includes obligatory introductory courses on both of the legal fields of the programme. The students have the right and opportunity to give feedback both to individual courses and lecturers as well as to the study programme in general. This feedback is used to further develop the programme.

The course content is flexible and the students can take up a wide range of courses, some of which are not directly connected to international law or European/ EU law. The SAR does not provide full justification for this. There is some content that could be added to the programme e.g. legal remedies in EU law. However, the students showed their appreciation to the high flexibility of the studies and to the fact that they are able to take courses that interests them. The study implementation methods are appropriate and support the academic character of the programme. The programme in principle allows both full time and part-time participation. However, the programme description currently indicates that the programme is available as a one-year academic programme. The short term of studies explains, why the students are not participating in mobility opportunities.

### **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

The descriptions of the study courses and the thesis are of high quality but in places remain general in their nature. The programme is constantly evaluated and as of 2020, it guarantees also obligatory introductory courses on both of the fields the programme covers.

Strengths:

1. The teaching and evaluation methods of courses are appropriate and support the academic character of the programme. As this is mainly a one year Masters programme, the students are not participating in mobility opportunities.
2. The programme includes two obligatory courses that substantively introduce both of the legal fields to the students.
3. Teaching staff is highly qualified.

Weaknesses:

1. Flexibility of the programme does not ensure equal attention to both legal areas of the programme.
2. The students can take up a wide range of courses, some of which are not directly connected to international law or European/ EU law.
3. Study outcomes remain at times general and do not indicate the legal knowledge, competencies and skills the courses provide.

### **3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme**

#### **Analysis**

RGSL has all the necessary infrastructure - lecture halls, study rooms, a computer room, leisure rooms, a library (with computers available). The top floors are accessible for people with physical disabilities - they are supplied with special keys to call a special elevator.

All lecture halls are in very good technical condition and equipped with multimedia equipment and

all other necessary equipment for the implementation of the study process. Wi-fi coverage is available in the RGSL building. RGSL students can also use the Stockholm School of Economics' library as the buildings are joined. Students can also order books from partner-universities.

It was confirmed by students during the on-site visit that during an outbreak of COVID pandemic the online access to databases, resources and materials was of great importance and help to assure continuity of teaching and learning.

The scientific and technical support provided for the students, including the internet study environment is of very high quality and support studying. The lecturers have high qualifications in the field and are recognised legal scholars. All necessary infrastructure and resources are available for the study programme. The latest literature on international and EU law is regularly updated in order to provide the most up-to-date scientific and educational literature on various aspects of the subject. The students benefit from close contacts with visiting lecturers coming from other academic institutions.

### **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

All criteria have been met.

Strengths:

- Bright and comfortable lecture and study halls. There are a lot of places for self-study. The library has computers with shortcuts to all important databases. It is also quiet and comfortable. There is a quiet room that students can reserve if needed.
- During the COVID pandemic, online access to databases, resources and materials was of great importance and help to assure continuity of teaching and learning.
- The scientific and technical support provided for the students, including the internet study environment is of very high quality and support studying.
- The lecturers have high qualifications in the field and are mostly recognised scholars.

Weaknesses:

- Most books have only one copy available so if several students need the same book they can loan it only for a short period of time, for example, a day, which in most cases is not enough for thorough work and examination.

## **4. Teaching Staff**

### **Analysis**

SAR notes that a total of 42 lecturers participate in the implementation of the study programme (SAR p 152). The study plan indicates that the programme includes different courses, where 31 lecturers have central responsibility. 20 of them have doctoral degrees.

Majority of the lecturers are external; they have a high level of competence both in international law and human rights law, as well as EU law. As discussed under the indicators, the study programme (SAR Annex 13) does not specify whether the programme focuses on European law in general or on EU law. Further support could be given for developing a more comprehensive EU law curriculum that would cover more areas of EU law. Nevertheless, the teaching staff has appropriate qualifications and their study methods and outcomes are constantly evaluated.

RGSL aims to promote the professional development of the teaching staff (SAR 152). This is not fully

reflected in the scientific results of the academic staff, which could include more recent and extensive research. RGSL stimulates academic initiatives to allow that its teaching staff develops research initiatives and links their outputs to the study process, but the number of publications is small.

### **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

The teaching staff includes highly qualified legal scholars, most of whom have a doctoral degree. The qualification of the teaching staff members involved complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme and enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses.

Strengths:

- Lecturers are supported with appropriate workshops.
- RGSL has a good motivation policy that supports higher involvement and improvement of research of the academic staff.

Weaknesses:

- Visiting lecturers are not motivated to write scientific publications and bring this scientific knowledge into the classroom.
- Involvement of the administrative staff in the research process could be more extensive.
- Further support could be given for developing a more comprehensive EU law curriculum that would cover more areas of EU law.

## **5. Assessment of the Compliance of the Study Programme "International and EU Law"**

### **Requirements**

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** According to the Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers no. 202 all criteria are fulfilled. RGSL provided Diploma shows that the sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme EU law and policy complies with the procedure by which state-recognised documents of higher education are issued. Technical clarification is needed that does not directly affect compliance - the translation of degree (ENG version) is different from Latvian version.

2. Documents confirming that the higher education institution/ college will provide the students with the options to continue the acquisition of education in another study programme or at another higher education institution/ college (a contract with another accredited higher education institution/ college), in case the implementation of the study programme is discontinued.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** Provide the students with the options to continue the acquisition of education in another study programme/ another higher education institution according to Agreement between the University of Latvia and Riga Graduate School of Law. Document Nr. 9.2.5./2019/02 (8 of November, 2019) Article 4.

3. Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college guarantees to the students a compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the higher education institution/ college (actions or failure to act) and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** According to RGSL Letter (Nr. 2.15n/119/19) from December 16, 2019 "On compensation guarantee to students" addressed to Quality Agency for Higher Education RGSL guarantees to the students a compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the higher education institution and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** According on Law of Riga Graduate School of Law section 25 -"The personnel of the School shall not be subject to the statutory requirements concerning proficiency in the official language." Annex 19 confirms that all academic staff have English language knowledge from B2 to C2 levels.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** According to provided teaching staff CV and Annexes, the requirements are fulfilled. The documents show that teaching staff have English language knowledge from B2 to C2 level.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

**Justification:** N/A

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** The requirements are fulfilled according to the documentation provided.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** The sample of the study agreement complies with the mandatory requirements. Technical clarification is needed that does not directly affect compliance - the translation of degree (ENG version) is different from Latvian version

- 9 9. The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in all languages in which the study programme is implemented, and they comply with the requirements set forth in Section 56.1, Paragraph two and Section 56.2, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in English and in Latvian. They are compliant with the said paragraphs of the Law.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

**Justification:** N/A

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** The requirements are fulfilled. According to the submitted documents, the relevant opinion of the Council for Higher Education has been received in accordance with Section 55(2) of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** According to Annex 13 "Compliance of the study programme International and European Law with the national education standard" programme is fully compliant with the national education standard.

13 13. The joint study programmes comply with the requirements prescribed in Section 551, Paragraphs one, two, and seven of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (if applicable).

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

**Justification:** N/A

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** According to the provided annexes and CV, the requirements are fulfilled. But, it shall be noted, that the scientific activity of the teachers (as well as visiting lecturers) can be higher. Only half of those teachers have published in high-ranking journals and in a considerable amount. The topics of teachers publications might be more relevant to represented course

15 P5 - Overall rating

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** In general, the programme is compliant with the requirements.

## Requirements (R6-R8)

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** The requirements are fulfilled. Students have sufficient scientific material and technical support during their studies.

Everything necessary to achieve the learning outcomes has been provided. The only exception is books in the library that are mostly in one copy each, so if more than one student wants the book, each student can have it only for a short period of time, for example, one day. But there is option for the students to order the scan copy of necessary division of the book.

Some students also commented that now that more students are joining RGSL, the premises are becoming too small.

Admission procedure needs elaboration how applicants are ranked in case of competitions to ensure the transparency of the admission. Optional courses should be analysed and those which do not support directly the learning outcomes of the programme should be left out. In general, provided information complies with the requirements.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** The requirements are fulfilled. The qualification of the academic staff members, visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting docents, visiting lecturers, and visiting assistants met the necessary conditions. More than half of the teaching staff has PhD.

- 3 R8 - The study programme leading to the master or doctoral degree is based on the advances and findings in the relevant field of science or artistic creation.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** The requirements are fulfilled. The curriculums of the courses are relevant and include the latest developments in international and EU law.

## Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The programme complies with the requirements prescribed in the Law on Institutions of Higher Education and other regulatory enactments.

Strengths:

1. The courses have high quality and are content-filled and updated.
2. Two mandatory courses give an introduction to both areas of law covered in the programme.
3. Teaching uses Student-centered teaching methods.
4. RGSL has a professional library and access to all required databases relevant to the two areas of law.

Weaknesses:

1. Name of the programme varies in different documents. It is unclear, whether the programme's focus is on European law in the wider sense or EU law in the strict sense.
2. The minimum required content of the EU/European law is not defined.
3. The study programme connects two areas of law but does not require the students to have equal attention to both areas of law.
4. The programme is tilted towards public international law, there are fewer courses available on European/EU law.

## Evaluation of the study programme "International and EU Law"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Excellent

## 6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "International and EU Law"

### Short-term recommendations

Ensure consistency of the name of the programme.
Clarify the minimum requirements for both international law and European / EU law.
Develop a more detailed description of the aims of the programme and specific knowledge and skills acquired that better reflects the content of the course.
Admission procedure needs elaboration how the applicants are ranked in case of competition to ensure the transparency of the admission.

### Long-term recommendations

Ensure that students without legal academic background gain academic knowledge of law and legal research.
Monitor whether the current system of 2 topical obligatory courses is sufficient to gain balanced insight and theoretical knowledge for both areas of law.
Increase students' international mobilities

## II. "Law and Technology" ASSESSMENT

### II. "Law and Technology" ASSESSMENT

#### 1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

##### Analysis

Name of the Study programme Law and Technology accords to the goal of the programme. Programme is offered as 1-year full time studies 60 ECT, and as 2-years part time studies 60 ECT. After graduation the degree acquired is Masters of law LL.M. The title of the degree to be awarded in English does not coincide with the title of the degree in Latvian. Goal of the programme and learning outcomes are interrelated and accord to the aim of the Study Field. Professional qualification acquired, the aims, objectives and learning outcomes are interrelated. Programme has interdisciplinary approach and is needed in the contemporary labour market. Flexibility in master studies by offering 1-year and 2-year studies is a good practice as it affords working students also apply to the programme. Admission requirement for the programme are rather flexible - one can come to study in the programme also from other fields than law, only the bachelor degree with specific amount of ECTS are required and the previous education should be if not law then law related fields. Even though the programme has 3 ECT course about introduction to law and legal research methodology it raises a question how well can students manage with limited knowledge in law. However, visiting meetings did not give evidence that there are problems concerning this. Additionally to specific bachelor degree a certificate of proficiency in English is required. As the programme is a specific programme a question raises about the motivation of applicants to study in this programme. Motivation letter or interview with the applicants would give RGSL and to the applicant as well the knowledge whether this applicant is suitable and motivated to study in the programme.

Admission procedure does not have rules for the situations when there is a competition between the applicant. Even though the Rules of Admission and Order of Matriculation (Academic Year

2020/2021) article 3.12. provides that the Admissions Committee reserves the right to invite applicants for individual interviews and article 4.1 that the final decision for admission is taken by the Admissions Committee there are missing the criteria Committee evaluates in the interview when deciding which candidate is suitable for the programme. Such criteria are important also because there is no limit for accepted students in the programme.

### **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

The name of the Study programme accords to the goal of the programme. The aims, objectives and learning outcomes, degree and the professional qualification are interrelated. The title of the degree to be awarded in English does not coincide with the title of the degree in Latvian. Also, admission procedure needs elaboration as the criteria deciding which students are suitable for the programme is needed to ensure the transparency in the admission process. Programme is very useful in labour market. Flexibility in master studies by offering 1-year and 2-year studies is a good practice as it affords working students also apply to the programme.

