

Expert group joint opinion

Evaluation Procedure: Assessment of Study Field

Higher Education Institution: Rīga Stradiņš University

Study field: Internal Security and Civil Protection

Experts:

1. Robin Bryant (Chair of the Experts Group)
2. Tatjana Mavrenko (Secretary of the Experts Group)
3. Raini Jōks
4. Krišjānis Mārtiņš Alliks (Student Union of Latvia)
5. Uldis Lībietis (Employers' Confederation of Latvia)

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

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

The Rīga Stradiņš University (hereinafter RSU) Development Strategy for 2022-2027 outlines an ambitious vision for delivering high-quality, research-based education with a distinct focus on international collaboration. This strategy is anchored in three core research platforms: medicine, public health, and social sciences. Within this strategic framework, the Study Field “Internal Security and Civil Protection” (hereinafter Study Field) is housed under the newly created Faculty of Social Sciences.

The RSU’s development plans, including the Study Quality and Study Programme Development Plan and the Science Development Plan, serve as key guiding documents aimed at enhancing the quality of research-based education, ensuring the sustainability of programmes, and improving participation in international grant opportunities. These plans detail specific actions with defined responsibilities, timelines, and expected outcomes, creating a robust framework for achieving the institution’s long-term goals. However, despite this solid foundation, the Study Field continues to face significant challenges in terms of international reach. The programmes remain primarily focused on local needs, which limits their ability to engage with a broader global academic and professional community. However, the EG also notes that this is largely as a consequence of meeting the needs of the local labour market, and the RSU continues to seek to develop further the international aspects of the Study Field.

Through introducing the Study Field, the RSU has expanded its programme offerings and enhanced the interdisciplinary nature of its curriculum. These developments contribute to the RSU’s aim of providing a comprehensive education that equips students with the necessary skills to work in law enforcement, civil protection, and economic security. However, despite these advances, the RSU remains aware of the ongoing challenges in fully realizing its ambitions for internationalisation and innovation. The strong emphasis on local language instruction—driven by specific internal security considerations and national regulations—has limited engagement with international partners. This, in turn, restricts the Study Field’s global visibility and its ability to provide students with a broader, more diverse perspective.

The RSU Quality Assurance (hereinafter QA) system is implemented in accordance with ISO 9001 standards, ensuring that processes are efficient, transparent, and aligned with international best practices. A key strength of this system is its continuous internal quality monitoring, which is carried out through regular evaluations, feedback from students, staff, and external stakeholders, and the involvement of the Internal Security Academy (hereinafter ISA) Consortium's Strategic Oversight Board.

The RSU’s approach to governance and programme management is another key area of strength. The institution demonstrates a high level of engagement with both students and external stakeholders, including industry representatives and state bodies, ensuring that the study field programmes remain relevant and responsive to the evolving needs of the labour market. This is particularly evident in the collaborative partnerships that underpin the study field such as the consortium with the Ministry of the Interior, the College of the State Police, and the University of Latvia. However, the governance model relies heavily on councils and committees, which, while thorough, can sometimes slow down decision-making processes and reduce efficiency. Streamlining the governance structure could help the university respond more quickly to emerging challenges and opportunities.

The RSU has also made significant investments in infrastructure and resources to support the delivery of the Study Field. The RSU has equipped its lecture halls and classrooms with modern multimedia technology, and IT resources are readily available to both students and staff. Investments in technology have improved the learning environment, and the availability of

resources such as a recording studio and podcast studio further enhance the institution's ability to offer innovative learning experiences. However, while these investments are commendable, the RSU faces some limitations, particularly in specialised areas. For example, the forensic training ground equipment used in the First cycle professional higher education study programme "Police Work" is outdated, which may hinder the quality of practical training provided to students in certain areas of law enforcement.

The RSU has made substantial efforts to maintain a strong academic and ethical foundation. The institution places a significant emphasis on academic integrity, supported by a comprehensive Academic Integrity Policy that outlines the principles and expectations for both students and staff.

The Study Field's commitment to student engagement and feedback is another important aspect of its strategy. The institution has implemented a well-developed feedback mechanism, allowing students, graduates, and employers to provide input on the quality of study programmes. Recent data shows that there has been a significant increase in student participation in course evaluations. However, while student feedback on the programmes remains generally positive, there has been a slight decline from earlier evaluations, suggesting that further investigation is needed to understand and address the causes of this drop in satisfaction.

The teaching staff involved in the Study Field are generally well-qualified, with the majority having at least five years of practical experience in their respective fields. The RSU has taken steps to ensure that staff turnover does not negatively affect the quality of programme delivery, with measures in place to manage staff transitions smoothly. However, there are some gaps in academic output, particularly regarding the lack of peer-reviewed publications from staff members in the past six years.

The Study Field includes three study programmes: a First cycle professional higher education Study Programme in "Police Work", a Joint academic Master's study programme in "Economic Security" and a Professional Master's (second cycle) Study Programme in the "Protection of Economic Security". Study Field staff and resources are shared between these three programmes.

The First cycle professional higher education study programme "Police Work" offers students specialised training for continuing their careers in law enforcement. The programme is accredited under ISO 9001 standards and ensures that students are equipped with the skills to address critical issues in areas such as criminal investigation, economic crimes, and criminology. Specialisations within this programme, such as criminal investigation, further enhance the depth of education provided. However, like the other Study Field programmes "Police Work" is also predominantly oriented towards the local market, with the exclusive use of Latvian as the language of instruction. Translation facilities are available which, in principle, would allow for the participation of foreign experts.

The Joint Academic Master's study programme "Economic Security" is developed in collaboration between the RSU and Daugavpils University. It is designed to provide students with a comprehensive education in economic and financial security, integrating legal, civil protection, and leadership skills necessary for addressing contemporary challenges in both the public and private sectors. The programme offers flexibility with full-time and part-time study options and is delivered in both Latvian and English languages, although currently, it is only available in Latvian. One of the key challenges facing the Joint academic Master's study programme "Economic Security", particularly as a joint initiative between two universities, is the difficulty in effectively sharing resources. Although the programme is designed to benefit from the expertise and facilities of both universities, in practice, resource-sharing has been limited.

The Professional Master's (second cycle) Study Programme "Protection of Economic Security", which was launched in 2022 under the ISA consortium. The programme was developed through close collaboration with key national stakeholders, including the Ministry of the Interior, the College of the State Police, and the University of Latvia. Such partnerships ensure that the programme meets the practical needs of the local labour market by preparing specialists in economic security, internal

security, and civil protection. The programme equips students with a Professional Master's Degree in Economic Security and the professional qualification of Senior Specialist in Economic Security. However, despite the programme's relevance to local industries, its focus on local markets and the fact that it is only available in the Latvian language limits its potential to attract international students.

I - Assessment of the Study Field

I - Assessment of the Study Field

1.1 Management of the Study Field

Analysis

1.1.1.

The RSU Development Strategy 2022-2027 outlines the university's vision, mission, and development goals, focusing on delivering research-based, high-quality, and internationally exportable education (SER, p. 19 and 04.1_Anx_StD_StP_Development_plan.pdf of the SER). The RSU emphasises three core research platforms: medicine, public health, and social sciences (ibid.). Within these, as it was clarified during the assessment visit in an interview with the management, the Study Field "Internal Security and Civil Protection" is a part of the newly established Faculty of Social Sciences (hereinafter FSS). The RSU aims to modernise its study processes, promote interdisciplinary, undertake world-class research, and foster strategic specialisation and international collaboration (SER, pp. 19-20). These ambitions are supported by management, teachers, and support staff, as evidenced by interviews conducted by the Expert Group (hereinafter EG) during the assessment visit.

The RSU's planning is supported by two key development documents: the Study Quality and Study Programme Development Plan (Annex 4.1 of the SER) and the RSU Science Development Plan (SER, p. 20). These plans prioritise enhancing research-based studies, sustainability, strategic specialisation, international grant participation, and operational efficiency. The Study Programme Development Plan includes detailed actions, outcome indicators, implementation periods, and assigned responsibilities (Annex 4.1 of the SER, p. 1).

The FSS was expected to be fully operational by September 2024, with the introduction of new study courses, consolidation of existing programmes, and a significant focus on digital transformation, including AI integration and digital literacy (SER, p. 19, interviews with management). Additionally, the RSU collaborates on the Erasmus Mundus project HYBRIDIM, developing a new study programme in partnership with institutions in Estonia and Lithuania (SER, p. 20).

The Study Field at RSU is accredited under ISO 9001 standards and focuses on training specialists for law enforcement bodies, such as the State Police and State Revenue Service (SER, p. 21; interviews with management and QA group). The Study Field aligns with the RSU's mission to equip students with the necessary skills to handle complex legal and economic issues, prevent and investigate crimes, and foster international cooperation (SER, Annex 20.1; interviews with teaching staff). The Study Field offers a comprehensive education in law, economics, criminology, and sociology (SER, pp. 22-23).

Key objectives of the Study Field include improving students' understanding of law enforcement structures, developing practical skills in criminal prevention, enhancing critical thinking, and fostering independent research. Specialisations are offered, such as Criminal Investigation within the "Police Work" programme (interviews with study field director and teaching staff). Two of the three existing programmes are being phased out and replaced with new ones: the joint academic Master's programme in "Economic Security", and a second-level professional higher education programme in "Police Work" (SER, pp. 23-24).

Since February 2024, the FSS has overseen all programmes in this field, under the leadership of the Study Field Director. Whilst student numbers remain at modest levels (176 in 2024, with 166 part-time), this single post with dual responsibilities is sustainable, though a revision may be needed if numbers increase (SER, Annex 16).

The focus of the Study Field aligns with the RSU's broader goals of preparing students for roles in law enforcement and civil protection, while promoting interdisciplinary research (interview with the Study Field Director). The consolidation process has strengthened ties between study programmes and research, emphasising innovation in social sciences, law, and economics (SER, pp. 24, 44, and 78). Priority research topics for 2024 (relevant to this Study Field) include security in the Baltic States and trust in a highly mediatised environment (SER, p. 25).

1.1.2.

The RSU's FSS has conducted a SWOT analysis for the Study Field, highlighting both strengths and weaknesses (SER, pp. 25 -30). Although the weaknesses and threats are not explicitly mapped within the Study Programme Development plan (Annex 4.1 of the SER) they are largely implicitly addressed. For example, the threat of a "decrease in the number of students delegated by ISA consortium partners" (SER, p. 30) is reflected in Objective 10 (SER, Annex 4.1, p. 7) to increase the "publicity for the study programmes".

The SWOT analysis points to the Study Field's strong foundation, particularly in the quality of its content, lecturer competence, and collaboration with industry (SER, p. 27). Efforts are being made to regularly update the curriculum, integrate interdisciplinary approaches, and invest in material resources and the EG found evidence of this during their visit (for example, the plans to open a dedicated computing lab for Economic Security programmes outlined during the assessment visit interviews with management and Study Field academic and managerial staff). The FSS also places emphasis on maintaining a balance between theory and practice by involving industry experts, offering placements, and encouraging scientific research activities (SER, p. 27). The EG found evidence of at least some of this emphasis during the site visit, particularly involving industry experts (interviews with employers) but less so in terms of students undertaking placements beyond their own workplace (interviews with students and teaching staff) and encouraging scientific research (interviews with teaching staff).

On the downside, there are challenges regarding lecturers' workloads, with a need for clearer separation of duties between academic staff and support personnel (SER p.28, interviews with management). Additional concerns include the need for innovative teaching methods and better workload distribution, particularly through involving doctoral students more heavily in the teaching process. Efforts are also being made to address remuneration issues and expand opportunities for international collaboration through networking events (interview with management).

Greater involvement from industry is seen as key to ensuring the relevance of the Study Field (SER p. 27) and this was reiterated on a number of occasions during the assessment visit (e.g. during interviews with Programme Directors). At the same time, threats include financial instability, competition from other programmes, and reliance on public funding, with proposed strategies such as diversifying funding sources, strengthening partnerships, and improving marketing efforts to mitigate these risks (SER, pp. 27-29). Opportunities for growth are identified, such as expanding marketing efforts to attract more students, particularly internationally, and enhancing the programme's scientific capacity through interdisciplinary courses and research activities (SER, p. 28 and Annex 4.1, Objectives 7 and 10).

While the analysis is thorough, it could benefit from clearer prioritisation of the outlined strategies. There is a strong focus on industry collaboration and practical learning, but the plan lacks specificity on how these partnerships will be maintained or expanded in the long term. Similarly, while the analysis identifies issues with lecturers' workloads and resource distribution, it offers only limited solutions beyond adjustments such as involving doctoral students more frequently. Furthermore, the suggested marketing efforts to attract international students seem underdeveloped, relying heavily

on standard strategies without addressing unique selling points that differentiate the programmes from competitors. Lastly, while the threats are acknowledged, there is little discussion about how to handle unforeseen political or economic changes (such as withdrawal of State funding), making the plan less adaptable in times of crisis. A more flexible, scenario-based approach could better prepare the new FSS for external challenges.

1.1.3.

The governance structure of the Study Field at the RSU is designed to efficiently manage and develop the study programmes. It includes multiple layers of oversight and cooperation, such as the FSS, a Study Quality Council (involving students and employers), and several other councils focused on quality and supervision (SER, p. 30). The governance system actively involves industry representatives, who participate in feedback processes, curriculum design, and final thesis evaluations, ensuring that the programmes stay aligned with industry needs (SER, p.30; interviews with employers). Additionally, students play a role in shaping the Study Field by providing feedback (interviews with alumni and students). This structure is built to ensure that all administrative and technical needs are met, and it regularly monitors industry trends and professional competencies.

The effectiveness of this governance structure is evaluated through the RSU's quality indicators, which measure success at institutional, content, individual (student and lecturer), and employer levels (SER, p. 30). Indicators such as student satisfaction, graduate employment, and feedback from employers suggest that the governance is achieving its aims. The Director of the Study Field plays a key role in this system, managing programme development, quality assurance, research initiatives, international cooperation, and student support (interviews with management, SER p. 31).

While the governance structure is robust and engages a variety of stakeholders, there are some areas that the EG feel could be improved. First, while industry involvement is emphasised, the analysis in the SER and Appendices does not provide details on how these partnerships are sustained long-term or how flexible the Study Field is in responding to rapid changes in industry needs (e.g. in terms of cybercrime). The system also places significant emphasis on student feedback, but there is limited discussion in the SER on how feedback is systematically integrated into decision-making or whether students feel empowered by this process. However, interviews with students confirmed that they are aware that their feedback is acted upon.

Furthermore, the role of the Director of the Study Field appears to be highly multifaceted, covering areas from strategic planning to international cooperation, which raises the question of whether sufficient resources and delegation exist to manage such an extensive workload effectively. Similarly, while there is a clear focus on quality assurance, the report does not specify whether the quality indicators are being consistently met or if there are specific areas where improvements are needed.

Lastly, the governance system (which consists of the RSU internal and Latvian specific bodies and regulations) seems heavily dependent on councils and committees, which may lead to delays in decision-making or bureaucratic inefficiencies. A more streamlined approach or additional clarity on how decisions are expedited could improve the system's overall effectiveness.

The Study Programme Development Plan also relies on the idea that the current structure is sufficient to respond to future challenges, but it does not offer much in the way of scenario planning for unexpected shifts in the higher education or employment landscape.

1.1.4.

The RSU appears to have established an effective system for student admissions, recognition of prior learning and professional experience, and the evaluation of student achievements (SER, pp. 32-33). Admission is based on predefined regulations that are annually updated and published in both Latvian and English languages (ibid) and which relate to the academic level of study (ibid). For certain programmes like the ISA programmes, admission is governed by specific regulations and ministry referrals (interviews with management and Study Field Director(s)), while non-ISA programmes follow an open, equal competition.

The ISA is a Consortium made up of the Ministry of the Interior, the State Police College, RSU and the University of Latvia (see <http://www.ida.edu.lv/par-mums/>). The ISA plays an important role in terms of admission of law enforcement officials (such as police officers) to the Study Field, approving the criteria for admission (for “Police Work” these are described in Annex 1.6 of the SER). Candidates for the Study Field are first selected by the law enforcement institutions involved “following the selection requirements set by these institutions” (SER, p.33). However, the description of selection criteria in Annex 1.6 of the SER is somewhat tautological in nature, referring to a recommendation from an applicant’s superior based on “the necessity of obtaining an official’s education, professional suitability, reputation and objective orientation” (Annex 1.6 of SER). The EG discussed this with a number of the groups interviewed during the site visit, but no further clarification was offered.

Recognition of qualifications is conducted in line with international agreements such as the Lisbon Convention and is coordinated with national and international agencies (SER, p. 33). A single recognition commission ensures consistent evaluation of qualifications across all thematic areas, in an attempt, inter alia, to avoid discrepancies. Students are represented in this process through the Student Union. The RSU also has procedures for recognising competencies gained outside formal education (such as the Accreditation of Prior Learning) as per national regulations (SER, p. 33).

The SER (p.33) also notes a decrease in the number of qualification recognition cases from 2022 (62 cases) to 2023 (33 cases), with a specific example (the “Police Work” study programme), where professional experience is equated with course credit for a particular course (“Practice”). However, no further details are given for any other study programme or course and therefore the assumption must be that there are at best only small numbers involved.

1.1.5.

The RSU has implemented a comprehensive and transparent system for assessing students' academic performance. Students can familiarise themselves with the assessment criteria and procedures through the Academic Regulations I, which are accessible in both Latvian and English languages (SER, p. 34). Additionally, each course has a detailed description or “agreement” (in practice a course document) between the lecturer and the student, specifying the learning outcomes, assessment criteria, and other relevant information (e.g. as found in SER, Annex 20.1 for the “Police Work” Study Programme). This agreement ensures that students are aware of the lecturer's requirements from the beginning of the course, promoting clarity and accountability throughout the learning process.

Assessments are conducted in accordance with the specific requirements set by each lecturer, tailored to the course's content and credit value (ECTS) (interviews with teaching staff). The final assessment of student performance is presented on a ten-point scale, with lecturers also providing intermediate evaluations, such as pass/fail assessments (SER, p.121). Furthermore, feedback on both written and practical work is routinely provided in written or oral form (interviews with teaching staff), and all submissions are evaluated through the university's e-learning system, which includes plagiarism checks to ensure academic integrity (tour of facilities).