Strengths:

1. Programme is very useful in current labour market.
2. Flexibility in master studies by offering 1-year and 2-year studies is a good practice as it affords working students also apply to the programme.

Weaknesses:

1. Admission procedure needs elaboration as the criteria deciding which students is suitable for the programme is needed to ensure the transparency in the admission process.
2. The title of the degree to be awarded in English does not coincide with the title of the degree in Latvian

## **2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof**

### **Analysis**

The descriptions of the study courses/ modules, and the final thesis are of high quality and comply with the provisions set forth in the regulatory enactments. Outlines of study courses are informative, including study aims and descriptions of course plans, literature etc. The content of compulsory courses is relevant and complementary and complies with the aim of the Study programme, ensures the achievement of the learning outcomes, and meets in general the needs of labour market considering technological development and scientific trends in the field of law and technology. Programme consists also the courses 'Civil Protection' and 'Environmental Protection'. In the visiting meeting it was explained that the schedules are organised so that students of one programme cannot take any courses they want. However, if the programme itself consists all the Study Field courses as optional courses and the choices are regulated by the schedule then a question of transparency of the programme can be raised. The amount of optional courses should be reduced and they must clearly support the learning outcomes of the specific programme. The director regularly reminds all teaching staff of the aims, objectives and outcomes of the programme, thereby ensuring that the study process is organised in such a way as to achieve the results of the study programme. The settings of the study programmes are clarified at the beginning of the academic year by organising a workshop for lecturers. (visiting meetings) According to the SAR (p. 85) the programme includes fundamental basic courses common to the similar Study programmes in Europe. Also, this programme provides added value by offering in-depth law courses related to recent technological development, as well as by paying additional attention to academic research and transferable skills. However, the data of the research did not show considerable research of the university in law and technology. According to the SER report (SER p.87) evaluation criteria and

methods are clarified in advance and published in the Student Regulations, the criteria for evaluating courses are set out in the description of each course. The study courses more related to technology than law topic. There is lack of specific literature on particular topic. Course descriptions do consist evaluation methods: essay, assignment, test. But the evaluation criteria is missing. Every course description has a general evaluation table with percentages and according knowledge and skills student must grant but this table is not related to the specific evaluation methods provided by the percentages of the total grade. In several courses the only evaluation method 'essay' raises a questions whether this is the most suitable form of evaluating the granting of the learning outcomes, e.g. Introductory/Foundation course etc. Programme has student-centered learning and teaching principles (visiting meetings). The outcomes of the surveys conducted among the students, employers, and graduates are used to improve the quality of studies (SAR p. 10, 13, 26, 28, 87, 88, 89). Feedback about the programme and courses are collected regularly from the employers and students (SAR p. 89). In academic year 2019/2020 13 students have been enrolled, 1 of them from Russia and 1 from Turkey. Outgoing mobility has not yet taken place.

### **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

The descriptions of the study courses/ modules, and the final thesis are of high quality and comply with the provisions set forth in the regulatory enactments. The content is relevant and complementary, and it complies with the aims of the study programme, ensures the achievement of the learning outcomes, and meets the needs of the relevant industry and the scientific trends. Outlines of the courses are informative, including study aims and descriptions of course plans, literature etc. However, if the programme itself consists all the Study Field courses as optional courses and the choices are regulated by the schedule then a question of transparency of the programme can be raised. Also, optional courses should clearly support the learning outcomes of this specific programme.

In general, the study implementation methods, including the evaluation methods, contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study courses and the study programme. However, evaluation methods and criteria used for each method need to be analysed and corrected. In learning student-centered teaching is used.

There are surveys among students and employers carried out regularly to support the development and quality of the programme.

As the programme has just opened, there is no data about incoming and outgoing mobility. Number of students in the programme is average 13 students, only 2 of them are from abroad.

Strengths:

1. Innovative and attractive content of the programme, useful for the labour market.
2. Student-centered teaching.

Weaknesses:

1. Too many optional courses, not all of them support granting the learning outcomes of this specific programme.
2. Evaluation criteria do not accord to the evaluation methods.
3. The study courses more related to technology than law topic. There is lack of specific literature on particular topic.

## **3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme**

### **Analysis**

RGSL has an excellent library with latest literature, access to good databases but there is too few books about law and technology. RGSL has all the necessary infrastructure - lecture rooms, study rooms, computer room, leisure rooms, a library (with computers available). The top floors are accessible for people with disability issues - they are supplied with special keys to call a special elevator. All auditoriums are in very good technical condition and equipped with multimedia equipment and all other necessary equipment for the implementation of the study process. Wi-fi coverage is available in the RGSL building. RGSL students can also use Stockholm School of Economics' library as the buildings are joined.

Students can also order books from partner-universities if they need to. A large digital database collection is available that is mostly used by bachelors students and is especially helpful in writing their thesis. There are only one copy of the books in the library, so if multiple students need the same book they can only have it for a short period of time.

### **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

In general, the study provision, scientific support, informative provision, material and technical provision, and financial provision comply with the specific features and the conditions for the implementation of the study programme, create the prerequisites for the achievement of the learning outcomes, and indicate the possibility to ensure a high-quality study process also in the future. RGSL has an excellent library with the latest literature, access to good databases but few books in law and technology field. In the building there are lecture rooms, study rooms, computer room, leisure room with appropriate good technical equipment. However, in the library most books are only one copy so if multiple students need the same book they can only have it for a short period of time. Also, there is a lack of books related to law and technology.

Strengths:

1. The bright and comfortable lecture and study halls. There are a lot of places for self study. The library has computers with shortcuts to all important databases. It is also quiet and comfortable. There is a quiet room that students can reserve if needed.

Weaknesses:

1. Most books are in only one copy each so if multiple students need the same book they can only have it for a short period of time, for example, a day, which in most cases is not enough for thorough work and examination. But this do no affects the study process directly.
2. Lack of books related to law in technology field.