The evaluation process involves various parameters, including class participation, seminar contributions, practical work, and written assignments such as essays and mini tests, culminating in an examination. This multifaceted approach encourages students to engage with the material continuously rather than relying solely on exam preparation. The course-specific assessment systems are communicated to students at the start of each module, ensuring that they understand the standards and expectations.

Academic freedom is granted to lecturers in terms of designing and implementing course assessments, provided these methods align with the learning outcomes of the programme (SER, p. 121; interviews with teaching staff). To maintain quality, the RSU regularly reviews the assessment methods through collaborations between course lecturers, programme heads, and support units like the Centre for Educational Growth. Employer and student representatives also contribute to these

reviews.

A blend of summative and formative assessments is employed to measure both the specific and broader learning outcomes. Active student participation, initiative, and responsibility are integral to this evaluation, along with individual performance in interim and final assessments, which are accessible through the university's e-learning platform. For research papers, the assessment criteria are detailed in methodological guidelines, updated in 2023 for Bachelor's (the EG assumes this also covers professional higher education Police Work students) and Master's students, further reinforcing the importance of a structured and transparent evaluation process.

However, while academic freedom for lecturers is a vital component of a dynamic educational environment, it could potentially result in inconsistencies across different courses. The autonomy given to lecturers in designing assessments, though beneficial for encouraging creative and tailored approaches, may lead to variability in the rigour and fairness of assessments if not adequately monitored. The regular review of assessment methods and the involvement of student and employer representatives are positive steps, but the report could benefit from more detailed insight into how these reviews address inconsistencies or disparities between courses.

Another strength of the system is its emphasis on continuous learning and engagement, preventing students from merely focusing on final exams. This approach fosters deeper learning and retention of knowledge. Assessments, such as participation in seminars, practical work, written or theoretical work are utilised. Ensuring that assessment criteria accommodate different learning styles and strengths would further enhance the fairness and inclusiveness of the system.

1.1.6.

The RSU has established a comprehensive framework to promote and manage academic integrity, centering around a Code of Ethics and an Ethics Commission to handle violations and disputes (SER, p. 35). To strengthen this system, an Academic Integrity Policy has been implemented, outlining various aspects of academic integrity, including violations and the procedures for addressing them (SER, p. 35 and Annex). This policy is detailed and clear, based on principles which include "prevention", "responsibility", "justice", etc (Minutes No. 2-S-1/3/2023 available as a hypertext link from p. 37 of the SER) and an example of good practice at the RSU. Students are supported in adhering to these standards through resources like the "Methodological Guidelines for References and Listing of Reference Sources and Literature" which provide detailed instructions on proper citation practices. To facilitate the detection of academic misconduct, the university utilises the "Unified Computerised Plagiarism Control System" (SER, p. 35) and Turnitin (SER, p. 61), integrated into the e-learning platform, ensuring that all submitted assessed works are automatically checked for originality.

The RSU has taken further steps to support faculty and staff in using Turnitin effectively, organising regular training sessions led by the Information Technology Department and the Centre for Educational Growth (interviews with teaching staff). This training helps lecturers assess student work, detect plagiarism, and provide detailed feedback. The results from Turnitin, including the percentage of matching content and a visual breakdown of similarities, guide lecturers in determining whether a student's paper adheres to academic integrity principles or requires revision. A high similarity percentage does not automatically indicate plagiarism but may suggest that the student's work lacks sufficient original analysis or interpretation, which is flagged for correction (SER, p.36).

The RSU has developed a clear disciplinary process for handling violations of academic integrity, including specific forms for reporting infractions in both interim and final examinations. In more serious cases, repeated violations can lead to exmatriculation (interviews with teaching staff). Academic integrity principles are also integrated into the curriculum at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, ensuring that students are educated about the importance of ethics and plagiarism from the start of their studies.

In a broader context, the RSU is working to promote a consistent approach to academic integrity

across the Latvian higher education system (SER, p. 37). This initiative includes developing shared materials and collaborating with other institutions to align standards, fostering intellectual cooperation. Additionally, the university has introduced guidelines on the use of artificial intelligence (hereinafter AI) in academic work to address new challenges to academic integrity (SER, p.83, interviews with teaching staff). These guidelines explain how AI tools can be used responsibly within the academic environment, reflecting the university's proactive stance on emerging technologies.

However, while the system is robust, the reliance on tools like Turnitin may have limitations. Automated plagiarism detection tools, though useful, are not infallible; they can flag work unnecessarily or overlook more sophisticated forms of misconduct. There needs to be a balance maintained between technological tools and human judgement to ensure fairness in how academic integrity is enforced.

The training provided to lecturers on using Turnitin is commendable, but there may be variations in how effectively different lecturers implement this knowledge in their assessments. Consistency across faculties in interpreting Turnitin results is critical to avoid subjective or uneven applications of academic integrity standards. Furthermore, while the focus on preventing plagiarism through continuous monitoring and education is essential, it may benefit from an even stronger emphasis on fostering a culture of academic honesty that extends beyond compliance with rules. Encouraging students to engage more deeply with ethical scholarship could complement the enforcement mechanisms already in place.

The RSU's collaboration with other institutions in Latvia to develop shared academic integrity standards is a positive step toward creating a unified national framework. This cooperation could lead to more consistent enforcement across the higher education sector. Additionally, the university's attention to the challenges posed by artificial intelligence reflects a forward-thinking approach. However, the implementation of AI-related guidelines may require ongoing revision, as the capabilities and use of AI tools in academic settings evolve rapidly.

In conclusion, the RSU has established a strong foundation for promoting academic integrity, with policies and tools that are well-integrated into the academic process. The focus on both preventative education and the use of plagiarism detection systems creates a layered approach to maintaining academic integrity. Nevertheless, ensuring consistency in the application of these tools, fostering a deeper culture of academic ethics, and continually adapting to new challenges like AI will be crucial in maintaining and enhancing the university's commitment to integrity.

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

The RSU's Strategy 2022-2027 (see <https://www.rsu.lv/en/about-us/strategy>) aims to deliver high-quality, research-based education with an international focus. The plan emphasises three core research platforms: medicine, public health, and social sciences. Within this framework, the Study Field "Internal Security and Civil Protection" falls under the FSS, role in aligning with the university's goals of fostering interdisciplinary, world-class research and international collaboration.

The RSU's development plans, particularly the Study Quality and Study Programme Development Plan and the Science Development Plan, appear central to achieving its objectives. These plans focus on enhancing research-based studies, ensuring sustainability, and improving international grant participation and operational efficiency. The detailed actions within these plans outline clear responsibilities, time frames, and outcomes. The Faculty of Social Sciences, set to be fully operational by the end of September 2024, includes new courses and consolidates existing programmes, with an emphasis on digital transformation and AI integration.

The Study Field offers a comprehensive education that prepares students for roles in law enforcement and civil protection. Accredited under ISO 9001 standards, the programmes within the

Study Field equip students with critical skills to address legal, economic, and criminological issues while fostering international cooperation. Specialisations, such as Criminal Investigation within the “Police Work” programme, add depth to the curriculum, providing targeted training and education. The Study Field also includes rather new Master’s programmes in Economic Security, further enhancing the RSU’s position in preparing specialists for the economic security challenges in both public and private sectors.

The SWOT analysis highlights the strength of lecturer competence and collaboration with industry, while also noting challenges such as lecturer workloads and the need for innovative teaching methods. Greater involvement of industry is seen as crucial, and this was reinforced during interviews with Study Field director and industry representatives. However, ensuring that there are policies and procedures to ensure partnerships are sustainable and flexible enough to respond to rapid changes in industry needs, such as cybersecurity, remains a key area for development.

The RSU places a strong emphasis on promoting and maintaining academic integrity, with a comprehensive framework in place to encourage the highest ethical standards in student and staff conduct. Central to this framework is the Academic Integrity Policy, which outlines clear principles, guiding the actions of students and faculty alike. The university employs tools like Turnitin to detect and deter academic misconduct, with regular training provided to staff on how to effectively use these systems. Additionally, the RSU’s Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission play an active role in addressing violations, ensuring that integrity is upheld throughout the institution. However, while these measures are robust, there is a need to maintain the balance between automated systems and human judgement to ensure fairness and prevent unnecessary penalties. The university also recognises the growing challenge posed by artificial intelligence in academic work and has implemented guidelines to promote the responsible use of AI, reflecting its proactive approach to emerging ethical concerns.

Finally, the RSU’s approach to governance and programme management ensures a high level of engagement with both students and State and industry stakeholders. However, the reliance on councils and committees (albeit some are national Latvian requirements) may result in bureaucratic delays, and a more streamlined decision-making process could enhance efficiency. Furthermore, while the strategy acknowledges potential threats such as financial instability and competition, there is a lack of scenario planning for unforeseen challenge.

Strengths:

- 1) By fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, especially between social sciences, law, economics, and digital technologies, the RSU equips students with diverse, adaptable skills for law enforcement, civil protection, and industry security roles;
- 2) The RSU emphasises partnerships with industry and public bodies, ensuring that its programmes remain aligned with professional demands, providing students with practical experience and networking opportunities;
- 3) The robust academic integrity system, supported by a variety of automated tools and clear guidelines, encourages the maintenance of ethical standards.

Weaknesses:

- 1) The need for clearer separation of duties between academic and support staff, along with better workload management, presents a challenge for maintaining teaching quality;
- 2) Although industry collaboration is a strength, the availability of practical placements for students remains limited, especially in some specialised fields;
- 3) Efforts to attract international students rely heavily on standard marketing approaches, without fully differentiating the RSU’s unique strengths from competitors;
- 4) The governance structure, while comprehensive, may slow decision-making due to its reliance on multiple councils and committees, leading to potential inefficiencies.

1.2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System

Analysis

1.2.1.

The RSU has established a well-defined quality policy (the “RSU Quality Policy”). This document is publicly available on the RSU website in the Latvian language (<https://www.rsu.lv/par-rsu/strategija-dokumenti>) and in the English language (<https://www.rsu.lv/en/about-us/strategy>). The latest updated publicly available document of general points of RSU Quality Policy was approved at the meeting of the RSU Council on 18 January 2023, Minutes No.1-P-1/1/2023. This is a one-page document, which is based on the RSU strategy and values – human, team, results, and loyalty. The full set of RSU Quality Policy documents is actual and available in internal RSU system for download in Latvian and English. The RSU Quality Policy observes four main principles – quality, partnership, student-centric approach, research and practice-based education and experience. The RSU Quality Policy is meant to be implemented by all RSU units and employees, through the implementation of strategic objectives at both departmental and individual level. The RSU quality management system is implemented and maintained in accordance with the ISO 9001 standard “Quality Management Systems Requirements” (RSU Quality Policy). Both the staff and students of RSU are involved in the implementation of the Quality Policy (SER, p.14).

The RSU has established and maintains a well-developed QA system, which successfully contributes to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the Study Field “Internal Security and Civil Protection” and its study programmes, as also ensures continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the Study Field and its study programmes. Based on SER Figure 6 (SER, p.15), the study QA is a multi-level system, which consists of four main levels: university level, study field level, study programme level and individual level. The University level involves RSU management, who defines strategic and quality aims, quality policy, manages resources and defines internal procedures. The study field level is represented by the Director of the Study Field, who ensures compliance of the Study Field with the strategy of RSU, assesses the risks and coordinates compliance between the study programmes of the Study Field. The study programme level is represented by the Director of the study programme or group of study programmes (after consolidation the position is combined with Director of the Study Field), who ensures compliance of study programmes with the internal and external laws and regulations, requirements of the labour market, industry trends and students’ needs, as also analyses data and implements necessary improvements. Finally, the individual level is represented by members of the teaching staff, who ensures a high-quality study process, reviews learning outcomes and improves content of the study courses, and who also participates as observers and shares their academic experience (SER, p.15). This multi-level system proves the involvement of all RSU staff in implementation of the QA at the RSU.

In the newly created FSS governance model, the Director of the study programme is replaced by the Director of the group of study programmes. At the same time, a new post of the Head of Programme Development and Quality has been created at the faculty to monitor the quality of ISA study programmes, make proposals for their modernisation and improvement, ensure close cooperation with the parties involved in the consortium, including law enforcement bodies (SER, p.14). Starting from 06.02.2024, the supervision of all study programmes of the Study Field “Internal Security and Civil Protection” is ensured by the same person - the Director of study programmes groups and Director of the Study Field (SER, p.24). Concentration of management of the study programmes and the Study Field in the hands of one person helps to exclude overlapping of content and to have a full vision of the structure of the Study Field and its programmes.

Supervision of the RSU QA system is performed by both the internal system and quality auditors and independent external experts.

Based on SER Figure 7 (SER, p.38), the “Plan-Do-Check-Act” principle is applied in implementation of

the RSU internal quality system. The planning stage includes strategic aims, planning of personnel, finance, time, and other resources. The doing stage includes implementation of the study process and research. The checking stage includes control and implementation of performance supervision measures like analysis of strategy implementation results and internal audit. There are more than 300 internal laws and regulations to comply with, and there are more than 10 supervision measures. The acting stage includes initiating changes to the internal laws and regulations, improving processes and activities (SER, p.38).

Based on SER Figure 8, internal quality control is ensured throughout the year. In January – February, RSU implements analysis of complaints, proposals and irregularities, analysis of internal audit results, audit of the Annual Statement. In February – March, RSU implements analysis of process description criteria, does external audit of IT system and system for the protection of personal data. In March, the external audit of energy management is done. In March-April, analysis of academic achievements is done. In June – August, RSU implements risk assessment. In July – September, analysis of the strategy implementation results is done. In September – October, analysis of criteria for study programmes is implemented. In October, an external audit of the quality system is undertaken. In October – December, RSU analyses description of study programmes, Study Fields, including SWOT, analysis of students' surveys (SER, p.40). This timeline - based approach allows to ensure well-planned quality control and up-to-date reaction to the quality assurance issues.

RSU has created a well-developed framework of internal documents to support the internal quality system, the main of them are the following (Annex 1.3.):

- Quality Handbook;
- Study Quality Council Statutes (approved by RSU Senate on 20 February 2018, Minutes No.2-1/20.02.18);
- Process description No.34 "Updating and Development of Study Courses, Study Programme and Study Directions" (approved by RSU Rector's Decree No.5-1/66/2018 on 27.03.2018.);
- Study Process Quality Indicators;
- Study Process Quality Guidelines (approved by RSU Rector's Decree No 5-1/73/2018 on 3 April 2018);
- Process description No.47 "Strategy Planning and Implementation" (approved by RSU Rector's Decree No 2/-3/159 on 27 July 2016);
- Process description No.6 "Evaluation and Submission of Learning Outcomes" (approved by RSU Rector's Decree No 5-1/84/2019 on 14 March 2019);
- Regulations on Writing and Defence of Qualification Paper, Student's Research Paper, Bachelor's Thesis and Master's Thesis (approved by RSU Senate on 15 January 2019, Minutes No 2-1/1/2019);
- Process description No.22 "Surveys" (approved by RSU Rector's Decree No 5-1/220/2018 on 31 August 2018);
- Process description No.31 "Management of Complaints, Appeals, Irregularities and Proposals (approved by RSU Rector's Decree No 5-1/74/2018 on 3 April 2018) (Annex 1.3.).

This well-defined framework of internal regulation documents provides clear guidelines for all the involved stakeholders how to implement and ensure high quality assurance at RSU.

The Quality Handbook describes the practice of RSU in quality management issues with a view to ensuring a shared understanding of the quality standards at RSU by the employees and stakeholders. It includes information on quality policy and goals; risk and opportunity management; liability, powers and responsibilities for the effective maintenance of the quality management system and its processes and management; structure of the quality management system; validation, measurement and monitoring of processes and procedures; communication; management of inappropriate results. Monitoring of the fulfilment of requirements and updating of the Handbook is provided by the Quality Assurance and Internal Audit Department (Annex 1.3., p.2).

The Study Quality Council is a collegiate institution of RSU, which operates as a support for the

Director of the study programmes and the Dean of Faculty. It examines issues related to quality of study processes and quality of study results, including recommendations for improvement of quality of studies; assessment of the conformity of the study programme contents and implementation to long-term development strategy of the respective Study Field; participation in preparation and/or coordination of descriptions and/or overviews of study programmes and Study Field; examination of drafts of internal regulatory enactments, which are related to the study process; assessment of the necessity for establishment of a new study programme and/or Study Field in accordance with current trends on the labour market in Latvia and EU; proposals on other issues related to quality of studies (Annex 1.3., p.3-4).

Process description No.34 "Updating and Development of Study Courses, Study Programme and Study Directions" is based on 21 internal document or form and 12 minutes and describes in details how involved parties are contributing to the development of the content of the Study Field and its programmes (Annex 1.3., p.7-9).

RSU has developed clear study programme quality indicators, which are defined on several levels:

- Institutional level – provision of e-environment, presence of RSU in international rankings, provision of library resources, provision of information technologies, availability of extracurricular activities;
- Content level – ensuring of verification of knowledge, skills and competence and their conformity with learning outcomes; organisation of placement;
- Individual level students – academic achievements, personal contribution to achieving the goal, research work;
- Individual level academic staff – professional competence and participation in continuing education; cooperation with students; attraction of visiting lecturers from abroad;
- Individual level employers – employers' satisfaction with graduates' competence (Annex 1.3., p.39-41).

Study Process Quality Guidelines are developed with the aim to improve the quality and development of the study process by establishing common basic principles for the provision of the study process and cover the following fields: research and practice-based studies, comprehensive achievement of learning outcomes, ensuring academic honesty, constant modernisation of the study process and the environment, internal and external interdisciplinary cooperation, compliance of study programmes with sectoral development, internationalisation of the study process, monitoring the quality assurance of studies and targeted development activities for sustainable development of the university and the society. The quality development cycle of the study process includes planning, implementation and evaluation (Annex 1.3., p.88).

Process description No.47 "Strategy Planning and Implementation" describes in detail the procedure for planning, development, implementation and control of the strategy at RSU. As the main process quality criteria are mentioned development of structural units' plans in accordance with RSU development strategy and that 80% of the targets to be achieved. The process is based on 4 internal documents or forms and 3 minutes (Annex 1.3., p.92-93).

Process description No.6 "Evaluation and Submission of Learning Outcomes" provides the detailed explanation how RSU organizes the evaluation of learning outcomes during the semester and at the end of the semester, the submission and correction of the assessment to improve the quality of the assessment input, as also provides students with timely information on their assessment in study courses (Annex 1.3., p.103).

Regulations on Writing and Defence of Qualification Paper, Student's Research Paper, Bachelor's Thesis and Master's Thesis provides detailed rules and quality requirements on writing students' final papers (Annex 1.3., p.124).

Process description No.22 "Surveys provides the detailed procedure in which surveys help to discover the views of students, employees and other stakeholders on the content of studies, the quality of work of the staff and other issues; the way survey results are used to improve the quality of the study content and process and overall work at RSU. The process is based on 6 regulation

documents and 1 minutes (Annex 1.3., p.135-136).

Process description No.31 "Management of Complaints, Appeals, Irregularities and Proposals" provides detailed information in the procedure for receipt, registration and analysis of irregularities, complaints and proposals at RSU, identifying and undertaking preventive and remedial actions to improve the satisfaction of stakeholders and effectiveness of the quality management system. The process is based on 9 regulatory documents and 2 minutes, including Standard ISO 9001 "Quality Management Systems. Requirements" (Annex 1.3., p.158-159).

RSU study programmes fully comply with Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) Part 1. RSU has publicly available Quality Policy, which is implemented by all parties (SER Annex 23.1., p.1), there is a clear procedure on design and approval of Study Fields and its programmes, including the intended learning outcomes (SER Annex 23.1., p.3); student-centred learning, teaching and assessment approach is ensured at all levels (SER Annex 23.1., p.5); student admission, progression, recognition and certification regulations are clearly defined and published (SER Annex 23.1., p.9); clear, transparent and fair rules are applied to teaching staff recruitment and employment (SER Annex 23.1., p.12); RSU has appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and resources, including library, study equipment and IT infrastructure; RSU collects, analyses and uses relevant information for the effective management of study programmes and other activities (SER Annex 23.1., p.17); RSU publishes information about their activities, including programmes, which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to date and readily accessible (SER Annex 23.1., p.19); RSU ensures on-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes (SER Annex 23.1., p.20) and undergoes cyclical external quality assurance (SER Annex 23.1., p.23).

1.2.2.

RSU has developed clear procedures for the development and review of the study programmes of the Study Field and the feedback mechanisms. These procedures are described in detail in the following documents (SER Annex 1.3.):

- Process description No.34 "Updating and Development of Study Courses, Study Programme and Study Directions" (approved by RSU Rector's Decree No.5-1/66/2018 on 27.03.2018.);
- Process description No.6 "Evaluation and Submission of Learning Outcomes" (approved by RSU Rector's Decree No 5-1/84/2019 on 14 March 2019);
- Process description No.22 "Surveys" (approved by RSU Rector's Decree No 5-1/220/2018 on 31 August 2018).

The mentioned procedures are well-formulated, clear, logical, efficient and available for all stakeholders.

Process description No.34 "Updating and Development of Study Courses, Study Programme and Study Directions" regulates development of new study courses and updating of study course descriptions, development of new study programmes, and development of a new Study Field (Annex 1.3., p.7).

Necessity, usefulness, and compliance of a new study programme is evaluated by Centre for Educational Growth and Vice-Rectors for Studies, while developed study programme licencing, accreditation and change are coordinated by several RSU structural units and collegial institutions, including the Study Quality Council, Faculty Council, Dean's Council, Rectorate, and Senate. Supervision over the implementation of study programme and its quality is ensured by the Study Programme Director by evaluating the study process, learning outcomes, analysing the results of student surveys, changes in the trends in the labour market, and current events in the sector and world. Several administrative structural units are also involved in monitoring the quality of studies, including Centre for Educational Growth, Academic Affairs Department, Human Resources Department, Quality Assurance and Internal Audit Department. There is also external monitoring of "Internal Security Academy" study programmes, which is carried out by representatives included in the Study Programme Council of the Consortium "Internal Security Academy". Annual revision

process of study programmes and Study Fields is implemented at RSU and involves Study Programme and Study Field Directors as also members of the Quality Council (SER, p.40-41). During the site visit, in interviews with Study Field management and teaching staff, the EG has received evidence that all of them are well informed about development and changes principles of study courses, study programmes and Study Field, and are actively involved in such annual activities.

Process description No.6 "Evaluation and Submission of Learning Outcomes" provides detailed information on the procedure and includes assessment of learning outcomes during the semester and interim assessment input into the e-grade book, final examination of the study course and assessment submission, entering assessment after repeated examination or appeal, cancellation of assessment sheet and correction of input errors (Annex 1.3., p.103). During the site visit, in interviews with students, alumni and teaching staff, the EG has received evidence that all of them are well informed about RSU principles of assessment and submission of learning outcomes.

Process description No.22 "Surveys" provides detailed information on the procedure and how to organise surveys to discover the views of students, employees and other stakeholders on the content of studies, the quality of work of the staff and other issues. The process consists of the following procedures: conducting surveys on study courses within study programmes, conducting surveys on study programmes, analysis of the survey results and provision of feedback; updating of the survey questionnaires; surveys organised by structural units. As the quality criteria RSU has defined that at least 60% of the survey questionnaires for the evaluation of study courses and study programmes are completed; the survey results are analysed and used for the improvement of RSU and the study process; two times during the academic year, feedback on survey results and the decisions taken for the improvement of the study process is provided to students (Annex 1.3., p.135). During the site visit, in interviews with teaching staff, the EG has received evidence that faculty members are well-informed about the mandatory course assessment surveys and requirement to share with students their feedback on students' feedback. In interviews with students and alumni, the EG has received evidence that all of them were participating in different surveys and had received feedback about the survey results.

Since 6 February 2024, the position of the Head of Quality and Development of Study Programmes is introduced in the structure of the Faculty of Social Sciences, whose primary task is to provide supreme supervision of the quality and content of study programmes, to analyse various indicators confirming the quality of study courses, including completed by students the study course assessment questionnaires (SER, p.42). There is a chance that a separate position will contribute to better communication of the feedback to students and alumni.

During the meeting with employers, the EG has received evidence that study programmes of the Study Field "Internal Security and Civil Protection" are developed and reviewed in close cooperation with employers. There are also the "Internal Security Academy" Consortium Strategic Oversight Board and Study Programme Board, which are the key advisors in defining content, structure and resources of the related study programmes (SER, p.42-43).

SER Annex 21.1. "The survey results of the evaluation of the study programs and study courses included in the "Internal Security and Civil Defence" study direction" indicates, that in spring 2023, from 388 students 54% completed the study course questionnaires, and 46% did not. In autumn 2023, from 667 students 84% completed and 16% did not complete the study course questionnaires (SER Annex 21.1., p.1.). It shows a great progress of RSU in getting students' feedback on the study courses. In spring 2023, the average study course evaluation was 9.32 from 10, in autumn 2023 – 8.4 from 10 (SER Annex 21.1., p.2). It indicates the necessity to investigate the reasons for the fall of the average evaluation of the study courses.

1.2.3.

RSU has a well-developed, effective mechanism for submission of student complaints and suggestions. It is based on the Process description No.31 "Management of Complaints, Appeals, Irregularities and Proposals (approved by RSU Rector's Decree No 5-1/74/2018 on 3 April 2018)

(Annex 1.3.), and promotes implementation of improvements. The requirements for the submission and consideration of appeals are additionally determined in the Study Regulations I (SER, p.43). During the site visit, in interviews with students and alumni, the EG has received evidence that students are informed about this procedure, and that when the complaints were shared, the improvements were introduced.

Information on the opportunities for students to submit complaints or proposals is available on the RSU homepage in Latvian and English and on the student portal. In accordance with the internal procedure, students can submit complaints on the student portal MyRSU, in the "Students" section of the RSU website, by sending an e-mail to Atsauksmes@rsu.lv or Complaints@rsu.lv, orally, in writing, by submitting them personally to the Student Service or the Student Self-Government. The structural units ensure the registration of complaints and proposals and their transfer to the responsible structural unit for consideration. In the case of an appeal, an appeal commission is convened to consider it. After evaluating the complaint/proposal/appeal and taking corrective actions, the complainant is informed in writing about the results of the review and the actions taken. Once a year, information on all received complaints/proposals is collected and the results are included in the document "Overview of the quality management system" (SER, p.43).

In SER page 43, RSU provides information about the number of appeals, complaints and proposals during the period 2018-2023. It proves RSU interest in analysis of complaints cases and their solutions. In 2023, structural units registered a total of 45 complaints, 111 appeal complaints and two proposals. In the Study Field "International Security and Civil Protection", no appeals were submitted. To monitor the level of student satisfaction and prevent possible complaints regular meetings are organised for students with the Director of Study Programmes Group (SER, p.44). During the meeting with students and alumni, the EG received evidence that students have very good communication with the Director of the Study Programme Group, and all the issues can be discussed and solved without writing the official complaints.

1.2.4.

The RSU has established an efficient statistical data collection mechanism, which ensures regular collection and analysis of information on the study programmes of the Study Field. The approach of collecting data from students, graduates and employers, as providing feedback, is effective and focused on the improvement of the Study Field.

RSU has developed a system for centralised collection and analysis of key data related to the study process. The system has a clear division of responsibilities for data analysis at various levels (RSU institutional level, study field and programme levels, faculty and academic structural unit levels and study course level), drawing conclusions and providing feedback on the changes planned and implemented in the study process because of the analysis. To ensure data integration, data from different RSU information systems are periodically automatically backed up in a data storage room, where information can be analysed in different ways, integrating data from different disciplines. Key performance indicators have been developed and are periodically measured and monitored, and in-depth analysis of key indicators is ongoing.

There are the examples of the obtained statistical data which is used to improve the study field and its related study programmes:

- the number of applications for studies by programmes to indicate the demand,
- statistics on study application priorities to identify opportunities for interdisciplinarity in the offer of the study programmes,
- study applications by regions and secondary schools to improve publicity activities,
- statistics on the number of study contracts concluded/students enrolled,
- statistics on academic achievement to analyse the level of,
- drop-out statistics,
- statistics on the number of graduates,
- statistics on the types of tuition fee payment (loans, sponsorships, grants, own finances),

- status of study course descriptions to ensure regular updating of study courses,
- results of study course evaluation questionnaires for the review of study courses;
- statistics on the causes of leaving studies to analyse drop-offs,
- statistics on the number and qualification of the teaching to assess the compliance with regulatory requirements of programmes,
- distribution of types of lecturers' work to plan the staff development of academic departments and to balance the pedagogical, research and methodological work of lecturers,
- completion of e-learning environment to eliminate deficiencies (SER, p.46).

Student surveys at the RSU are organised centrally twice in the academic year. Students fill out an anonymous electronic questionnaire for each study course taken in the semester, in which they evaluate the content, results, organisation of the study course, as well as evaluate the work of the lecturers involved in the implementation of the study course. The survey results for all lecturers, as well as heads of structural units and programme directors, are available in a summarised form on the RSU academic portal in Latvian language. It is the duty of the head of each study course to become familiar with the results of the course survey and to provide the students with structured feedback on the identified strengths and weaknesses of the course, as well as the planned improvements in the development of the study course, if necessary. The feedback is submitted by the head of the course on the RSU academic portal, and it is automatically published on the student portal MyRSU and in the e-study environment - in the course, where it is available both to students who have studied the course and to students who start studying the course in the next academic year. Thus, when starting the study course, the students have access to the results of the previous course evaluation, as well as the feedback provided by the course leader on the planned improvements of the study course (SER, p.46). The RSU procedure guarantees that feedback is available for students. During the meeting with students and alumni, the EG received evidence that feedback was shared with them on a clear basis. Also, communication with the Director of the Study Programme/ Group of Study Programmes was highly appreciated by students and alumni as an opportunity to share and discuss all the necessary study issues.

Once a year, students of the last year of study fill out a study programme evaluation questionnaire, in which they provide feedback on the content and results of the study programme. This questionnaire is also anonymous and organised electronically, and its results are automatically collected and published on the RSU academic portal, where they are available to study programme directors, heads of study areas and deans of faculties. Obtaining feedback from alumni is essential to understanding the quality of the studies. RSU has developed an online questionnaire (<https://www.rsu.lv/form/anketa-absolventiem-studijas-rsu>) with the aim of obtaining feedback from RSU graduates about their study experience, the quality of education and its impact on their career and professional development (SER, p.47). An example of the Alumni survey is provided in SER Annex 21.3. The RSU also conducts focus groups. On 6 January 2024, a focus group of graduates was formed in the Rehearsal Hall of the RSU, in which graduates shared their experiences and gave in-depth feedback. This approach was tested for the first time and is recognized as effective, as it allowed to receive more detailed and personal answers (SER, p.48).

Since April 2020, the "Employers" section has been created on the RSU website in Latvian and English languages, which contains a survey questionnaire, which is freely available to any visitor to the website, including RSU employers and cooperation partners. Since 2020, the "Employer" field has been included in the Certification of Fulfilment of Obligations to develop the up-to-date database of employers of graduates, which all graduates must fill in before exmatriculation. An individual e-mail is sent to all employers twice a year - at the beginning of February and in July, with an invitation to fill out a survey questionnaire. Once the data is collected, the staff of RSU Career Centre summarises and compiles statistical data, as well as highlights recommendations. The results of the survey are presented and sent to the Deans' Council and study programme directors (SER, p.48-49). Director of Study Programme Group ensures regular contacts with employers in the form of a survey

and organising student placements, inviting employers to participate as members of the Faculty Council, as well as attracting as lecturers. Regular cooperation partners in the study field are all law enforcement bodies (SER, p.49).

All the above mentioned activities of RSU provides an excellent basis for data collection, analysis and development of improvements in the study field and its study programmes.

1.2.5.

The information published on RSU website <https://www.rsu.lv> about the study programmes of the study field “Internal Security and Civil Protection” is expected to correspond to the information available in the SER, official registers. At this moment (last checked on 12 October 2024), it reflects the current situation in the study programmes (before the changes applied for in the re-accreditation process).

Information about the study programme “Police Work” is available on the website <https://www.rsu.lv/studiju-programma/policijas-darbs> (retrieved 05/10/2024) and reflects information about 4 years Bachelor’s study programme. After the re-accreditation is finished, the information should be updated to the new length and type of the study programme – 1st level professional higher education study programme, 120 ECTS.

Current information published on the website <https://www.rsu.lv/magistra-studiju-programmas> (retrieved 05/10/2024) does not provide any data about two Master’s study programmes: academic Master’s programme “Economic Security” 120 ECTS and professional Master’s programme “Protection of Economic Security 90-120 ECTS. The website <https://www.rsu.lv> is checked again on 27/11/2024. At this moment, information about Master’s study programme “Protection of Economic Security” is missing, but information about Master’s study programme “Economic Security” reflects data before changes applied in re-accreditation. It promotes professional degree, not academic, and there is no option in English language (<https://www.rsu.lv/studiju-programma/ekonomiska-drosiba>, retrieved 27/11/2024).

Information for potential applicants for the academic year 2024/2025 contains two brochures on the website <https://www.rsu.lv/studiju-iespejas-2024-2025> (retrieved 05/10/2024), one for Bachelor’s studies and one for Master’s studies, but both files are not technically available.

All the information for applicants and students on the website <https://www.rsu.lv> is provided in both languages – Latvian and English

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

The RSU has established a well-defined RSU Quality Policy, which is publicly available on RSU website in Latvian and English languages and is supposed to be implemented by all RSU units and employees.

The RSU has established and maintains a well-developed multi-level QA system, which successfully contributes to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study field “Internal Security and Civil Protection” and its study programmes, as also ensures continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the Study Field and its study programmes. The RSU quality management system is implemented and maintained in accordance with the ISO 9001 standard “Quality Management Systems. Requirements”.

In the newly created FSS governance model, the Director of study programme is replaced by the Director of the group of study programmes, Director of the Study Field, and a new position of Head of programme development and quality is introduced to monitor the quality of studies. Concentration of management of the study programmes and the Study Field in the hands of one person helps to exclude overlapping of content and to have a full vision of the structure of the study field and its programmes.

Internal quality control is ensured throughout the year with a definite schedule for specific activities. This timeline - based approach allows to ensure well-planned quality control and up-to-date reaction

to the quality assurance issues.

The RSU has created a well-developed framework of internal documents to support the internal quality system, which is available to all involved parties and provides clear guidelines on how to implement and ensure top-level quality assurance at RSU.

The RSU has developed clear study programme quality indicators, which are defined on institutional, content and individual levels.

The RSU study programmes fully comply with Standards and Guidelines for QA in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) Part 1.

The RSU has developed clear procedures for the development and review of the study programmes of the study field and the feedback mechanisms. The mentioned procedures are well-formulated, clear, logical, efficient and available for all stakeholders.

Study programmes of the Study Field “Internal Security and Civil Protection” are developed and reviewed in close cooperation with employers. There are also the ISA Consortium Strategic Oversight Board and Study Programme Board, which are the key advisors in defining content, structure and resources of the related study programmes.

The RSU has a well-established mechanism of collecting data from students, graduates, employers through surveys, interviews, focus groups. In spring 2023, from 388 students 54% completed the study course questionnaires, and 46% did not. In autumn 2023, from 667 students 84% completed and 16% did not complete the study course questionnaires. These results show a great progress of RSU in getting students’ feedback on the study courses. In spring 2023, the average study course evaluation was 9.32 from 10, in autumn 2023 – 8.4 from 10. This change indicates the necessity to investigate the reasons for the fall of the average evaluation of the study courses.

The RSU has a well-developed, effective mechanism for submission of student complaints and suggestions, which promotes implementation of improvements. Students and alumni are well-informed about this procedure, and confirmed that when the complaints were shared, the improvements were introduced. In the study field “International Security and Civil Protection”, no appeals were submitted. To monitor the level of student satisfaction and prevent possible complaints regular meetings are organised for students with the Director of Study Programmes Group. Students and alumni have confirmed that they have had very good communication with the Director of the Study Programme Group, and all the issues could be discussed and solved without making an official complaint.