## **4. Teaching Staff**

### **Analysis**

In general, RGLS undertakes measures in a target-oriented manner to avoid negative effects on the quality of the implementation of the study programme and the compliance of the study programme with the requirements set forth in the regulatory enactments, as a result of the changes in the composition of the teaching staff. However, there are no clear measures/procedure to avoid negative effects on the quality of the implementation of the study programme as a result of the changes in the composition of the teaching staff. In the meeting with Directors it was said that the quality doesn't change when teaching staff does because all of them are qualified and hand picked. The qualification of the teaching staff members involved complies with the requirements for the implementation of Study programme and enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the Study programme and the relevant Study courses. RGSL promotes and implements a fair and transparent recruitment and development process for its teaching staff (SAP p. 90). There are 41 teachers in the programme (SAR p. 92). SAP does not give division of teachers between the academic positions and visiting lecture positions. Based on the annex compulsory courses (A part)

are given by visiting lectures. Most of the teachers have PhD. Only half of the teachers of compulsory courses have considerable amount of scientific publications. Some have few and some none. Report and visiting meeting did not give evidence how much information obtained from the research has been used in the teaching. In the Report only two teachers have been brought out – Ineta Ziemele and George Ulrich but only Ineta Ziemele is a responsible teacher of the course Introductory Foundation, however, this course is not programme specific course. In the Report also Ingrida Karina-Berzina has mentioned who gives 2 programme-based course but she has only few scientific publications. There is no clear mechanism for mutual collaboration between the teaching staff. There are no documents provided information unclear mechanism for collaboration between the teaching staff. It has been mentioned in the visit meeting that there are workshops for the staff and that courses are interrelated but it is unclear how good and cultivated is the communication between the staff. Teaching staff do not have enough publications on law in technology.

### **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

In general, RGSL undertakes measures in a target-oriented manner to avoid negative effects on the quality of the implementation of the study programme and the compliance of the study programme with the requirements set forth in the regulatory enactments, as a result of the changes in the composition of the teaching staff. But, there are no clear measures/procedure to avoid negative effects on the quality of the implementation of the study programme as a result of the changes in the composition of the teaching staff. In the meeting with Directors it was said that the quality doesn't change when teaching staff does because all of them are qualified and hand picked. The qualification of the teaching staff members involved complies with the requirements for the implementation of study programme and enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses in general. The academic staff is not sufficiently involved in scientific research both at national and international level. Only half of the teachers of compulsory courses have considerable amount of scientific publications. Some have few and some none. The obtained information is still used in the study process. The mechanism for mutual collaboration between the teaching staff members in place, which contributes to the improvement of the study courses/ modules and their correlation, is unclear. There are workshops for teachers but it is unclear how good and cultivated is the communication between the teaching staff.

Strengths:

1. Many teachers with PhD.

Weaknesses:

1. There are no clear measures/procedure to avoid negative effects on the quality of the implementation of the study programme as a result of the changes in the composition of the teaching staff.
2. Few academic publications in law and technology.
3. There is no clear mechanism for mutual collaboration between the teaching staff.

## **5. Assessment of the Compliance of the Study Programme "Law and Technology"**

### **Requirements**

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** According to the Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers no. 202 all criteria are fulfilled. RGSL provided Diploma shows that the sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme Law and Technology complies with the procedure by which state-recognised documents of higher education are issued. Technical clarification is needed that does not directly affect compliance - the translation of degree (ENG version) is different from Latvian version.

- 2 2. Documents confirming that the higher education institution/ college will provide the students with the options to continue the acquisition of education in another study programme or at another higher education institution/ college (a contract with another accredited higher education institution/ college), in case the implementation of the study programme is discontinued.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** An agreement with University of Latvia has been signed. This agreement ensures that should the programme "Law and technology" be discontinued, the students will be able to keep studying in University of Latvia, programme "Law". Document Nr. 9.2s.5./2018/01/A (8 of March, 2018) Article 1

- 3 3. Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college guarantees to the students a compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the higher education institution/ college (actions or failure to act) and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** According to RGSL Letter (Nr. 2.15n/119/19) from December 16, 2019 "On compensation guarantee to students" addressed to Quality Agency for Higher Education RGSL guarantees to the students a compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the higher education institution and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** According on Law of Riga Graduate School of Law section 25 -"The personnel of the School shall not be subject to the statutory requirements concerning proficiency in the official language." Annex 19 confirms that all academic staff have English language knowledge from B2 to C2 levels.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** Annex 19 confirms that all academic staff have English language knowledge from B2 to C2 levels.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

**Justification:** N/A

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** It is fully compliant as seen in the annex

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** The sample of the study agreement complies with the mandatory requirements. Technical clarification is needed that does not directly affect compliance - the translation of degree (ENG version) is different from Latvian version.

- 9 9. The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in all languages in which the study programme is implemented, and they comply with the requirements set forth in Section 56.1, Paragraph two and Section 56.2, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** Descriptions are prepared in English language, which is the study language. They are compliant with the said paragraphs of the Law. Course outlines need elaboration in evaluation criteria for each evaluation method and grade.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

**Justification:** N/A

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** Council of Higher Education had decided to support the implementation of study programme Law and technology in accordance with the law. Document from 22.08.2019 in the annexes.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** It meets the standards and criteria as shown in annex.

- 13 13. The joint study programmes comply with the requirements prescribed in Section 551, Paragraphs one, two, and seven of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (if applicable).

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

**Justification:** N/A

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** According to the provided annexes and CV, the requirements are fulfilled. But, it shall be noted, that the scientific activity of the teachers (as well as visiting lecturers) can be higher. Only half of those teachers have published in high-ranking journals and in a considerable amount. The topics of teachers publications might be more relevant to represented course

- 15 P5 - Overall rating

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** In general, the programme is compliant with the requirements.

## Requirements (R6-R8)

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** Everything necessary to achieve the learning outcomes has been provided. The only exception is books in the library that are mostly in one copy each, so if more than one student wants the book, each student can have it only for a short period of time, for example, one day. But there is option for the students to order the scan copy of necessary division of the book.