The information published on the RSU website <https://www.rsu.lv> about the study programmes of the study field “Internal Security and Civil Protection” partially reflects the current situation in the study programmes (before the changes applied for in the re-accreditation process).

Information about the study programme “Police Work” reflects information about four years of the Bachelor’s study programme. After the re-accreditation is completed, the information should be updated to the new length and type of the study programme – the 1st level professional higher education study programme, 120 ECTS.

Current information published on the website does not provide any or full data about two Master’s study programmes: academic Master’s programme “Economic Security” 120 ECTS and professional Master’s programme “Protection of Economic Security” 90-120 ECTS. This lack of information does not help in attracting potential students to these programmes.

All the information for applicants and students on the website <https://www.rsu.lv> is provided in both languages – Latvian and English.

Strengths:

- 1) RSU has established a well-defined RSU Quality Policy;
- 2) The RSU quality management system is implemented and maintained in accordance with the ISO 9001 standard “Quality Management Systems. Requirements”;
- 3) Concentration of management of the study programmes and the Study Field in the hands of one person helps to exclude overlapping of content and to have a full vision of the structure of the Study

Field and its programmes;

4) RSU has achieved significant increase – from 54% to 84% - in number of students participating in assessment of the study courses during the year 2023;

5) RSU has established efficient mechanism of collecting statistical data from students, graduates and employers;

6) There are no complaints submitted in the Study Field; all issues are solved in close cooperation with the Director of the group of study programmes;

7) Employers are broadly involved in development of the study programmes of the Study Field and improvement of their quality;

8) RSU has established well-developed framework of internal regulatory documents to ensure effective quality assurance.

Weaknesses:

1) Decrease in average evaluation of the study courses from 9.32 to 8.4 during the year 2023;

2) Lack of information about Master's study programmes and changes in the study programmes submitted in re-accreditation of the study field on the website.

Assessment of the requirement [1]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

RSU fully complies with the requirement of the Law on Higher Education Institutions, Section 5, Paragraph 2.1

It ensures continuous improvement and efficient performance of the study field, has established well-developed quality assurance system and successfully implements it. RSU has created a well-developed framework of internal documents to support the internal quality system, which are followed by all stakeholders (Annex 1.3.) Information provided on the RSU website should be updated after the re-accreditation.

In the next chapters of the report, there are no severe violations of QA system at RSU, that's why fully compliant.

- 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

RSU has established clear and well-developed policy and procedures for quality assurance. The main documents are the following:

- RSU Quality Policy (SER, p.14);
- RSU Quality Handbook;
- Study Process Quality Indicators;
- Study Process Quality Guidelines (Annex 1.3.).

- 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

RSU has developed clear and effective mechanism for the development and approval of the study programmes, as also for efficient supervision of their performance. The main steps are described in detail in the following documents:

-Process description No.34 "Updating and Development of Study Courses, Study Programme and Study Directions" (Annex 1.3.);

-SER Annex 4.1. Study field development plan

Information about the study programmes should be updated on the RSU website after the re-accreditation.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

RSU has developed clear criteria, conditions and procedures for the evaluation of students' results and achievement of the learning outcomes. The main steps are described in detail in the following document:

Process description No.6 "Evaluation and Submission of Learning Outcomes" (Annex 1.3.).

- 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

RSU has developed clear and effective internal procedures and mechanisms for assuring the qualifications of the academic staff and their work quality. The following documents describe them in detail and prove the compliance with the legal requirements:

-RSU Faculty Regulations, approved by Rector's decree No 1- PB-2/58/2024, on 30.01.2024;

-SER Annex 6.1.Staff list;

-SER Annex 6.2. Teaching staff biographies;

-SER Annex 6.4. Academic staff publication list;

-SER Annex 6.5. Data summary publications;

-SER Annex 24.2. Certification regarding the knowledge of Latvian;

-SER Annex 24 Certification regarding the English language knowledge.

- 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

RSU fully complies with this requirement, as it is collecting relevant data periodically. The following documents describe the process in detail:

-Process description No.22 "Surveys" ;

-Process description No.31 "Management of Complaints, Appeals, Irregularities and Proposals (Annex 1.3.).

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

All the above mentioned quality assurance system's documents prove a well-developed framework for continuous improvement, development and efficient performance of the study field. During the visit, EG has received confirmation from management, academic staff, students and graduates that the quality assurance system is successfully implemented.

1.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Field

Analysis

1.3.1.

The RSU is funding the Study Field through state budget grants financed from the state budget funds allocated to the Ministry of the Interiors departmental budget programme “Internal Security Academy”, tuition fees and fees for courses as well social payments, funding for science (state budget and EU structural funds, international project funding, revenues from contract work etc), income from the other services, such as student dormitories, room and equipment rental etc (SER, p. 51).

In order to promote research and help researchers at the initial stage of their careers, the RSU has established incentive schemes and practices: These include the RSU internal grant system (approximately 400 thousand EUR per year), joint RSU and Riga Technical University grant programme for multidisciplinary research, grant for post- doctoral students and researchers at the initial stage of their careers (European Social Fund), grants for doctoral students, co-financing for international cooperation networks and mobility (Erasmus+) (SER, p. 52).

The EG assessment visit interviews with the management confirmed that the Study Field funding is sustainable. The RSU has agreement with state budget grants until 2042.

Overall, the funding model appears to be relatively diversified, drawing on a combination of government support, student contributions, external grants, and other income sources. This diversification can help to finance the Study Field and support required for the implementation of the Study Field and the corresponding study programmes. A system for funding scientific or applied research is defined and implemented and it is effective.

1.3.2.

The RSU has identified the infrastructure resources and material technical provision necessary for the implementation of the Study Field “Internal Security and Civil Protection” and they are fully available to the RSU. Access to resources is ensured for students and teaching staff. A unified system and procedures for the improvement and purchase of material and technical, methodological, informative and other facilities have been established (SER, p. 52).

To ensure continuous availability of IT resources for the study process an IT service centre was established (SER, p. 53).

RSU staff and students have the possibility to use the Wi-Fi network free of charge. RSU students may also use open access computers with provided access and internet resources (EG assessment visit).

There is a specially equipped studio for creating interactive content. Various technological solutions are available in the studio: green screen, interactive display and the first transparent learning glass in the Baltics, which can be used to prepare more engaging and enjoyable video lectures and classes. (SER, p. 53).

The study environment – both premises and material and technical provisions are essential both for the quality of the study process and for the mental well-being of students. This aspect has also been highlighted as important in the satisfaction assessment questionnaires of students of the programme, where, in addition to the opinion on the work of the lecturer and the content of the study course, there is also an opinion on classrooms – environment and technical provisions. It should be noted that over the last decade the study environment and material and technical provisions have improved significantly, but the level of student requirements is also growing (SER, p. 54).

The RSU has established systems and procedures to ensure that students and faculty have access to the infrastructure resources and materials they need. RSU has invested in IT resources, multimedia equipment, and interactive learning spaces. The investment in technology and facilities has improved the study environment and student satisfaction.

EG assessment visit saw the infrastructure resources and remarkable was recording studio and podcast studio and Mock court room, also the infrastructure resources and material and technical support necessary for the implementation of the study field have been identified in the RSU and they are at the disposal of the higher education institution. Resources are available to students and teaching staff. However, during the EG assessment visit it was noted that the forensic training facility was in need of improvement, particularly in terms of the availability of more modern equipment. EG consisted of conventional forensic science equipment rather than the use of innovative technologies.

1.3.3.

The total area of library premises is 2,044 m², including premises to serve readers – 1318 m² (290 places for readers, 33 computer places, wireless internet). The open-access subscription library has well-equipped premises, the possibility of taking books home using self-service machines; there are reading rooms for group and individual work. To ensure accessibility to disabled visitors, the library has a lift from one floor to another in the main building. The library is in the main RSU building (Dzirčiema iela 16, Riga), and it has two service centres (SER, p. 55).

In terms of library service there is a wide range of information resources, advice on searching for information, including searching by thematic requests. Library professionals conduct information literacy classes, which are included in study programmes and offer support for researchers (information in Latvian, English) (SER, p. 56).

Access to more than 30 online e-resources is provided. Students and lecturers can access the subscribed databases remotely using the RSU username and password (SER p.56). During assessment visit EG had a high-level presentation of e-resources and RSU possibilities.

In the provision of e-resources for the Study Field "Internal Security and Civil Defence", the most important are two multidisciplinary e-book databases (ebook Academic Collection (EBSCO), Ebook Central (ProQuest)), the HeinOnline database in International Core law, six full-text multidisciplinary databases of journals (Academic Search Complete (EBSCO), ProQuest Central database package (including Criminal Justice Database and Military Database), Wiley Online Journals, Science Direct (Elsevier), SAGE Premier 2024, Sociology Source Ultimate (EBSCO), as well as purchased e- books for the courses of Study Field programmes (SER, p. 57).

The RSU has developed a system for the improvement and purchase of methodological and informative provision. Library resources and databases are available to students and meet the needs of the study field.

1.3.4.

One of the main websites used by RSU students is the e-learning environment. The e-learning environment provides access to absolutely all study courses implemented in all curricula; therefore e-learning can be used by any RSU lecturer, and students have access to e-learning courses that the student is studying or has studied. The e-learning environment is used as a tool for the organisation of study process in each study course – for posting various materials, execution of test works and home assignments, checking originality of the content of works, and publication of assessments (SER, p. 58).

RSU students have access to the MyRSU student portal, which combines the possibility to view the necessary information about studies and to use the e-services necessary in the study process in one place. MyRSU is available as both a browser and a mobile app (SER, p. 59, on-site meeting).

Remote lectures and classes are mostly implemented using Zoom, video recordings are available using the Panopto service (relevant licences have been provided to lecturers by the RSU) (SER, p. 59).

RSU academic staff can make video recordings of lectures and presentations (SER, p. 60).

The EG on-site visit interviews and inspection of resources identified that the information and communication technology solutions used to ensure the study process are appropriate and effective.

1.3.5.

The RSU academic and pedagogical staff are well-qualified, have relevant competences and a good reputation and are involved in the implementation of the study direction and achievement of results (SER p. 63).

The process of attracting and evaluating teachers is transparent, efficient, and is one of the prerequisites for maintaining the high quality of the study process (SER, p. 63).

The personnel policy states that (3.1.): "The personnel selection process ensures equal opportunities for all current and potential employees of the University, regardless of a person's gender, race, religious, political affiliation or family status. The selection process is open and fair, giving equal opportunities to all applicants" (SER, p. 64).

In general, the recruitment and employment processes of teaching staff (including the announcement of vacancies, recruitment, election procedures) are based on the regulatory framework, which is procedurally agreed in the internal regulatory documents and whose implementation and process development, and continuous improvement are supervised and coordinated by the RSU Personnel Department, implementing high internal quality requirements (SER, p. 64).

The academic staff application and selection procedure at RSU is regulated by internal regulations: 'Regulations on Academic Elections at Rīga Stradiņš University'.

There is also the 'Regulations on the procedure of inviting visiting university lecturers at Rīga Stradiņš University'.

Qualification for an academic position takes place according to the requirements set for the job in the "Law on Institutions of Higher Education", the tasks of academic positions defined in the RSU Constitution (SER, p. 66).

The EG during the assessment visit interviews with employers and other external stakeholders confirmed that they are involved and informed.

The RSU has defined, implemented and followed procedures (for the Study Field and the corresponding study programmes) for attracting qualified teaching staff, they are open, and the stakeholders involved are informed about them.

1.3.6.

An RSU Centre for Educational Growth (hereinafter CEG) was created in 2014 for the improvement of the quality of studies, the modernisation of the study process and competence of university lecturers. Within the scope of its operations, it provides support in the improvement of the quality of studies by analysing the study process, providing support and advising lecturers on the modernisation of study programmes, courses, organising pedagogical growth of academic staff in continuing education activities according to current needs. The CEG learning activities are based on the following thematic blocks:

- a) pedagogy (didactics and educational management of a higher education institution),
- b) technology-enriched learning and teaching (information and communication technologies, digitalisation),
- c) transverse competence (e.g. skills to communicate, collaborate, innovate, improvise, work in an interdisciplinary way and in data-based research) (SER, p. 66).

In general, it can be concluded that systematic and regular activities are carried out to strengthen the capacity of teaching staff, which is also appreciated (SER, p. 68).

The needs of professional and didactic development of the teaching staff are purposefully determined, appropriate improvement measures are used, evaluating the results and effectiveness of the implemented measures.

1.3.7.

For the lecturers involved in the Study Field "Internal Security and Civil Protection" and programme implementation, the teaching load is planned according to the study plan of each academic year and study semester. Study courses can be organised in modules and the load is reviewed according to necessity and regulations. The RSU promotes a balanced workload for lecturers and promotes a

healthy lifestyle to reduce and eliminate the risk of burnout for teaching staff (SER, p. 65).

The academic, research and administrative responsibilities of the teaching staff are mostly balanced. However, the EG during assessment visit interviews with academic staff members suggests that there are sometimes problems with the overall workload.

1.3.8.

The RSU has identified the necessary support for students and based on the needs of students, has created a functioning support system. RSU student with special needs is a RSU student with functional restrictions requiring adaptation of the study environment and process in order to create equal opportunities to receive the higher education (SER, p. 70).

Since 2012, all RSU students have access to psycho-emotional support (SER, p.70.).

The Career Centre is operating at RSU (SER, p.70).

A mentor programme is supported for the purposes of helping new students to adapt at the RSU. The mentor programme is primarily intended for international students; however, any local student can also apply for mentor support and will be provided with it (SER, p.72).

Through the EG assessment visit, interviews with students and analysis of SER the EG can confirm that the RSU has identified the necessary support for students: for students from abroad, part-time students, distance learning students, students with special needs, etc. and a functioning support system has been established to meet the needs of students.

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

Overall, the funding model appears to be relatively diversified, drawing on a combination of government support, student contributions, external grants, and other income sources. This diversification can help to finance the Study Field and support required for the implementation of the Study Field and the corresponding study programmes. A system for funding scientific or applied research is defined and implemented and it is effective.

The analysis states that RSU has established systems and procedures to ensure that students and faculty have access to the infrastructure resources and materials they need. RSU has invested in IT resources, multimedia equipment, and interactive learning spaces. The investment in technology and facilities has improved the study environment and student satisfaction.

The EG assessment visit identified the infrastructure resources and observed the recording studio and podcast studio, also the infrastructure resources and material and technical support necessary for the implementation of the study field have been identified in the RSU and they are at the disposal of the higher education institution. Resources are available to students and teaching staff. A unified system and procedures have been established for the improvement and purchase of material, methodological, informative, etc. provision.

The information and communication technology solutions used to ensure the study process are appropriate and effective.

The RSU has developed a system for the improvement and purchase of methodological and informative provision. Library resources and databases are available to students and meet the needs of the study field.

The RSU has defined, implemented and followed procedures (for the study field and the corresponding study programmes) for attracting qualified teaching staff, they are open, and the stakeholders involved are informed about them.

The needs of professional and didactic development of the teaching staff are purposefully determined, appropriate improvement measures are used, evaluating the results and effectiveness of the implemented measures.

The academic, research and administrative workload of the teaching staff is mostly balanced.

RSU has identified the necessary support for students: for students from abroad, part-time students, distance learning students, students with special needs, etc.) and a functioning support system has

been established to meet the needs of students.

Strengths:

- 1) The study field financing is sustainable;
- 2) Employers and other external stakeholders are involved and informed;
- 3) Students and staff members are satisfied with rooms and equipment;
- 4) RSU appears to be well-equipped in terms of infrastructure and resources, demonstrating a commitment to providing a high-quality learning experience;
- 5) A functioning support system has been established to meet the needs of students.

Weaknesses:

- 1) There are some concerns about the overall teaching staff workload;
- 2) Forensic training ground equipment is not of a modern standard.

1.4. Scientific Research and Artistic Creation

Analysis

1.4.1.

The RSU positions itself as a modern European research university, focusing on delivering both fundamental and applied research across various fields that hold national and international relevance (SER pp. 72-73). The RSU's commitment is to produce high-quality scientific results that can address global challenges, with a strong emphasis on interdisciplinary and data-intensive research (SER, p. 73). The RSU's three main research platforms—medical, public health, and social sciences—cover key scientific areas that are priorities for Latvia's economy and align with EU policies.

A relatively new area of focus within the RSU's research is security, particularly in the context of civil protection, defence, and socio-political stability (SER pp. 74-75). The RSU has prioritised security as a strategic research direction, recognising the increasing relevance of national and international security concerns. The RSU's security-related research appears to align well with global and regional priorities, including the policies of NATO and the European Union, making it a potentially important contributor to discussions on defence, public safety, and cybersecurity.

The Study Field of "Internal Security and Civil Protection" is particularly prominent within the RSU's Social Sciences Platform (SER, p. 73), which conducts research across a wide range of disciplines such as politics, law, economics, sociology, and communication studies. Research on internal security covers critical areas like national and international security, political stability, and cyber defence (interviews with teaching staff; Annex 06.4_Anx_Academic staff publication list_ENG). Research methods include both traditional approaches and new digital tools, including artificial intelligence, to address the complex challenges posed by contemporary security environments. The RSU's commitment to internal security research is demonstrated through its Security and Defence Research Group, housed within the newly established Social Sciences Research Centre (SER p.75, interviews with Directors of study programmes). This group is headed by an experienced Associate Professor and Senior Researcher, who has a distinguished international background, including roles at a prestigious US university and other leading global institutions (SER, p.75). The group focuses on civil protection, geopolitical threats, and the development of Latvia's and the EU's security frameworks. Projects within the group, such as studies on public attitudes toward national defence and responses to political instability, are designed to contribute both to academic knowledge and to practical policy solutions. These projects are supported by substantial funding, with over EUR 600,000 allocated for security-related research in 2024 (SER, p. 75). However, during assessment visit interviews with teaching staff suggested that this funding was only available to early-years researchers and not to more established members of staff. If so, this would appear a restriction that is potentially holding back those who wish to develop a research profile later in the career - for example, those who join the RSU after a career in policing.