Some students also commented that now that more students are joining RGSL, the premises are becoming too small.

Admission procedure needs elaboration how applicants are ranked in case of competitions to ensure the transparency of the admission. Optional courses should be analysed and those which do not support directly the learning outcomes of the programme should be left out. In general, provided information complies with the requirements.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** To be hired, the possible academic staff goes through a thorough evaluation done by existing staff, management, directors.

- 3 R8 - The study programme leading to the master or doctoral degree is based on the advances and findings in the relevant field of science or artistic creation.

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

**Justification:** Few programme-specific publications in English

## Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:

- Programme is useful in the labour market
- Appropriate compulsory courses
- Student-centered teaching
- Very good library and access to databases.
- Teachers are supported with teaching development workshops.

Weaknesses:

- Admission procedure is not transparent.
- Too many optional courses, some do not support the knowledge in technology law.
- Few students.
- Limited programme-based research.
- Unclear evaluation criteria.
- The lack of literature on Law in technology, not enough number of scientific article on Law and technology field provided by academical staff/guest lecturers.
- The title of the degree to be awarded in the study programme in English should be revised, aligning it with the title of the degree in Latvian

## Evaluation of the study programme "Law and Technology"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

### 6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Law and Technology"

#### Short-term recommendations

Admission procedure needs elaboration how the applicants are ranked in case of competition to ensure the transparency of the admission.

Optional courses should be analysed and left out those which do not support directly the learning outcomes of the programme.

Course outlines need elaboration: add clear evaluation criteria to each method and grade.

The title of the degree to be awarded in the study programme in English should be revised, aligning it with the title of the degree in Latvian.

#### Long-term recommendations

Increase the number of students.

Increase the number of publications, specifically programme-field topics.

Consider the changes in optional courses, keeping only those which support directly the learning outcomes of the specific programme.

## II. "Law and Finance" ASSESSMENT

### II. "Law and Finance" ASSESSMENT

#### 1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

##### Analysis

Name of the Study programme Law and Finance accords to the goal of the programme. Programme is offered as 1-year full time studies 60 ECT, as 2-years part time studies 60 ECT or 2-years full-time studies 120 ECT. The title of the degree to be awarded in English does not coincide with the title of the degree in Latvian

After graduation the degree acquired is Masters of law LL.M. However, the title of the degree to be awarded in English does not coincide with the title of the degree in Latvian Goal of the programme and learning outcomes are interrelated and accord to the aim of the Study field. Programme has interdisciplinary approach and is needed in the contemporary labour market. The professional qualification acquired, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated.

Admission requirement for the programme are rather flexible - one can come to Study in the programme also from other fields than law, only the bachelor degree with specific amount of ECTs are required and the previous education should be if not law then economics, finance, management or related fields. Even though the programme has 3 ECT course about introduction to law and legal research methodology it raises a question how well can students manage with such limited knowledge in law. However, visiting meetings did not give evidence that there are some kind of

problems concerning this.

Additionally to the specific bachelor degree a certificate of proficiency in English is required. As the programme is a specific programme a question raises about the motivation of applicants to study in this programme. Motivation letter or interview with the applicants would give to RGSL and to the applicant as well the knowledge whether this programme is for the applicant. Admission procedure does not have rules for the situations when there is a competition between the applicants. Even though the Rules of Admission and Order of Matriculation (Academic Year 2020/2021) article 3.12. provides that the Admissions Committee reserves the right to invite applicants for individual interviews and article 4.1 that the final decision for admission is taken by the Admissions Committee there are missing the criteria Committee evaluates in the interview when deciding which candidate is suitable for the programme. Such criteria are important also because there is no limit for accepted students in the programme.

According to the admission requirements all students who have specific bachelor degree and certificate of Proficiency in English are accepted to the programme. Also, applicants with law degree are not assessed whether they can manage with courses of finance in the programme.

Number of students of 1-year programme was 22 in academic year 2013-2014 but has decreased to 6 in year 2018-2019 (academic year). Number of students of 2-year programme has been very small all the assessed period: 3-7 students. Also the number of foreign students in the programme has decreased in both, 1-year and 2-year programme.

## **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

The name of the Study programme accords to the goal of the programme. The degree, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes and the professional qualification are interrelated. However, the title of the degree to be awarded in English does not coincide with the title of the degree in Latvian, Also, admission procedure needs elaboration as the criteria deciding which students are suitable for the programme is needed to ensure the transparency in the admission process. Programme is very useful in labour market. Flexibility in master studies by offering 1-year and 2-year studies is a good practice as it affords working students also apply to the programme.

Strengths:

1. Flexibility in master studies by offering 1-year and 2-year studies is a good practice affording working students also apply to the programme. Programme is very useful in current employment market.

Weaknesses:

1. Admission procedure needs elaboration as the criteria deciding which students is suitable for the programme is needed to ensure the transparency in the admission process.
2. The title of the degree to be awarded in English does not coincide with the title of the degree in Latvian

## **2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof**

### **Analysis**

In general, the descriptions of the study courses, and the final thesis are of high quality and comply with the provisions set forth in the regulatory enactments. The content is relevant and complementary, and it complies with the aims of the study programme, ensures the achievement of the learning outcomes, and meets the needs of the relevant industry and the scientific trends. Outlines of study courses are informative, including study aims and descriptions of course plans, literature etc. However, if the programme itself consists all the Study Field courses as optional courses and the choices are regulated by the schedule then a question of transparency of the

programme can be raised. The amount of optional courses should be reduced and they must clearly support the learning outcomes of the specific programme. Too many optional courses raises a question whether it is possible to choose the courses which do not support granting the learning outcomes of the programme, e.g. International Insolvency Law or Lobbying in the EU: Cases and Regulatory Framework etc. In the visiting meeting it was explained that the schedules are organized so that students of one programme cannot take any courses they want. Programme consists also the courses 'Civil Protection' and 'Environmental Protection'. Contents of the compulsory courses support the learning outcomes of the programme meets the needs of area of Finance and the scientific trends in this field. But only two law courses as compulsory courses (leaving out the Introductory/foundation course): Comparative Contract and Commercial Law and European Company Law seem to be too few to ensure the in-depth theoretical knowledge in law and enables to carry out research in different areas of law related to finance, also to work in a legal field. The study implementation methods, including the evaluation methods, contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study courses and the study programme in general. Course descriptions do consist evaluation methods: essey, assignment, test. But the evaluation criteria is missing. Every course description has a general evaluation table with percentages and according knowledge and skills student must grant but this table is not related to the specific evaluation methods provided by the percentages of the total grade. In several courses the only evaluation method 'essey' raises a questions whether this is the most suitable form of evaluating the granting of the learning outcomes, e.g. Introductory/Foundation course etc.