The Security and Defence Research Group is an encouraging initiative, but its positioning within the broader Social Sciences Platform may limit its interdisciplinary reach. Given the multifaceted nature of current security challenges—spanning technology, law, public health, and international relations—a more holistic, cross-platform approach could better leverage the strengths of the RSU's medical and public health research platforms. More collaboration across these platforms could result, more comprehensive security research, especially in areas like cybersecurity, public health crises, and bioterrorism, where interdisciplinary expertise is important.

In addition to its focus on civil protection and defence, the RSU also leads projects under the Latvia-Ukraine cooperation research programme, which address the need for transformation and adaptation in challenging environments (SER, p.75). One of the key projects focuses on developing frameworks for internal security in collaboration with Ukrainian institutions, reflecting the RSU's commitment to supporting global security efforts. Another project focuses on forensic science education, enhancing internal security capacities through distance learning. Both projects are led by experienced PhD researchers and align with Latvia's strategic interests in maintaining national and regional security.

1.4.2.

The integration of the Study Field students' research work into the academic study process appears to be through a number of methods and activities, aimed at fostering student engagement, facilitating knowledge exchange, and developing practical research skills. Central to this effort is the role of research centres within the newly created Faculty of Social Sciences. These centres, which consist of research groups tailored to specific fields of study, are responsible for promoting the growth of research within the Field and are tasked with ensuring that the projects implemented complement the academic curriculum (SER, p. 13). However, an examination of Appendix 13. 2 of the SER (13.2_Implemented_projects_StD_2013-2023.pdf) entitled 'Projects Implemented in RSU (2013-2023) Study direction "Internal Security and Civil Protection"' suggests that only a minority of projects are strictly relevant to the courses undertaken by students.

A key function of these research centres is to actively involve students in both national and international research projects, such as Horizon projects, particularly in the domain of security (SER, p. 76). Students are not only engaged in research but also see their work used as instructional material during lectures and seminars, and this was confirmed in interviews with students. This integration provides opportunities for students to analyse and discuss case studies, which enhances their ability to contextualise theoretical knowledge with practical, real-world scenarios. For example, courses such as "Development of Scientific Research and Methods of Research," "Scientific Research in Economic Security," and "Scientific Research Methodology" are designed to help students systematically develop their research capabilities from the early stages of their academic journey (SER, p.76).

The results of student research, particularly Professional Higher Education and Master's theses, are incorporated into the development of new courses and modules, allowing for continuous updates to the curriculum in line with the latest research findings (ibid).

Students also have opportunities to present their work at conferences, such as the RSU's International Student Conference "PLACES", which facilitates knowledge exchange between students, faculties, and the broader academic community (SER, p.77). Looking at the PLACES conference Agenda for June 2025 (<https://rw2025.rsu.lv/places>) it is described as a 'biennial event for academic exchange and knowledge sharing, fostering discussions on the latest advancements in political science, law, anthropology, communication, economics, business, sociology, and other social science disciplines'.

Selected high-quality research papers are published annually in editions like the RSU's "Summary of Final Research Papers" for the "Police Work" programme (a programme within the Study Field), which features the best student research as determined by a commission after all papers have been defended. These summaries are made available online and distributed to national institutions, such

as the CSP and the National Library of Latvia (SER, p. 76).

Finally, regular sessions, presentations, and simulations of scientific conferences provide students with additional opportunities to share their research experiences and findings. Specific sections of conferences, such as the “International Interdisciplinary Conference PLACES” and the Medical Law Conference, allow students to engage with topics relevant to current societal and legal challenges (The Agenda for the 2025 PLACES conference has at least two proposed panels which may be of interest to Study Field Students - see <https://rw2025.rsu.lv/places>). For example, discussions at the 2024 Medical Law Conference highlighted the role of investigators and police officers in cases where medical harm has occurred, underscoring the practical relevance of student research in real-world investigations.

1.4.3.

International cooperation is a key focus of the RSU, aligned with the institution’s Science Development Plan, approved in 2024 (SER, p.78). The research work of academic staff is monitored to ensure it adheres to this plan, with an emphasis on interdisciplinary collaboration. Structural units involved in scientific research are required to meet specific performance indicators, including publications in high-impact journals, attracting external funding, especially from international sources like Horizon Europe (SER, pp. 77-78), and increasing the number of defended doctoral theses.

However, sampling of the research output from Study Field researchers (as listed in Annex 6.4 06.4_Anx_Academic staff publication list_ENG of the SER) suggests that the majority of publications involved RSU staff (excluding guest lecturers and invited professors) with very few examples of joint publications with overseas’ researchers.

The allocation of research funding is structured to incentivise high-quality research. The RSU’s internal grant programme continues to support priority research areas, with particular emphasis on open access publishing to increase the visibility of the institution’s scientific contributions. To further strengthen research quality, the programme "Consolidation and Management Change Implementation Grants" focuses on supporting priority topics defined by the scientific units, with targeted funding aimed at enhancing international collaboration and the creation of new research groups.

The EG read and heard about significant structural changes being implemented to enhance research coordination. From 2024, Faculty Deans will be responsible for overseeing the scientific outcomes of their respective faculties, and a Social Sciences Research Centre will be established to support research across the social sciences at RSU. This centre will work closely with international partners, such as the Baltic Studies Centre (SER, p. 78), and focus on fields like public security, food and water safety, and the resilience of supply chains. A joint international advisory board will provide guidance to both the Social Sciences Research Centre and the broader Science Centre, aiming to promote research excellence and enhance interdisciplinary and international cooperation (ibid).

To boost international research collaboration and funding, the RSU is actively involved in European Union research initiatives like Horizon Europe and ERA-NET. It is also a member of international research infrastructures and consortia, such as EIT Health and CIMBA, promoting a broad network of cooperation. From 2017 to 2021, 130 international research projects were submitted, with 39 funded (SER, p. 80), demonstrating a commitment by the university, at least in principle, to extending international cooperation in research to the ‘Internal Security and Civil Protection’ Study Field.

1.4.4.

The RSU has established mechanisms to enhance teaching staff involvement in scientific research. Annually, clear scientific and applied research goals are set for academic staff across all Study Fields, including “Internal Security and Civil Protection”, in alignment with the academic and strategic goals of each programme. These goals are managed through the “RSU Grow” portal, which facilitates performance management, aligns individual goals with the university's strategy, and encourages professional development (SER, p.80). Although the “RSU Grow” website

(<https://www.rsu.lv/grow>) does explicitly mention scientific research (the emphasis seems to be on “work performance and management process”) the GE understood from the interviews that it also incorporates planning of research activities.

In addition to goal setting, the RSU emphasises the professional growth opportunities associated with scientific research. This includes a support system, which has expanded with the creation of the Social Sciences Research Centre, providing access to databases, research grants, and administrative support (SER, p. 80). A financial incentive programme is also apparently in place, rewarding high-quality publications, although the exact amounts involved are not revealed in the SER or Appendices. Professional development is apparently further supported through training sessions and seminars on research methodologies, project writing, and dissemination of research results, this was borne out in our interviews.

Departments, such as the Research Department and the Development and Project Department, regularly offer practical support for lecturers, aiding in project preparation and fostering connections with industry partners (SER, p. 81).

The EG conducted an analysis of the number of research outputs by members of academic staff deployed to the Study Field (given in Annex 6.5 of the SER which lists by name 75 members of staff and their number of outputs since 2018). The analysis reveals a considerable variation in productivity. On average, staff members have produced 2.44 Web of Science or Scopus-indexed articles and 0.91 ERIH articles, but the median in both categories is 0, indicating that over half of the Study Field members have not published in these areas. Similarly, the average number of other scientific articles is 2.76, but again, the median is 0, highlighting that many staff members have contributed little or nothing in this category. This disparity is further underscored by the large standard deviations, with some individuals producing a substantial number of publications while the majority remain inactive. Participation in science-related events follows a similar pattern, with fewer individuals reporting involvement, though the average for those who did participate is higher at 6.73 events. Taken as a whole, and based on the statistics alone, the number of research outputs per year reduced from 86 in 2020 to 47 in 2023. However, in more recent years, the numbers appear to have stabilised.

Overall, the data suggests that the research output within the Study Field is highly concentrated among a small number of individuals but the number of outputs now appears stable.

While the average output may appear reasonable, most staff members are not contributing significantly to the Study Field's research profile. This uneven distribution of productivity points to the need for targeted support and development initiatives to encourage more widespread engagement in research activities, such as increased access to mentoring, collaboration opportunities, or structured research programmes aimed at boosting publication rates across the board.

1.4.5.

The RSU has implemented several mechanisms to promote student involvement in scientific research relevant to the Study Field. One initiative is the Vertically Integrated Projects (hereinafter VIP), designed to help students acquire practical research skills (SER, p. 81 and <https://www.rsu.lv/en/research/vertically-integrated-projects>). The RSU website explains that there are currently six VIP teams working at the RSU (<https://www.rsu.lv/en/research/vertically-integrated-projects#:~:text=VIPs%20are%20a%20new%20and,out%20various%20research%20and%20activities.>) However, none of these appear particularly relevant to the research needs of students on the “Internal Security and Civil protection” Study Field. Additionally, students can apply for Student Research and Innovation Grants (hereinafter SRIG) to support their independent research projects (SER, p. 81).

Students also develop research skills through participation in RSU's business incubator programmes, such as PINK and IN (although these seem more relevant to the EG to students on the Masters programmes and who are also employed in the private sector), or by joining one of the 39 active

scientific interest groups (SER, p. 81). Financial aid is available through the Student Union for conference participation, publishing in peer-reviewed journals, and attending seminars both locally and internationally. Furthermore, students can assist doctoral candidates in developing scientific papers or take part in the annual international student conference “Research Week”, which has grown significantly, with over 365 students presenting in 2024 (SER, p. 82).

Students are also encouraged to participate in various competitions, such as submitting research papers to the journal *Jurista Vārds* (which the EG notes tends to concentrate on Law, see <https://juristavards.lv/>) or entering competitions on competition law organised by PwC Legal and the Competition Council. The RSU International Student Conference (hereinafter ISC) provides a platform for students to showcase their research, with active involvement from student research groups in organising workshops and RSU professors assessing the submissions. However the 2024 iteration of the ISC appeared dominated by healthcare, medicine and law (<https://isc.rsu.lv/programme/programme-rsu-isc-full/>). There may be scope therefore for greater encouragement to be given to students from the “Internal Security and Civil Protection” Study Field to submit.

Having said this, whilst the RSU’s initiatives to involve Study Field students in scientific research are comprehensive and diverse, there may be a potential issue with the emphasis on competitive opportunities, such as the SRIG and research competitions. Students who excel in these competitive platforms are rewarded, but those who may not yet have the skills or confidence to compete could be left behind, potentially limiting broader participation in research activities.

1.4.6.

The RSU has introduced several innovations aimed at improving the study process, with the intention of making it more dynamic, engaging, and aligned with modern educational demands (SER, pp. 82-83). Methodological innovations, such as research-based learning, project work, and problem-solving approaches, are attempting to be integrated into the curriculum to encourage critical thinking and practical application of knowledge (interviews with staff and students). Technological advancements at the RSU also play a role in modernising the study process. Tools like H5P, Miro, Turnitin QuickMark, and 3D printing have been introduced to enhance interactive learning (SER, p. 83). The RSU claims that the use of augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) further enriches the study experience by providing immersive learning environments (SER, p. 83). (Although it should be noted that these were not viewed by the EG during their visit). Students in Study Field specialisms such as criminalistics benefit from simulation rooms where they can practise real-world scenarios in a controlled setting. However, the room visited by the EG consisted of conventional forensic science equipment rather than the use of innovative technologies.

Additionally, the RSU is developing specialised computer classrooms equipped with software for open data analysis, computer forensics, and other analytics tools. (However, some of these will not be available until 2025; interviews with management and Study Field Director).

Supporting these innovations, the RSU offers structured guidance through resources like the “Teaching and Learning Methods and Techniques” material (SER, p. 83 but only available in the Latvian language), which provides lecturers with modern methods to foster active learning.

Moreover, the RSU promotes the ethical use of artificial intelligence (AI) in the study process. AI tools are being integrated into the learning environment to help both students and faculty explore new ways of teaching and learning (SER p. 83 and interviews with Study Field directors and academic staff). This includes responsible experimentation with AI, ensuring that academic integrity and data privacy are upheld. Lecturers are encouraged to explore AI’s potential through dedicated workshops and resources, making the study process more efficient and aligned with technological advancements (ibid).

On the administrative front, the RSU is transitioning toward full digitisation of student records and processes. The shift to electronic storage of student files and requests aims to improve data quality, reduce processing times, and minimise the use of natural resources (SER, p. 85).

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

In conclusion, the RSU presents itself as a modern research institution with a strong focus on delivering impactful research both nationally and internationally. Its research strategy for 2022-2027 reflects an emphasis on high-quality scientific output, designed to address pressing global challenges. The prioritisation of interdisciplinary and data-driven research highlights the RSU's ambition to position itself as a leader in various fields, particularly those relevant to Latvia's economy and aligned with European Union policies. The focus on security-related research, covering civil protection, defence, and socio-political stability, is particularly timely, aligning the institution with broader national and regional security priorities, including those of NATO and the EU.

While the emphasis on security research is commendable, there are concerns about the distribution of research funding within the RSU. Interviews with staff revealed that funding is primarily directed at early-career researchers, leaving established Study Field members with limited opportunities to access resources. This could be a significant limitation for experienced staff members, particularly those transitioning from careers in sectors like policing, who may wish to further develop their research profiles.

The establishment of the Security and Defence Research Group within the Social Sciences Platform is a positive step, but its integration within a single platform may limit its interdisciplinary reach. Given the complex and evolving nature of security challenges, which span technology, public health, international relations, and law, a more integrated approach could leverage the strengths of the RSU's other platforms, such as the medical and public health sectors. A broader interdisciplinary framework could enhance research in areas like cybersecurity, bioterrorism, and public health emergencies, where security intersects with other fields of expertise.

In terms of Study Field student involvement, the RSU provides various avenues for engagement in research activities, such as integration into national and international projects, and opportunities for presenting work at conferences. These efforts are designed to foster practical research skills and knowledge exchange, with initiatives like the International Student Conference and the "Summary of Final Research Papers" creating platforms for students to showcase their research. However, it is noted that the majority of projects listed in the self-evaluation report are not strictly relevant to the courses undertaken by students in the 'Internal Security and Civil Protection' field. This disconnect raises questions about the extent to which students in this field can engage in research that directly enhances their academic and professional development.

Lastly, the research output of the Study Field academic staff presents a mixed picture. Analysis of publication data reveals that while some Faculty members are highly productive, a significant proportion of staff have contributed little or nothing in terms of research outputs. This uneven distribution of productivity is further compounded by a declining trend in publication numbers output after abnormal growth in 2020, which raises challenges for the Study Field's to maintain a strong research profile in the long term.

The concentration of research activity among a small number of individuals suggests that there may be barriers preventing broader engagement in research, such as insufficient mentoring, collaboration opportunities, or targeted support for less active researchers.

In summary, while the RSU has made significant strides in establishing itself as a key player in security-related research, there are several areas where improvements could be made. Greater interdisciplinary collaboration, better support for established researchers, and more inclusive approaches to student engagement would help to ensure that the Study Field can fully capitalise on its strengths and address its current limitations. The decline in overall research output and the uneven distribution of productivity among staff members highlight the need for a more cohesive strategy to support research development across all levels of the university.

Strengths:

1) The RSU has identified security—civil protection, defence, and socio-political stability—as a key

strategic area, aligning its research efforts with national, regional, and global priorities, including NATO and EU policies;

2) The Social Sciences Research Centre and the Security and Defence Research Group are valuable structures for conducting targeted research.

Weaknesses:

1) There is a decline in publication outputs from academic staff after abnormal growth in 2020, and research activity is highly concentrated among a small number of individuals. This imbalance suggests that many Study Field staff members are not actively contributing to the university's research profile, which could hinder overall research development and impact;

2) Although the RSU is involved in international research projects, the number of joint publications with overseas researchers within the Study Field is relatively low. This suggests that the full potential of international collaboration is not being realised, which may limit the RSU's global research visibility and impact in terms of internal security and civil protection.

Assessment of the requirement [2]

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

The Study Field is actively engaged in research which is relevant to the scientific field of "Internal Security and Civil Protection". However, there are concerns over the decline in research output and its uneven distribution over the academic staff. There is a need for targeted support and development initiatives to encourage more widespread engagement in research activities.

1.5. Cooperation and Internationalisation

Analysis

1.5.1.

Within the framework of the Study Field, cooperation is established with the ISA partners, Latvian universities, employers, employer organizations, and non-governmental organizations. The complete list of agreements with other institutions includes information on 26 concluded cooperation agreements (Appendix 7: "07_Anx_Cooperation_Agreements" of the SER). Among these, four new agreements have been signed with the State Police, the leading ISA consortium partner, over the past three years:

- For the training of Latvian State Police officers in the professional study programme "Police work" and in the sub-programme "Protection of economic security" of the professional master's study programme "Economic security", which is implemented after the short cycle of higher education, Agreement date 17.05.2023;

- Memorandum of Understanding between the State Police of the Republic of Latvia and Riga Stradiņš University on cooperation in science and research within the European Union Law Enforcement Training Agency (CEPOL), Agreement from 13.04.2022.;

- Training of specialists for the Latvian State Police; Agreement protocol No. 1 from 14.09.2023; Agreement protocol No. 2 from 08.01.2024; Agreement No.1 on amendments from 10.04.2024.;

- Faculty of Law, Riga Stradins University internship of students of the professional study programme "Police Work" (6th LKI/ EKI), which is implemented after the short cycle of higher education; Agreement date 16.05.2023.

During a meeting with employers (who are also partners with established cooperation agreements),

including representatives from the State Police, the State Revenue Service, and the Internal Security Office, it was confirmed that regular meetings and information exchanges with RSU regarding contract performance have been organized. These exchanges cover various topics, such as qualitative and quantitative indicators of the Study Field, student feedback, opportunities for student internships, potential thesis topics, and the integration of current issues into the study content. Such close cooperation contributes significantly to RSU's research efforts and helps maintain high standards of education and training. It also ensures that RSU prepares graduates in line with employers' requirements.