Programme has student-centered learning and teaching principles (visiting meetings). Surveys are conducted regularly to improve the quality of studies among students and also among employers (SAR p. 10, 13, 26, 28, 118-120). The director regularly reminds all teaching staff of the aims, objectives and outcomes of the programme, thereby ensuring that the study process is organised in such a way as to achieve the results of the study programme. The settings of the study programmes are clarified at the beginning of the academic year by organising a workshop for lecturers. (visiting meetings). There are 13 students 2018/2019 in the one-year programme and 17 students in the two-year programme. The number of foreign students tends to increase: in 2018/2019 3 foreign students. Outgoing mobility has been very poor - only 2 students went to traineeship abroad under Erasmus+ programme, in last 3 years none of the students.

### **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

Programme components and their volume, including the volume of the thesis accords to the requirements provided by regulatory enactment. Outlines of the courses are informative, including study aims and descriptions of course plans, literature etc. However, if the programme itself consists all the Study Field courses as optional courses and the choices are regulated by the schedule then a question of transparency of the programme can be raised. Also, optional courses should clearly support the learning outcomes of this specific programme. Compulsory part of the programme must consist more law courses or the current courses of finance should have clear part for legal aspects. The study implementation methods, including the evaluation methods, contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study courses and the study programme in general. However, evaluation methods and criteria used for each method need to be analysed and corrected. In learning student-centered teaching is used. There are surveys among students and employers carried out regularly to support the development and quality of the programme. Number of students in the programme is average 13 students, only 2 of them are from abroad. The number of students is average, however, there are few foreign students. Outgoing mobility is poor: only 2 students went to traineeship abroad under Erasmus+ programme, in last 3 years none of the students

Strengths:

1. Well structured descriptions of the study courses.
2. Programme is useful for the labour market.
3. Student-centered teaching.

Weaknesses:

1. Too many optional courses.
2. Unclear evaluation criteria.
3. Compulsory part of the programme must consist more law courses or the current courses of finance should have clear part for legal aspects.

### **3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme**

#### **Analysis**

In general, the study provision, scientific support, informative provision, material and technical provision, and financial provision comply with the specific features and the conditions for the implementation of the study programme, create the prerequisites for the achievement of the learning outcomes, and indicate the possibility to ensure a high-quality study process also in the future. Visit meeting showed that RGSL has an excellent library with latest literature, access to good databases. However, there are only one copy of the books in the library, so if multiple students need the same book they can only have it for a short period of time. RGSL has all the necessary infrastructure - lecture rooms, study rooms, computer room, leisure rooms, a library (with computers available). The top floors are accessible for people with disability issues - they are supplied with special keys to call a special elevator. All auditoriums are in very good technical condition and equipped with multimedia equipment and all other necessary equipment for the implementation of the study process. Wi-fi coverage is available in the RGSL building. RGSL students can also use Stockholm School of Economics' library as the buildings are joined. Students can also order books from partner-universities if they need to. A large digital database collection is available that is mostly used by bachelors students and is especially helpful in writing their thesis. It has been confirmed by students during an on-site visit that during an outbreak of COVID pandemic the online access to data bases, resources and materials was of great importance and help to assure continuity of teaching and learning.

#### **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

The study provision, scientific support, informative provision, material and technical provision, and financial provision comply with the specific features and the conditions for the implementation of the study programme, create the prerequisites for the achievement of the learning outcomes, and indicate the possibility to ensure a high-quality study process also in the future. RGSL has an excellent library with the latest literature, access to good databases but few books in law and technology field. In the building there are lecture rooms, study rooms, computer room, leisure room with appropriate good technical equipment. However, in the library most books are only one copy so if multiple students need the same book they can only have it for a short period of time.

Strengths:

1. The bright and comfortable lecture and study halls. There are a lot of places for self-study. The library has computers with shortcuts to all important databases. It is also quiet and comfortable. There is a quiet room that students can reserve if needed.

Weaknesses:

1. Most books are in only one copy each so if multiple students need the same book they can only have it for a short period of time, for example, a day, which in most cases is not enough for thorough work and examination. But the copies of the books can be provided if necessary.

## 4. Teaching Staff

### Analysis

RGSL undertakes measures in a target-oriented manner to avoid negative effects on the quality of the implementation of the study programme and the compliance of the study programme with the requirements set forth in the regulatory enactments, as a result of the changes in the composition of the teaching staff (SAR p. 10, visit meetings). However, there are no clear measures/procedure to avoid negative effects on the quality of the implementation of the study programme as a result of the changes in the composition of the teaching staff. In the meeting with Directors it was said that the quality doesn't change when teaching staff does because all of them are qualified and hand picked. The qualification of the teaching staff members involved complies with the requirements for the implementation of Study programme and enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the Study programme and the relevant study courses. According to the SAR (p. 121) RGSL has managed to find good balance in the teaching staff composition, which includes both external lecturers active as practitioners in the field of law and finance and RGSL faculty members. It has also succeeded to attract high-profile foreign lecturers. There are regular surveys about the quality of teaching and students feedback has been considered when assessing teaching staff. RGSL attempts to ensure the balance between elected academic personell and guest lectures (SAR p.121). Currently there are 41 teachers in the programme (SAR p.124) but according the report it is not possible distribute the data of division of academic personell and visiting lecturers in the programme. According to the annex about the courses the teachers in the compulsory courses (part A) are evenly divided between academic positions and visiting lecturers, most of the teachers have PhD. Only some of the teachers of compulsory courses have considerable amount of scientific publications. Some have few and some none. Report and visiting meeting did not give evidence how much information obtained from the research has been used in the teaching. In the Report only two teachers have been brought out - Ineta Ziemele and Bard Tuseth but they are teachers of Introductory Foundation course and Legal Research course which are not programme specific courses. There is no clear mechanism for mutual collaboration between the teaching staff. It has been mentioned in the visit meetings that there are workshops for the staff and that courses are interrelated but it is unclear how good and cultivated is the communication between the staff.

### Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

In general, RGLS undertakes measures in a target-oriented manner to avoid negative effects on the quality of the implementation of the study programme and the compliance of the study programme with the requirements set forth in the regulatory enactments, as a result of the changes in the composition of the teaching staff. But, there are no clear measures/procedure to avoid negative effects on the quality of the implementation of the study programme as a result of the changes in the composition of the teaching staff. In the meeting with Directors it was said that the quality doesn't change when teaching staff does because all of them are qualified and hand picked.

The qualification of the teaching staff members involved complies with the requirements for the implementation of study programme and enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses. The academic staff is not sufficiently involved in scientific research both at national and international level. Only half of the teachers of compulsory courses have considerable amount of scientific publications. Some have few and some none. The obtained information is still used in the study process. The mechanism for mutual collaboration between the teaching staff members in place, which contributes to the improvement of the study courses/ modules and their correlation, is unclear. There are workshops for teachers but it is unclear how good and cultivated is the communication between the teaching staff.

## Strengths

1. Many teachers with PhD

## Weaknesses:

1. There are no clear measures/procedure to avoid negative effects on the quality of the implementation of the study programme as a result of the changes in the composition of the teaching staff.
2. Few academic publications in law and finance.
3. There is no clear mechanism for mutual collaboration between the teaching staff.

## 5. Assessment of the Compliance of the Study Programme "Law and Finance"

### Requirements

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** According to the Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers no. 202 all criteria are fulfilled. RGSL provided Diploma shows that the sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme EU law and policy complies with the procedure by which state-recognised documents of higher education are issued. Technical clarification is needed that does not directly affect compliance - the translation of degree (ENG version) is different from Latvian version.

- 2 2. Documents confirming that the higher education institution/ college will provide the students with the options to continue the acquisition of education in another study programme or at another higher education institution/ college (a contract with another accredited higher education institution/ college), in case the implementation of the study programme is discontinued.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** An agreement with University of Latvia has been signed. This agreement ensures that should the programme "Law and finance" be discontinued, the students will be able to keep studying in University of Latvia, programme "Law". Document Nr. 9.2.5./2019/02 (8 of November, 2019) Article 5

- 3 3. Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college guarantees to the students a compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the higher education institution/ college (actions or failure to act) and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** According to RGSL Letter (Nr. 2.15n/119/19) from December 16, 2019 "On compensation guarantee to students" addressed to Quality Agency for Higher Education RGSL guarantees to the students a compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the higher education institution and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** According on Law of Riga Graduate School of Law section 25 -"The personnel of the School shall not be subject to the statutory requirements concerning proficiency in the official language." Annex 19 confirms that all academic staff have English language knowledge from B2 to C2 levels.

- 5 5. The teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language, if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language.  
**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant  
**Justification:** Annex confirms that all academic staff have English language knowledge from B2 to C2 levels.
- 6 6. At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of an academic doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field of science. At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a professional doctoral study programme in arts.  
**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant  
**Justification:** N/A
- 7 7. The academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements set forth in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.  
**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant  
**Justification:** It is fully compliant as seen in the annex.
- 8 8. The sample of the study agreement complies with the mandatory provisions to be included in the study agreement.  
**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant  
**Justification:** The sample of the study agreement complies with the mandatory requirements. Technical clarification is needed that does not directly affect compliance - the translation of degree (ENG version) is different from Latvian version.
- 9 9. The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in all languages in which the study programme is implemented, and they comply with the requirements set forth in Section 56.1, Paragraph two and Section 56.2, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.  
**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant  
**Justification:** Descriptions are prepared in English language, which is the study language. They are compliant with the said paragraphs of the Law. However, course outlines need elaboration for each evaluation method and grade.
- 10 10. The study programme complies with the valid professional standard or the requirements for the professional qualification (if there is no professional standard required for the relevant occupation) provided that the completion of the study programme leads to a professional qualification.  
**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant  
**Justification:** N/A
- 11 11. Academic study programmes provided for less than 250 full-time students may be implemented and less than five professors and associated professors of the higher education institution may be involved in the implementation of the mandatory and limited elective part of these study programmes provided that the relevant opinion of the Council for Higher Education has been received in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.  
**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant  
**Justification:** Council of Higher Education had decided to support the implementation of study programme Law and technology in accordance with the law. Document from 22.08.2019 in the annexes.
- 12 12. The study programme complies with the State Academic Education Standard or the Professional Higher Education Standard.  
**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant  
**Justification:** It meets the standards and criteria as shown in annex

13 13. The joint study programmes comply with the requirements prescribed in Section 551, Paragraphs one, two, and seven of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (if applicable).

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

**Justification:** N/A

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** According to the provided annexes and CV, the requirements are fulfilled. But, it shall be noted, that the scientific activity of the teachers (as well as visiting lecturers) can be higher. Only half of those teachers have published in high-ranking journals and in a considerable amount. The topics of teachers publications might be more relevant to represented course

15 P5 - Overall rating

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** In general, the programme is compliant with the requirements.

## Requirements (R6-R8)

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** The requirements are fulfilled. Students have sufficient scientific material and technical support during their studies.

Everything necessary to achieve the learning outcomes has been provided. The only exception is books in the library that are mostly in one copy each, so if more than one student wants the book, each student can have it only for a short period of time, for example, one day. But there is option for the students to order the scan copy of necessary division of the book.