RSU has also concluded cooperation agreements with five Latvian Higher Education Institutions (hereinafter HEI) (see Appendix 7 "07_Anex_Cooperation_Agreements" of the SER).

One of the brightest examples of cooperation between RSU and other HEI is the Joint Academic Master's (second cycle) study programme "Economic Security", which is implemented in cooperation with Daugavpils University (hereinafter DU). This programme focuses on economic security and the prevention of financial crimes by combining economic, financial and legal knowledge. The programme is designed to prepare specialists capable of solving the challenges of economic security in various sectors. The courses of the programme are divided between RSU and DU, where 50% of the courses are offered only by RSU, 20% by DU, and 30% by both institutions (Annex 19 "Academic Master's study programme "Economic Security" plan for full-time regular studies in LV and EN" of the SER). This exchange promotes the sharing of expertise and best practices between the two institutions, enhancing the quality of education and research. Faculty members from both universities have the opportunity to teach courses, participate in defence commissions, and engage in joint research projects. This collaboration not only enriches the academic experience for students but also fosters professional development for faculty members. According to interviews during the assessment visit with teaching staff, by working together, RSU and DU can create a dynamic and innovative academic environment that benefits both students and staff.

Another example of successful cooperation between RSU and other HEI is the use of the premises of the College of State Police for classes that require security clearance.

1.5.2.

The RSU claims in its SER that Study Field and study programmes management and academic staff are in regular communication and coordination with foreign embassies, EU institutions, NATO, UN representations, which help to regularly update the study content and provide various activities – visiting lectures, visits to institutions and organisations, to identify placement opportunities. Until now, RSU has cooperated with several foreign institutions: universities, state and non-governmental organisations, universities, colleges, etc. The main criteria for starting the cooperation were the partner's reputation, compliance with the goals and tasks of the study area, and benefits for all cooperation partners. The main directions of cooperation are participation in scientific research and creative activities, organisation of guest lecturers and guest lectures (SER, p.88, p.98).

During the assessment visit interviews with management they provided confidence that the RSU's International Department has established a wide partnership with higher education institutions in Europe. For example, Hybridim consortium agreement with Estonian Academy of Security Sciences (Estonia) and Mykolas Romeris University (Lithuania) has been signed in Y2023, mutual cooperation agreement in the field of law, training of specialists with Grigol Robakidze University has been signed in Y2021. A full list of cooperation agreements relevant to Study Field is provided in Annex 7 "List of cooperation agreements with other institutions Study field "Internal Security and Civil Protection" of the SER.

RSU is ranked in the 1500+ range in the international ranking "The Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2025" (<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/riga-stradins-university>). RSU's performance in international collaboration is rated the highest. The investment in

internationalisation has been evaluated based on the proportion of foreign students and faculty, as well as international research collaboration. The second highest rating for RSU is in industry collaboration, which considers the university's income from partnerships and the number of patents. In the opinion of the EG, RSU's international reputation, along with the presence of international students and teaching staff at the university, significantly contributes to achieving the aims and learning outcomes of the Study Field.

1.5.3.

The RSU has a comprehensive strategy to attract international students, as outlined in their strategic documents (See <https://www.rsu.lv/en/about-us/strategy>). The RSU Strategy 2022-2027 focuses on delivering research-based, high-quality, and internationally exportable education. The university emphasises three core research platforms: medicine, public health, and social sciences. Within these, the Study Field "Internal Security and Civil Protection" is part of the newly established FSS (SER, p. 19).

Outgoing mobility of the teaching staff of RSU is implemented within the framework of Erasmus+ programme, bilateral cooperation and a few EU-funded projects. Cooperation agreements have been signed with other higher education institutions of the European Union, in which equal study programmes to the study content are implemented to ensure full cooperation (SER, p.93). During the reporting period, there were several outgoing teaching staff mobility events observed at RSU. The university has defined the minimum mobility requirement for lecturers, which is one visit in five years (SER, p.93).

Incoming mobility of teaching staff during the reporting period was limited, considering the specific content of the study programmes and the selection of applicants according to the evaluation of law enforcement authorities (SER, p.93). Statistical data on the teaching staff from abroad confirms the involvement of 22 international experts (Annex 8.1 "08.1_Anx_Statistics_on_incoming_lecturers_IDCA.pdf" of the SER).

RSU is very active in attracting foreign students and offers students mobility opportunities. According to the information published on the RSU website, the university has been admitting international students for full-time studies since 1990. As of 2024, the total number of international students exceeds 3,000, representing 83 different countries (<https://www.rsu.lv/en/study-here/admissions/statistics>). Additionally, RSU students can participate in exchange programmes to study or undergo international traineeships for one semester or the entire academic year abroad, receiving an Erasmus+ scholarship (<https://www.rsu.lv/en/international-cooperation/mobility-programmes/erasmus-outgoing-students>). RSU also accepts foreign students within the Erasmus+ program (<https://www.rsu.lv/en/international-cooperation/mobility-programmes/erasmus-outgoing-students>). To help students overcome difficulties, especially foreign students, the RSU has established the Student Services unit. This unit aims to assist current and future students with both their academic and daily needs. During the EG assessment visit to the RSU Student Services, it was observed that the unit is well-equipped, operates 24/7, and can provide advice on the study process, general information about RSU structural units, or even help a foreign student buy a public transport ticket. Students seeking information can contact Student Services in person, by phone, or by email. Most inquiries handled by Student Services come from foreign or exchange students.

However, despite the well-organised attraction of international students and student exchange at the university level, no incoming or outgoing mobility can be observed within the Study Field "Internal Security and Civil Protection" (Annex 8.2 8.2_Anx_Sat_data_on_stud_mobility_IDCA of the SER,). Meetings with management, academic staff, and employers indicate that mobility opportunities are extremely limited due to several factors: students work full-time, studies are conducted only in Latvian, and students need special security clearance to participate in certain study courses.

The lack of student mobility was already observed during the previous attestation and long-term

Recommendation 13 from the previous attestation (Annex 11: 11_Anx_StD_Recommendation_Implementation_Plan of the SER) stated: "To improve student mobility, RSU should seek an agreement with the National Police that would allow students to temporarily suspend their duties to focus on their studies". RSU acknowledges that this recommendation has not been implemented, primarily due to practical challenges. The EG accepts that this explanation is valid for students participating in whole-semester exchanges which require them to be absent from professional duties in Latvia. However, the EG suggests that it might still be feasible for students to undertake shorter visits, ranging from one to three days to neighbouring countries.

The above-mentioned restrictions do not apply to the recently launched study programme "Protection of Economic Security". Since the programme was licensed on 02.08.2023. and first students were registered on 1st of October 2023, none of the students have gone on ERASMUS+ mobility. Considering the development of the study programmes, RSU plans to promote mobility of students and lecturers at future stages of studies (SER, p.155).

During the assessment visit meetings with current students and graduates, regret was expressed about the lack of opportunities to exchange learning experiences with students of related studies from other countries.

The EG expresses concern that without international experience students' ability to adequately assess the quality of their studies can be negatively impacted.

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

RSU has established strong cooperation with various state institutions, which plays a crucial role in the development and implementation of its study programmes, particularly in the Study Field of "Internal Security and Civil Protection". Overall, the collaboration between RSU and the ISA is a key factor in the success of the study field, providing students with valuable practical experience and ensuring that the program is aligned with the needs of the industry. This partnership also contributes to the RSU research efforts and helps maintain high standards of education and training. The RSU has developed a system and procedures for the attraction of the teaching staff from abroad within the study field, the system is effective. Teaching staff participate in both outgoing and incoming mobility, which provides added value to the implementation of the study process and the quality of studies.

However, during the reporting period, RSU has not made any improvements to improve student mobility, and outgoing student mobility has not been recorded within Study Field. The lack of student mobility can negatively affect the study outcomes, as students have no opportunity to compare the education they receive at RSU with that of other countries and request improvements if necessary.

Strengths:

- 1) Successful and close cooperation within the ISA consortium;
- 2) Employers are actively involved in the realisation of study programmes at all stages from guest lectures to providing internship opportunities;
- 3) A wide range of cooperation agreements with foreign universities that ensure Erasmus mobility, as well as a well-developed infrastructure for the reception of foreign exchange students; it ensures great possibilities to enforce internationalisation of the study programme and start at least with short-term mobilities;
- 4) The university has the ability to establish international relations and attract foreign students.

Weaknesses:

- 1) Limited possibilities to provide mobility for students, but students expressed interest in that;
- 2) Opportunities to provide students with even short-term international experience are limited because of students' employment contracts.

Assessment of the requirement [3]

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

The EG is convinced that the cooperation between RSU, other educational institutions, state institutions, and employers (Annex 7 of the SER) effectively helps achieve the set study goals. However, the EG also expresses concern that the challenge to realize student mobility could have impact on the study development, as students could additionally have the opportunity to broaden their experience with comparing the education at RSU with that of other countries and recommend improvements if necessary. (SER, Annex 8.2
8.2_Anx_Sat_data_on_stud_mobility_IDCA).

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

Analysis

1.6.1.

During the reporting period, significant steps were taken to implement the expert recommendations from the previous accreditation and improve the Study Field. The previous accreditation was completed in the 2018-2019 academic year, and since then, several key developments occurred. Two new programmes—the Professional Master's (second cycle) study programme "Protection of Economic Security" and the First cycle professional higher education study programme "Police Work"—were both licensed on August 2, 2023. Additionally, the Joint Academic Master's (second cycle) study programme "Economic Security" was incorporated into the accredited study field by a decision made in December 2023.

In response to recommendations from the previous accreditation experts, the RSU appears to have largely carefully reviewed and adapted them to suit the specifics of the Study Field and its programmes. The EG begins this current analysis with an overview and then considers those recommendations that do not appear to the EG as being fully followed through.

The Student Council was advised to engage more actively with students from the First cycle professional higher education study programme "Police Work". The SER explains that since the autumn semester of 2020/2021, representatives from the Student Council, along with Student Services and the Library, have participated in introductory lectures to inform students about available support. Moreover, the RSU revised the SWOT analysis to reflect internal weaknesses and threats to the field of study, ensuring a clear plan for maintaining strengths and addressing weaknesses.

Recommendations also emphasised the need to evaluate and enhance the development plan for the First cycle professional higher education study programme "Police Work", particularly in relation to progression to a future Master's. As a result, in 2019, an additional study module in law was added to the professional Master's programme in "Legal Science", enabling graduates from First cycle professional higher education study programme "Police Work" to continue their studies and obtain a professional law qualification. The Joint Academic Master's (second cycle) study programme "Economic Security" was also introduced, and by 2023, the institution began offering further studies in the Master's programme 'Protection of Economic Security (all three programmes are the subjects of the current accreditation).

Further recommendations focused on improving feedback mechanisms for students, primarily by increasing student participation in course evaluation questionnaires. Efforts to enhance student involvement in scientific research were also noted, with faculty members encouraged to engage in

research projects where possible. Finally, a suggestion was made to promote student mobility, though it was acknowledged that the context-specific nature of police work in Latvia makes studying abroad less feasible.

Long Term Recommendation 6 was that the 'RSU should re-evaluate the development plans of the First cycle professional higher education study programme "Police Work" in the following areas: involvement of academic staff in mobility activities. The RSU argues in Annex 11 that this recommendation has been implemented through the signing of an Erasmus + agreement with a German university in 2019. Although this is indeed the case, the EG believes it falls somewhat short of the more general recommendation made in the previous visit.

Long Term Recommendation 12 was that 'the management of the study programme should more actively promote scientific research. This should be done not only in terms of teaching staff, but also in terms of student involvement. Specific, measurable, achievable and relevant objectives should be developed to ensure the further development of scientific research. Objectives should be continuously monitored and, if necessary, re-evaluated. The evaluation indicators should be broader, for example not only looking at the total number of publications in the field of study, but also at the number of publications per individual lecturer.' The RSU's response is essentially that academic staff on the "Police Work" programme, though primarily practitioners in public institutions and not regularly involved in research, have opportunities to participate in research projects as their time and capacity permit. This appears essentially a re-iteration of the previous position adopted by the RSU in the earlier accreditation process.

Long Term Recommendation 13 was "to improve student mobility, RSU should seek an agreement with the National Police that would allow students to temporarily suspend their duties in order to devote themselves to their studies". The RSU acknowledges that this recommendation has not been implemented, primarily because of the practical difficulty of doing so. The EG accepts this explanation applies to students taking whole semesters as an exchange (and hence being away from professional duties in Latvia) but would wish to argue that it might still be possible for students to undertake one to three day visits to neighbouring countries.

Recommendation 14 was that the "RSU should consider upgrading the current study programme "Police Work" to attract students from the wider law enforcement field, seeking additional funding from other partnerships where appropriate". In its response the RSU explains that other law enforcement officials are well catered for elsewhere in the Latvian higher education sector and the EG accepts this argument.

Long Term Recommendation 15 was that the "RSU should re-evaluate its current aim to establish the First cycle professional higher education study programme "Police Work" as an "internationally competitive study programme" due to unavoidable constraints. However, the ability to offer a number of the programme's courses to international students may be an intermediate goal". In its response the RSU states that "Foreign citizens cannot be in the service of the State Police because they are not Latvian citizens". However, this was not the intention of the EG in the earlier accreditation - it was to open up some of the courses (not the whole programme and qualification) to law enforcement officers from other countries.

Short Term Recommendation 5 for the Professional Master's (second cycle) study programme "Protection of Economic Security" was to 'ensure that within no more than two years, the study programme complies with the external regulatory framework, which stipulates that upon completion of a professional master's study programme, a professional qualification must also be awarded'. The RSU explains that this has only been partially completed and work remains to be done. Working groups are actively developing the professional standard, with the Ministry of the Interior reviewing and conceptually supporting the project. In a mutual meeting, an agreement was reached for the RSU to establish and lead the working group for the economic security protection specialist standard. Consequently, the RSU Rector issued Order No. 1PB-2/5/2024 on January 3, 2024, officially establishing the working group.

Short Term Recommendation 11 for the Professional Master's (second cycle) study programme "Protection of Economic Security" was to 'Promote student mobility (including internships) within the framework of ERASMUS+, CEPOL, or other programmes. The RSU explains that this has not been implemented but their reason given (every academic year, RSU students are informed about mobility opportunities and are provided with all necessary support to facilitate mobility) does not seem to be directly addressing the recommendation. However, during the current assessment visit the EG found evidence in interviews with staff and students that whilst mobility possibilities are 'advertised' the students themselves are reluctant to undertake them.

Overall, the actions taken demonstrate the RSU's commitment to fulfilling accreditation recommendations and improving the quality and structure of its study programmes, albeit with some work left to do to meet all the recommendations.

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

During the reporting period, the RSU made significant progress in implementing the expert recommendations from the previous accreditation, focusing on improvements within the Study Field "Internal Security and Civil Protection". Key developments included the licensing of two new programmes—the Professional Master's (second cycle) study programme "Protection of Economic Security" and the First cycle professional higher education study programme "Police Work"—as well as the inclusion of the Joint Academic Master's (second cycle) study programme "Economic Security" (with Daugavpils University) into the accredited Study Field. These actions demonstrate the RSU's commitment to enhancing its offerings in line with accreditation advice.

The RSU has largely addressed recommendations, including revisions to the SWOT analysis and improvements to student engagement, such as increased involvement of the Student Council in the "Police Work" programme. Additionally, steps have been taken to align the "Police Work" programme with progression into further studies, evidenced by the introduction of a law module in 2019, which allows students to continue in the Professional Master's programme in "Legal Science". Despite these advancements, certain recommendations, particularly around scientific research involvement and mobility, remain only partially fulfilled.

The RSU has made progress in promoting research, though faculty members, primarily practitioners, participate in projects as time allows. However, the institution's response on this matter mirrors earlier positions from previous accreditations, indicating that more active promotion of research, especially student involvement, may still be necessary. Similarly, while agreements were made to support academic staff mobility, practical challenges have limited the full implementation of student mobility, particularly within police work, due to the nature of the profession.

Overall, the RSU has shown a strong commitment to fulfilling many of the accreditation recommendations, with improvements in programme structure, student engagement, and planning. However, further work is needed to fully implement recommendations related to research promotion, student mobility, and compliance with professional qualification frameworks.

Strengths:

- 1) The RSU successfully licensed two new programmes—"Protection of Economic Security" and "Police Work"—and incorporated the joint Master's programme "Economic Security" into its accredited Study Field, expanding professional opportunities;
- 2) Significant efforts have been made to address expert recommendations, including revising the SWOT analysis and improving programme development plans, particularly for "Police Work";
- 3) The RSU has taken steps to enhance student engagement, such as involving the Student Council in introductory lectures for new students and increasing efforts to explain internal quality processes;
- 4) The introduction of additional law modules within an existing "Legal Science" Master's programme has created a clear pathway for "graduates" of "Police Work" to pursue advanced degrees and professional qualifications.

Weaknesses:

- 1) While efforts have been made to encourage research involvement, staff members' participation is limited; this reflects a continuation of previous challenges, and the recommendation to more actively promote research remains partially unfulfilled;
- 2) Despite agreements to support mobility, practical challenges related to the nature of police work in Latvia have limited the implementation of student mobility programmes.

Assessment of the requirement [4]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The vast majority of recommendations have been implemented (excluding those whose implementation proved to be impossible on practical or professional grounds). However, a number of the recommendations made have only been partially implemented, but the EG notes that there are still several years remaining to do so.

1.7. Recommendations for the Study Field

Short-term recommendations

1) The RSU should prioritise expanding its interdisciplinary collaboration, particularly across its three research platforms—medical, public health, and social sciences. By promoting cross-platform initiatives, the university can better address multifaceted global challenges, such as cybersecurity and bioterrorism, with an interdisciplinary approach that integrates medical, technological, and social dimensions. This could be achieved by launching at least three interdisciplinary research projects by the end of 2026, which bring together experts from these diverse fields, fostering a more holistic research output.

2) By the end of 2026, the RSU should increase the proportion of research funds accessible to all faculty members, with a target of at least 50% of the research budget being available to both early and mid-career researchers alike.