Some students also commented that now that more students are joining RGSL, the premises are becoming too small.

Admission procedure needs elaboration how applicants are ranked in case of competitions to ensure the transparency of the admission. Optional courses should be analysed and those which do not support directly the learning outcomes of the programme should be left out. In general, provided information complies with the requirements.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** To be hired, the possible academic staff goes through a thorough evaluation done by existing staff, management, directors.

3 R8 - The study programme leading to the master or doctoral degree is based on the advances and findings in the relevant field of science or artistic creation.

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

**Justification:** Few programme-specific publications in English.

## Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

In principle the requirements for the study programme have been met. There are some deficiencies but these are easy to eliminate. The only deficiencies, which cannot be eliminated within the two-year accreditation term, is increasing the number of students.

Strengths:

1. Programme is useful in a labour market
2. Student-centered teaching
3. Very good library and access to databases.
4. Teachers are supported with teaching development workshops.

Weaknesses:

1. Admission procedure is not transparent
2. Too many optional courses, some do not support the knowledge in law and finance.
3. Few students, little mobility.
4. Limited programme-based research.
5. Unclear evaluation criteria.

### **Evaluation of the study programme "Law and Finance"**

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

### **6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Law and Finance"**

#### **Short-term recommendations**

Admission procedure needs elaboration how the applicants are ranked in case of competition to ensure the transparency of the admission.

Optional courses should be analysed and left out those which do not support directly the learning outcomes of the programme.

Course outlines need elaboration: add clear evaluation criteria to each method and grade.

The title of the degree to be awarded in the study programme in English should be revised, aligning it with the title of the degree in Latvian.

#### **Long-term recommendations**

Increase the number of students and their mobility

Increase the number of publications, specifically programme-field topics.

Ensure that students without legal academic background gain academic knowledge of law and legal research.

## **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**

<b>Requirements</b>	<b>Requirement Evaluation</b>		<b>Comment</b>
<p>Pursuant to Section 5, Paragraph 21 of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education, the higher education institution/ college shall ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study direction whilst implementing their internal quality assurance systems:</p>	<p>Fully compliant</p>		<p>The higher education institution ensures continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study direction whilst implementing their internal quality assurance systems. In SAR p. 1.4 it is explained in detail how the HEI complies with the law. Therefore, all necessary criteria established by the Section 5, Paragraph 21 of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education have been met.</p> <p>However, experts have identified some areas for further improvement. For instance, whether the programmes covers the research of the specific area. To work with academic staff motivation to write more programme-related scientific articles and bring this knowledge into the classroom.</p>

<b>Requirements</b>	<b>Requirement Evaluation</b>		<b>Comment</b>
<p>R2 - The cooperation with different organisations from Latvia and abroad implemented within the study direction ensures the achievement of the aims of the study direction.</p>	<p>Fully compliant</p>		<p>RGSL has entered into agreements with higher education institutions in Latvia regarding cooperation in the field of education and international cooperation. RGSL has entered into agreements with the University of Latvia and the Stockholm School of Economics in Riga, which allows students of RGSL to use the libraries of these two institutions for free. RGSL is a member of the ERASMUS + projects and has partnership agreements with 45 higher education institutions in 22 foreign countries. RGSL also operates in the Nordplus Law Network, which includes 22 universities. However, the international partnership should be expanded because currently it is based on 2 projects. As cooperation involves also mobility then the mobility of teachers and students from all programmes should be increased. RGSL cooperates closely with employers in order to ensure the establishment and development of high-quality study programmes in line with labour market requirements. RGSL organises regular discussions with employers to identify their needs, and to hear their opinions about each of the study programmes. (SAR - 5.1)</p>
<p>R3 - Compliance of scientific research and artistic creation with the development level thereof (if applicable).</p>		<p>Partially compliant</p>	<p>Not all programmes are covered with research of this specific area. The research is mostly concentrated around EU law, International law and Human Rights law, Transborder commercial law. There is insufficient intensity of research in the areas of Technology law or Law and finances.</p>

Requirements	Requirement Evaluation		Comment
R4 - Elimination of the shortcomings and deficiencies identified during the previous assessment of the study direction, if it has been conducted, or the implementation of the provided recommendations.		Partially compliant	Elimination of the shortcomings and deficiencies identified during the previous assessment of the study direction, if it has been conducted, or the implementation of the provided recommendations has been partly realised. See more in pt 6 - Implementation of the Recommendations Received During the Previous Assessment Procedures.

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

No.	Study programme	R5	R6	R7	R8	Evaluation of the study programme (excellent, good, average, poor)
1	Law and Business (43380)	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Not relevant	Good
2	Law and Diplomacy (43380)	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Not relevant	Excellent
3	EU Law and Policy (45380)	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Good
4	Transborder Commercial Law (45380)	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Excellent
5	Public International Law and Human Rights (45380)	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Excellent
6	International and EU Law (45380)	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Excellent

<b>No.</b>	<b>Study programme</b>	<b>R5</b>	<b>R6</b>	<b>R7</b>	<b>R8</b>	<b>Evaluation of the study programme (excellent, good, average, poor)</b>
7	Law and Technology (45380)	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Good
8	Law and Finance (45380)	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Good

### **The Dissenting Opinions of the Experts**

Experts have different opinion on research question as well as on the issue connected to content of the study programmes. The Self evaluation report stresses interdisciplinarity of the studies. But in the study programmes, only two programmes specifically mention that they are interdisciplinary. The research issue is important as well. RGSL Development Strategy 2020-2026 states that one of the main issue is strengthening the permanent faculty in each key area of RGSL teaching and research activities (public international law, EU law, international human rights law, legal theory and methodology). The strategy states that RGSL will try to find further resources to improve research activities and outputs of RGSL. In order to benefit from research opportunities offered by the Latvian Council of Sciences RGSL will apply to become a 'Registered Research Institution'. RGSL is exploring at the moment the possibility to set up joint research projects with other EU universities. The ideas of research development are great, but from the todays perspective a little things were done. Very low number of scientific publications raises concerns that the goals stressed in the Strategy will not be achieved.