3) Regarding Study Field student engagement in research, the RSU should set a goal to double student participation in internationally relevant research projects by the end of 2026. This can be achieved through the development of research projects that specifically address the interests, and skill sets of students within the 'Internal Security and Civil Protection' Study Field. By creating at least three new research assistantships or internships in international research projects, the RSU can better integrate students into high-impact research.

4) Regarding the lecturer workload issue and the need for better role clarity between academic and support staff, the Study Field management should establish a structured workload assessment and redistribution plan by 2025. This plan could involve reducing non-essential administrative tasks for academic staff, delegating more to support personnel, and introducing a clear separation of teaching and research duties. By Q4 2025, a pilot scheme could be initiated within the Faculty of Social Sciences, with the goal of improving efficiency and achieving a significant improvement in staff workload balance as reported in annual surveys.

5) To address the drop in the evaluation of study courses, conduct a detailed analysis of student feedback and course evaluations within the next 12 months. Identify key factors contributing to the decline in satisfaction and implement targeted improvements, such as adjustments to course content, teaching methods, or resources, by the beginning of the following academic semester.

6) After the re-accreditation process is completed, update the RSU website within one month to reflect all changes in the programmes. Ensure that the updated information includes accurate descriptions of programme content, duration, admission requirements, to help prospective students make informed decisions.

Long-term recommendations

1) By the end of 2028 (or until the next accreditation), the RSU should aim to raise the median number of indexed publications from zero to at least two per Study Field member, particularly through structured research mentoring programmes and targeted research grants. This could involve establishing a new initiative where faculty staff with fewer than two publications over the past three years are paired with high-output researchers to co-author papers and learn from their experience.

2) The RSU should build on its existing technological advancements by ensuring that new innovative technologies, such as AR and VR, are fully integrated into the Study Field curricula by the end of 2027. This includes making immersive learning tools accessible to all students in fields like criminalistics and ensuring that the simulation rooms are equipped with the latest forensic technologies. A target could be set to equip the current 'forensics' room by 2027 with advanced forensic software and tools, providing hands-on learning environments that mirror real-world investigative processes.

3) The Study Field should bolster its marketing efforts to increase international student enrollment by 20% by 2028. This can be achieved by developing a strategic, targeted digital marketing campaign that highlights the unique selling points of the 'Internal Security and Civil Protection' Study Field, such as its ISO 9001 accreditation and collaboration with the Internal Security Academy.

II - "Police Work" ASSESSMENT

II - "Police Work" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1.

The First cycle professional higher education study programme "Police Work" (hereinafter FCSP "Police Work") fully complies with the strategic goals of RSU and goals of the study field "Internal Security and Civil Protection".

In the RSU Development Strategy 2022-2027, the main development goals of RSU are innovative studies in a contemporary environment and research of health, wildlife and humanities, including social responsibility for sustainable development of the university and society, twinning for integration in the labour market and internationalisation and reputation for international recognition. The RSU Study Field and the FCSP "Police Work" are developed based on the RSU development strategy. RSU develops an offer of locally and internationally competitive study programmes in accordance with the labour market demand in Latvia and Europe for special, integrated specialist competences, increasing also the number of state-funded study places for studies in the areas of social sciences. The FCSP "Police Work" is oriented towards the local labour market, but visiting lecturers from abroad should be involved for its successful development. It is determined both by the strategic settings of RSU and the "Internal Security Academy" implementation objectives and

quality indicators. The programme is based on the focus of the RSU strategy, such as synergy between the study process and the sector, which defines that the content of the programme is up to date, it is implemented through different forms of cooperation, feedback from employers and alumni, involvement of sectoral specialists in academic work and work-based studies. Competence education is ensured through clearly formulated learning outcomes, their sequential mastering and assessment. The link to the sector provides evidence-based learning and teaching. Integration of research into the study process and use of digital are important for successful programme development (SER, p.181). During the site visit, in interviews with employers, the EG received evidence that this programme is developed and maintained in very close cooperation with employers under the Consortium of "Internal Security Academy". The State Police is the main provider of students to the study programme. The studies in the programme "Police Work" (LQF/EQF 6) continues the education acquired in the College of State Police study programme (LQF/EQF 5). The programme is developed in close cooperation with the College of State Police, University of Latvia and related state institutions.

The FCSP "Police Work" fully aligns with the study field "Internal Security and Civil Protection." It provides a comprehensive education necessary for effective operation within the internal security system and prepares professional specialists capable of ensuring public safety and stability. The Study Field encompasses programmes that train specialists in the fields of internal security, public order, and civil protection. The main objective of this field is to ensure the safety of the state and society by responding to threats and risks, as well as promoting stability and security. The content of the FCSP "Police Work" directly corresponds to the requirements of this Study Field, as its goal is to prepare professional police officers who can maintain public order and protect citizens from various threats. The training of police officers is a crucial component of the internal security system since they are responsible for upholding the law, maintaining public order, and combating crime—key aspects of the study field. The FCSP "Police Work" is interdisciplinary, covering both legal and social sciences. This ensures that graduates are prepared not only for work in the police force but also for collaboration with other institutions involved in internal security and civil protection, such as fire and rescue services, border guards, state security agencies, and others. Study courses of the FCSP "Police Work" have been created in compliance with the specification of the police work and requirements set out in related laws and regulations. Development of the study programme has been performed in accordance with the latest political planning documents and conceptual guidelines of the sectoral development (SER, p.182).

2.1.2.

The FCSP "Police Work" is a first cycle (second level) professional higher education study programme, provided after the short cycle (first level) professional study programme at the College of State Police. The goal of the study programme is to train highly qualified specialists in the field of security and crime fighting, police work, ensuring the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competences in accordance with the requirements of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (LQF) Level 6 and the State Police Senior Officer (Level 6 professional qualification) occupational standard, including the requirements of law enforcement authorities, the labour market, and the interests of society (SER, p.175).

The education classification code of the study programme is 44861. The first part of the code "44" refers to the type of educational programme – the second level professional higher education with the fifth level professional qualification, continuation of the study programme with the code "41"; the duration of which in full-time studies is at least one to two years (SER, p.182; <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/291524-noteikumi-par-latvijas-izglitiba-klasifikaciju>). The duration of the full-time, intramural study programme "Police Work" is two years, while the volume of the programme is 120 ECTS, which corresponds to what is indicated in Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 305 "Regulations on the National Standard of the Professional Higher Education" for the volume of the study programme to be implemented after short-cycle study programme – at least 60 ECTS. The

second part of the code “861” of the study programme refers to the thematic area – protection of persons and property (SER, p.182; <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/291524-noteikumi-par-latvijas-izglitiba-klasifikaciju>). The title, objective, tasks and learning outcomes of the study programme indicate to compliance with the mentioned thematic area.

The objectives and content of the study programme comply with the occupational standard of Senior State Police Officer agreed at the Tripartite Cooperation Sub-Council of Vocational Education and Employment, meeting of 14 December 2022 (SER Annex 18.2. “Compliance of the Study Programme with the Professional Standard (Mapping)”). In the end of studies graduates obtain qualification of “Senior State Police Officer” (SER, p.178; SER Annex 24.1. Sample Diploma and Diploma Supplement). Final examination upon the completion of the study programme is State examination, which includes thesis development and defence.

The study programme meets the current need to provide professional studies that meet the requirements of the economy, culture, national defence and security, as well as social needs, are based on the scientific theoretical foundations of the field, meet the profession standards, and are practically applicable. This is reflected in the mutual coherence of the objectives, tasks, and outcomes of the study programme and in the aims and outcomes of the specific subordinated study courses at the level of knowledge, skills, and competences. The education obtained allows the continuation of studies in the professional (second cycle) Master’s study programme “Protection of Economic Security” (LQF/EQF 7) in the same study field “Internal Security and Civil Protection” (SER, p.182).

The study programme provides studies in two formats:

- full time studies, 2 years, in Latvian language, 120 CP,
- part time studies, 2 years and 6 months, in Latvian language, 120 CP (SER, p.177-178).

Admission requirements are the same for both formats: short-cycle professional higher education and qualification as a Junior State Police Officer or equivalent higher education in police work. Applicants are matriculated in accordance with the conditions of the consortium “Internal Security Academy” and in accordance with the list compiled by the Ministry of the Interior, taking into account the selection requirements and evaluation criteria established by the investigative authorities (SER, p.177-178).

Under the “Internal Security Academy” agreement, the programme is intended to be implemented in a part-time format, which is currently the format in which students are enrolled and studying. Full-time regular studies are not planned at present, but the need for such a format may arise in the future (SER, p.183).

Graduates of the study programme are eligible to enter Master’s programme and are eligible to work in state and local government institutions, commercial companies, law enforcement agencies including the State Police, the State Revenue Service, credit institutions (SER Annex 24.1. Sample Diploma and Diploma Supplement).

The title, code, professional qualification, aims, tasks, learning outcomes and admission requirements of the study programme are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation in full time and part time formats, as well as the implementation of the study programme in Latvian language, are reasonable and justified.

2.1.3.

As a part of RSU internal consolidation, the Director of study programme became the Director of the study programmes group “Internal Security”. With the introduction of the new credits, the volume of the study programme has changed from 80 Latvian credits to 120 credits under the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (for more information see SER Annex 28 “Recommendations for the Transition to the New Credit System”). The main place of implementation of the study programme is Kuldīgas street 9C. However, the ISA consortium members insist that the study programme is also implemented in the premises of the College of State Police on Ezermalas street

10, where the study courses of the specialisation “Operational work” are implemented, and practical work is organised in the special library. It is in line with the ISA objective to share resources and to ensure sufficient study programme coverage (SER, p.180). During the site visit, the EG get evidence from students, that classes are not very often organised in special premises of the College of State Police.

2.1.4.

The FCSP “Police Work” is developed in close collaboration with various state institutions, including the Ministry of the Interior, the State Police, and other law enforcement agencies. This collaboration ensures that the curriculum is relevant and up to date, providing students with practical skills and knowledge that are directly applicable to their future careers. The programme offers a comprehensive curriculum that includes theoretical knowledge, practical training, and research activities. This combination ensures that graduates are well-rounded and capable of addressing complex security issues.

According to the founding agreement of the consortium ISA, the FCSP “Police Work” is financed from the state budget funds of the ISA programme. The study programme is implemented only in Latvian and there are no foreign students within the study programme.

Interviews with both students and graduates confirmed that the studies provide growth in the workplace. Even in the first year of studies, students receive more recognition or promotion at work and are given more difficult tasks.

During a meeting with employers' representatives, the catastrophic lack of employees in the State Police was highlighted. Currently, there are 871 vacancies, including highly qualified positions. Therefore, the State Police greatly values its cooperation with RSU and the opportunity to train high-level employees and future heads of structural units. The vast majority of graduates continue to work in the State Police after completing their studies. The inclusion of interdisciplinary courses, such as economics, law, and management, further enhances the employability of graduates, even outside of law enforcement entities.

The representatives from the Corruption Prevention Bureau, the State Revenue Service, and the Internal Security Office also confirmed that RSU graduates are highly valued and welcomed in their institutions.

Annex 16 of the SER provides detailed statistics on the number of graduates from the FCSP “Police Work.” According to the data, the total number of enrolled students in the study programme is 282, and the number of graduates has reached 154. Additionally, 20 dropouts occurred.

2.1.5.

Not applicable.

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

The FCSP “Police Work” fully complies with the objectives and learning outcomes of the study field “Internal Security and Civil Protection” and strategic goals of RSU.

The study programme is oriented towards the local labour market, but visiting lecturers from abroad should be involved for its successful development.

The programme is developed under Consortium of “Internal Security Academy”, which ensures very close cooperation with employers, College of State Police and University of Latvia. The State Police is the main provider of students to the study programme. The studies in the programme “Police Work” (LQF/EQF 6) continues the education acquired in the College of State Police study programme (LQF/EQF 5).

The FCSP “Police Work” is interdisciplinary, covering both legal and social sciences. This ensures that graduates are prepared not only for work in the police force but also for collaboration with other institutions involved in internal security and civil protection, such as fire and rescue services, border guards, state security agencies, and others. Study courses of the study programme “Police Work”

have been created in compliance with the specification of the police work and requirements set out in related laws and regulations.

The FCSP “Police Work” is a first cycle, second level professional higher education study programme. The goal of the study programme is to train highly qualified specialists in the field of security and crime fighting, police work, ensuring the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competences in accordance with the requirements of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (LQF) Level 6 and the State Police Senior Officer (Level 6 professional qualification) occupational standard, including the requirements of law enforcement authorities, the labour market, and the interests of society.

The education classification code of the study programme is 44861. The first part of the code “44” refers to the type of educational programme – the second level professional higher education with the fifth level professional qualification. The second part of the code “861” of the study programme refers to the thematic area – protection of persons and property.

The study programme provides studies in full time and part time formats. Admission requirements are the same for both formats. Under the “Internal Security Academy” agreement, the programme is intended to be implemented in a part-time format, full-time regular studies are not planned at present, but the need for such a format may arise in the future.

Graduates of the study programme are eligible to enter Master’s programme and are eligible to work in state and local government institutions, commercial companies, law enforcement agencies including the State Police, the State Revenue Service, credit institutions.

The title, code, professional qualification, aims, tasks, learning outcomes and admission requirements of the study programme are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation in full time and part time formats, as well as the implementation of the study programme in Latvian language, are reasonable and justified.

With the introduction of the new credits, the volume of the study programme has changed from 80 Latvian credits to 120 ECTS credits.

Consortium of “Internal Security Academy” promotes the idea of sharing premises with the College of State Police for “Operational work” classes to ensure efficient application of study programme resources.

Strengths:

- 1) The study programme fully complies with objectives, tasks and learning outcomes of the related study field;
- 2) The study programme complies with RSU strategic goals;
- 3) The title, code, professional qualification, aims, tasks, learning outcomes and admission requirements of the study programme are interrelated;
- 4) The programme is developed under Consortium ISA, which ensures very close cooperation with employers, College of State Police and University of Latvia;
- 5) Study programme fully complies with all the related regulatory requirements.

Weaknesses:

- 1) The study programme is oriented mostly to the local market and has lack of internationalisation;
- 2) The study programme is in Latvian language only, it limits the opportunity to invite lecturers from abroad;
- 3) All current students are only part-time students, and because of requirement of Consortium ISA it is not possible to admit full time students;
- 4) Rather specific admission requirements limit the number and scope of potential students;
- 5) Premises of the College of State Police are not very often used for the classes of the study programme.

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1.

The courses in the FCSP “Police Work” are designed with consideration of the current industry requirements and the challenges that police officers face in their daily work. The courses cover a wide range of topics, from legal foundations and criminology to operational tactics and conflict resolution methods. The programme is structured so that its graduates acquire the necessary practical skills and competencies that are highly valued in the job market (SER, p.188).

To ensure the relevance of the courses to the labour market needs, the programme is developed in close cooperation with industry specialists and employers. Police structures and other representatives of the security sector participate in course development and provide feedback on the required competencies and skills. This ensures that the curriculum is not only theoretically grounded but also practically applicable, meeting the labour market demand for competent specialists (SER, p. 189).

The courses in the FCSP “Police Work” are relevant and closely aligned with industry needs, labour market requirements, and scientific trends. The programme provides students with the necessary theoretical knowledge and practical skills essential for modern police work. Regular updates to the courses, employer involvement, and the integration of scientific research ensure that graduates are well-prepared for careers in the security sector, able to adapt to a changing work environment, and capable of using the latest technologies and methods in their work (SER, p. 189).

Study programme is in compliance with the National Educational Standard.

Study Programme is in compliance with the Field-Specific Regulations (state standard “Police Work”).

In an EG interview with students they noticed that they want to know what other police departments are doing and they would like to undertake internships abroad.

EG interviews with employers and other external stakeholders and with students confirmed that the content of the study programme is topical, the content of the study courses / modules is interconnected and complementary, corresponds to the objectives of the programme and ensures the achievement of learning outcomes, as well as meets the needs of the industry, labour market and scientific trends.

2.2.2.

Not applicable.

2.2.3.

Lectures of FCSP “Police Work” are held as regular lectures, in exceptional cases providing Zoom remote connection for students who, for objective reasons, need to be outside the educational institution during the implementation of the programme (SER, p. 190).

The main study methods are: the main task of lectures is to provide students with the basics of theoretical knowledge. Teaching staff read them using up-to-date and interactive methods, including multimedia projectors, video materials, handout and presentation materials, special visual aids, etc. At seminars, students listen to and discuss independently prepared reports and reports on the relevant topic of the study course. During practical classes, students learn to use theoretical knowledge to solve specific professional problems in practice (typical situations) (SER, p. 191).

Study methods are aimed at developing independent, critical and creative thinking in students, which facilitates communication of students, ability to work in groups; patriotism, humanism, respect for human rights, honesty, creative use of knowledge, acquisition of scientific cognition methods, curiosity and autonomy in the performance of professional duties are developed. For a study course involving two or more lecturers, the leading lecturer who is responsible for the development and updating description of the study course has been determined prior to the beginning of the semester. RSU, in cooperation with employers, develops placement programmes (SER, p. 191).

A description of the study course has been developed for each study course, which defines all the requirements to be fulfilled in order to obtain certain learning outcomes; the requirements for

commencing learning of a study course have been defined; the objectives for the implementation of the study course and the planned learning outcomes have been determined (SER, p. 191).

In an EG interview with students they were satisfied and made recommendations to have some lectures from other countries to be involved in the FCSP "Police Work".

The EG on-site visit, the SER and interviews with teaching staff and students confirms that the study implementation methods contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study courses and the study programme. Student-centred learning and teaching principles are considered.

2.2.4.

At the end of studies, students in accordance with the direction of specialisation have placement in institutions subordinate to the system of the Ministry of the Interior. The duration of placement in FCSP "Police Work" is four weeks and it is implemented in semester 4 (full- and part-time studies) (SER, p. 193).

In cooperation with the employers, RSU provides the students with the placements and in a timely manner informs them about the requirements of the placement. RSU enters into an agreement with the employers who provide placement regarding the procedures for organising placement. Placement in the respective study direction is a part of the study process the purpose of which is to establish, enhance and practically use the obtained theoretical knowledge in the respective profession in standard and non-standard situations; to summarise and analyse respective empirical materials which are necessary for development of the final paper (SER, p. 193).

EG on site visit, SER and interviews with teaching staff, students and employers: the opportunities and provision of internship offered to students, as well as the organisation of work are effective. The tasks of the internship are related to the learning outcomes achievable. The placement complies with the requirements of regulatory enactments.

2.2.5.

Not applicable.

2.2.6.

The topics of the final papers offered to RSU students are updated annually and the same procedure will be provided to the students of the "Police work" course. In accordance with the ISA agreement and agreements between RSU and law enforcement authorities on the training of specialists, the Ministry of the Interiors submits recommended/priority research topics. The proposed topics are those on which the State Police wish to receive research. However, students may modify, develop or derive them according to their work experience, preferences and research interests, as well as with additional coordination with their immediate employer. The suggested range of topics in no way restricts the student's choice of research but suggests directions for research. Students also have the possibility to propose their own research topics. The topics of the theses are discussed with the chosen supervisor, while the topics of the final research theses are, in addition, discussed at the Faculty Council meeting. Any adjustments must be re-checked with the Faculty Council (SER, p. 194).

The topics of the research papers are submitted by the students on the topics and problems in law enforcement agencies, which have become topical in the performance of their duties. Students very often choose to continue their research in their theses and final research papers also on topics that were developed and defended at the National Police College (SER, p. 194).

The EG on-site visit, the SER with annexes and the interviews with teaching staff, students and employers confirms that the topics of students' final theses are relevant to the field and correspond to the study programme.

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

The content of the FCSP "Police Work" is topical, corresponds to the objectives of the programme

and ensures the achievement of learning outcomes, as well as meets the needs of the industry, labour market and scientific trends.

The study implementation methods contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study courses and the study programme. Student-centred learning and teaching principles are in use.

The opportunities and provision of internships offered to students, as well as the organisation of work are effective. The tasks of the internship are related to the learning outcomes achievable.

Strengths:

- 1) Study programme meets the needs of the labour market;
- 2) Study implementation methods contribute the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes;
- 3) Student-centred learning and teaching principles are in use and important for the RSU.

Weaknesses:

- 1) Lack of students' mobility options.

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

N/A

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1.

Developers of the FCSP "Police Work", including the experts involved, considered it essential to consider examples of good practice from Lithuania, Estonia and Finland, which show that a modern study base and infrastructure are essential for high-quality modern higher education. Such an approach identified and provided the elements of the study base necessary for the full implementation of the FCSP "Police Work", which are available and have been developed since the introduction of the study direction (SER, p. 196).

Auditoriums equipped in a modern way and maintained in good quality, which are fully compatible with the study methods planned for the implementation of the FCSP "Police Work", including e-learning environment, video lectures, online visiting lectures, debates, business games, innovative technological solutions in the study and teaching process, etc.; the e-studies environment, which includes full study programme course information for both the study process and the achievement of learning outcomes, including practical tasks for the verification of knowledge in the e-environment, the assessment system in the e-environment, the provision of a platform for discussion in the e-environment, etc.; RSU library infrastructure, which is appropriate for complete support of the modern study, scientific and research process, including for convenient availability of study materials on-site and online, quick ordering of new materials in accordance with needs of the FCSP "Police Work" and content of study courses; forensic laboratory, where forensic techniques can be mastered in practice; RSU Medical Education Technology Centre, which is the only simulation centre in Latvia and the largest in the Baltic States, with the right infrastructure and equipment in one place to ensure acquisition and improvement of skills, as well as implementation of simulation programmes in various sectors (SER, p. 196).

The resources and provision of the study programme comply with conditions of the implementation of the study programme and for the achievement of learning outcomes. To provide students with

flexible and student-oriented environment, make it possible to learn the study courses provided in the programme and do research in different stages, different resources available to students, including study rooms, material technical bases, tools and equipment (for the preparation, combining, integration, visualisation and dissemination of study and research materials), information networks (internet, intranet, Moodle), databases (library network, RSU research centre databases, free access to databases, book resource database), materials (research materials, scientific publications, including Web of Science and Scopus publications, archives), services (administrative, financial, IT and network support services, access to official statistics), computerised applications and software (Standart Office, SPSS, GIS, online data visualisation tools and software, online communication tools). The programme uses the necessary technical equipment (computers with licensed software, projectors, interactive boards, etc.) and different teaching methods are used (group work, role plays, simulations, seminars, discussions, etc.) (SER, p. 197).

The results of the student questionnaire confirm that students are satisfied with the planning of lectures and classes, availability of information, equipment and availability of materials. The improvement of the study programme during the study process was also appreciated. As part of the survey, students also indicate the desired improvements in the study programme, which the lecturers together with the programme director evaluate and implement as necessary (SER, p. 197).

EG on site visit, SER and interviews with teaching staff, students and employers: there are some concerns training ground equipment but the study provision, informative provision (including library), material and technical provision and financial provision comply with specific features and the conditions for the implementation of the study programme, create prerequisites for the achievement of the learning outcomes and indicate the possibility to ensure a high-quality study process.

2.3.2.

Not applicable.

2.3.3.

The FCSP “Police Work” in Latvian is funded by financial resources from legal entities. The funding amount per study place is EUR 5,207 for both full-time regular and part-time regular studies. In the first year of full-time studies, it is planned to admit 45 students, with an anticipated dropout of 4 students in the second year. For part-time regular studies, it is planned to admit 35 students in the first year, with an anticipated dropout of 3 students in the second year, and the number of students remaining constant in the third year. The total projected number of students in full-time regular studies is 127, while the minimum required for the programme to be profitable is 119. Cost savings can be achieved by optimising the number of groups, ensuring profitability with an intake of 36 students in the first year. For the development of the study programme and capital investments, EUR 35,941 per year is potentially available based on the planned intake (SER, p. 198).

After the EG on-site visit, SER and interviews with teaching staff, management staff, students and employers can confirm that the funding available to the study programme, funding sources and the use of funding ensures full implementation of the study process and facilitates the development of the study programme.

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

The developers of the programme considered good practices from other countries and ensured the availability of necessary study resources.

The study provision, informative provision, material and technical provision and financial provision comply with specific features and the conditions for the implementation of the study programme, create prerequisites for the achievement of the learning outcomes and indicate the possibility to ensure a high-quality study process. Except Forensic training ground equipment which is not at a high level.

The funding available to the study programme, funding sources and the use of funding ensures full implementation of the study process and facilitates the development of the study programme.

Strengths:

- 1) The results of the student questionnaire confirm that students are satisfied with the planning of lectures and classes, availability of information, equipment and availability of materials;
- 2) The study programme "Police Work" in Latvian is funded by financial resources from legal entities;
- 3) Auditoriums equipped in a modern way and maintained in good quality, which are fully compatible with the study methods planned for the implementation of study programme "Police Work", including e-learning environment.

Weaknesses:

- 1) There are some concerns about training ground equipment.

Assessment of the requirement [6]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The study provision, informative provision (including library), material and technical provision and financial provision comply with specific features and the conditions for the implementation of the study programme, create prerequisites for the achievement of the learning outcomes and indicate the possibility to ensure a high-quality study process.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1.

Table 1 of Annex 24.7 of the SER lists 29 lecturers that contribute to the 'Police Work' Study Programme. Eleven members of staff have PhDs. Of the 29 staff, 12 are either elected or acting to academic positions (of which two are professors and seven are either acting or full Assistant professors) (ibid). Section 55, Paragraph One, Clause 3 of the Latvian Law on Higher Education Institutions requires at least a total five professors or associate professors and hence the EG concludes that the regulatory requirements are met.

In terms of the qualifications of the teaching staff enabling the aims and the learning outcomes of the Study Programme to be met, this is somewhat more difficult to determine. Table 4 of the Self-Evaluation Report (pp. 200-205) outlines the nine main intended learning outcomes of the Police Work Study Programme, along with examples of academic staff members, their qualifications, and experience, illustrating how these contribute to the achievement of each outcome. The EG examined the CVs of these members of staff (Annex 6.2 of the SER, '6.2_Anx_Teaching_Staff_Biographies_Europass.pdf') and agrees that these staff are suitably qualified and experienced. For courses it is a similar picture (Table 6 of the SER, pp. 206 - 208 inclusive) but in this case the experience and expertise are more derived from professional experience of policing.

2.4.2.

The RSU claims in its SER that there have been no significant changes in the composition of the teaching staff since the licensing of the study programme, except for the departure of two people, whose responsibilities have been taken over by colleagues based on "interchangeability" (SER, p. 209). However, there has been reorganisation, including a single member of staff (who also carries

managerial responsibility) now overseeing the courses previously managed by two others.

Whilst the changes in the teaching staff and the internal consolidation undertaken have not negatively impacted the study programme's quality, there are some potential concerns and areas for improvement. The fact that responsibilities were redistributed on the principle of interchangeability raises questions about the depth of expertise being applied to specific courses. Although two members of staff took over another's, it's unclear whether they possess the same level of expertise in the specialist area of study. Similarly, the transition of a member of staff to taking over multiple courses and acting in a managerial capacity could lead to an over-concentration of responsibilities.

2.4.3.

Not applicable.

2.4.4.

Table 1 of Annex 24.7 of the SER lists 29 lecturers that contribute to the FCSP "Police Work". Annex 6.2 of the SER ('6.2_Anx_Teaching_Staff_Biographies_Europass.pdf') lists the CVs of all staff contributing to the Study Field. Comparing the two Annexes shows that 27 of the 29 staff meet the criteria that in the last six years they have published in peer-reviewed editions, including international editions or five years of practical experience (except for experience in the implementation of the study programme). The EG therefore judges that the RSU is partially compliant in this respect.

2.4.5.

The RSU correctly argues that collaboration among teaching staff is crucial for maintaining the quality and coherence of the FCSP "Police Work" (SER, p. 210). There are regular meetings (and working groups) involving lecturers with the aim of aligning course content, teaching methods, and learning outcomes (interviews with teaching staff). Jointly designed courses, such as those covering both criminal law and operational work, encourage consistency across disciplines, providing students with a unified learning experience.

In addition to internal collaboration, external experts such as State Police officers and prosecutors are involved as guest speakers, integrating real-world practices and current industry trends into the course content (interviews with staff and interviews with employers). During the 2023/2024 academic year, study work defences were organised in cooperation with law enforcement specialists, forming committees to assess student research. This collaboration is expected to continue with a joint thesis defence committee in the future (SER, p. 211).

Following the consolidation process, the Faculty of Social Sciences has expanded its network of cooperation partners and strengthened its security focus. Teaching staff also work closely to regularly update course content, ensuring that it remains relevant and avoids duplication (interviews with teaching staff). At the time of the report, the student-to-staff ratio was notably low at 1.7:1 (compared to international norms), reflecting strong individual attention and support for students (SER, p. 211).

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

The analysis of the CV's reveals that the qualifications and professional experience of the staff are generally aligned with the learning outcomes. However, much of the expertise stems from practical experience in policing, which may need further alignment with the academic depth required for certain courses.

There has been some organisational change within the teaching staff, including the consolidation of roles and responsibilities, particularly in cases where a single member of staff now oversees multiple courses and holds managerial responsibilities. While this reorganisation has not yet negatively impacted the quality of the programme, there are concerns regarding the potential over-concentration of responsibilities and the principle of interchangeability, which could affect the depth

of expertise applied to certain courses.

The involvement of external experts, such as State Police officers and prosecutors, enriches the curriculum by integrating real-world practices into the study programme. This collaboration ensures that students are exposed to current trends in the field, enhancing the relevance of their education. Furthermore, the low student-to-staff ratio allows for individualised attention, which positively contributes to the student learning experience.

In conclusion, while the teaching staff structure of the 'Police Work' Study Programme meets regulatory requirements and fosters collaboration both internally and externally, there are areas for improvement. Specifically, attention should be paid to the distribution of responsibilities and ensuring that all staff members possess the specialised expertise necessary for the courses they oversee. Maintaining a balance between academic and professional qualifications will be critical in ensuring that the study programme continues to meet its intended learning outcomes effectively.

Strengths:

- 1) Regular meetings and working groups among lecturers contribute to aligning course content, teaching methods, and learning outcomes, fostering consistency and coherence across the programme;
- 2) External experts such as State Police officers and prosecutors are involved as guest speakers, ensuring that students are exposed to current practices and professional trends in Police Work;
- 3) Jointly designed courses, such as those integrating criminal law and operational work, promote interdisciplinary learning, offering students a more unified and comprehensive education.

Weaknesses:

- 1) The redistribution of teaching responsibilities based on the principle of interchangeability raises concerns about the depth of expertise being applied to certain courses;
- 2) While the staff has significant professional experience, it is less clear whether their academic qualifications sufficiently align with all the intended learning outcomes. A stronger academic focus in certain areas might be needed to ensure depth;
- 3) Not all staff members meet the requirement of publishing in peer-reviewed editions or having five years of practical experience;
- 4) The dual responsibility of teaching and managing the programme for certain staff could lead to workload issues, potentially impacting their ability to maintain high teaching standards across multiple courses.

Assessment of the requirement [7]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The vast majority (27 of the 29 staff members) meet the criteria that in the last six years they have published in peer-reviewed editions, including international editions or five years of practical experience.

2.5. Assessment of the Compliance

Requirements

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Annex 17.1 describes the compliance of the first cycle professional higher education study programme “Police Work” with the National Education Standard, which matches the required standard.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Professional standard for “Senior State Police Officer” was approved on 14th of December 2022 at the meeting of the Tripartite Sub-Council for Cooperation in Vocational Education and Employment. Qualification of the Senior State Police Officer is equivalent to the sixth level of the Latvian qualification framework (6. LKI).

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Study course materials and descriptions are written in both English and Latvian languages, and they satisfy all requirements set forth in Law on Higher Education Institutions. See Annex 20.1.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Sample of the issued document matches 3rd attachment of “The procedure for issuing documents certifying higher education recognized by the state” regulations and contains all the necessary information. See Annex 24.1.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The academic staff has sufficient Latvian language knowledge indicated by their CVs and the signed certification by the RSU rector confirms that the teaching staff members comply with the Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No. 733 of 7 July 2009. See Annex 24.4 and 6.2.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The study agreement includes all the necessary parts set forth in Latvian legislation (Cabinet of Ministers regulation no. 70). In the agreement the university has not specified its rights. It would also be advisable to expand the agreement and include information about the guarantee of compensation losses. See Annex 24.6.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The university has submitted a rector's signed confirmation that students will have an opportunity to continue their studies in the RSU academic bachelor study programme "Law" if the implementation of the study programme is discontinued. See Annex 24.2.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The university has submitted a rector's signed confirmation that it will compensate all losses to the students of the study programme if it fails to be accredited or loses its license and the student does not agree to study in a different study programme. See Annex 24.3.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Assessment of the requirement [8]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Considering all of the requirements by analysis are fully compliant, the requirement is fulfilled.

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

The FCSP “Police Work” aligns effectively with the objectives and learning outcomes of the “Internal Security and Civil Protection” Study Field and the strategic goals of the RSU. The programme is developed under the Consortium of the ISA, ensuring close cooperation with employers such as the State Police, the College of State Police, and other providers, such as the University of Latvia. This collaboration helps ensure the relevance of the programme to the local labour market, meaning that graduates are, in the main, well-prepared for careers in law enforcement and related sectors. The interdisciplinary focus on both legal and social sciences broadens graduates' potential, equipping them to work with various internal security and civil protection institutions.

One of the key strengths of the programme is its student-centred approach, with well-aligned study implementation methods that support the achievement of the programme's aims and learning outcomes. The structure of the programme ensures that students receive practical, hands-on training, supplemented by the involvement of external experts such as State Police officers and prosecutors, who contribute real-world insights. Additionally, the low student-to-staff ratio enables close attention to student needs, fostering a high-quality learning environment that effectively prepares students for professional challenges.

Despite these strengths, there are areas for improvement, particularly in the realm of internationalisation. The programme is currently focused on the local market, with limited engagement from international lecturers due to its instruction in Latvian. This limits opportunities for students to gain global perspectives in their field.

Another challenge facing the programme is the distribution of teaching responsibilities. While staff members possess significant professional experience, there are concerns about the depth of academic expertise in certain courses. Furthermore, the redistribution of teaching roles based on the principle of interchangeability raises questions about whether staff can maintain the same level of specialised knowledge across multiple subjects. Modernising forensic training ground equipment is another priority to ensure that the programme remains relevant and continues to meet industry standards.

Overall, the “Police Work” study programme is a robust and well-structured set of courses that meets the needs of the labour market and regulatory requirements. Its interdisciplinary approach, collaboration with external experts, and strong partnerships with key institutions ensure that students receive relevant and practical education and training, but there remain a number of challenges to overcome.

Evaluation of the study programme "Police Work"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Police Work"

Short-term recommendations

- 1) The RSU/FSS should establish clear criteria for hiring and retention of 'Police Work' academic teaching staff, ensuring that all staff either publish in peer-reviewed journals or have a minimum of five years of relevant professional experience. Within the next 2 years, all academic staff should meet these criteria. This can be achieved by offering mentorship and support to help staff achieve publication or accumulate the required practical experience. These revised criteria should be in place within six months, and a development pathway for current staff should be ready for implementation at the start of the next academic year.
- 2) A workload assessment should be conducted for staff members balancing both teaching and programme management responsibilities. The assessment and any necessary adjustments should be completed by the next semester, allowing for a more balanced workload before the new academic year begins.
- 3) In the next two years, the institution should implement a plan to modernise the forensic training ground equipment, ensuring that all tools and resources meet current industry standards. The improvement of equipment should be completed by the start of the following academic cycle.
- 4) Within the next academic year, ensure the opportunity to attract guests lecturers from abroad to teach in the study programme.
- 5) By the end of the next academic year, the programme should establish a plan to utilise the special premises of the College of State Police more frequently for practical classes and training sessions. This could be achieved, for example through improved scheduling coordination and formal agreements between the programme and the College of State Police.

Long-term recommendations

- 1) To enhance the internationalisation of the "Police Work" study programme, the RSU should aim to increase the number of visiting lecturers from abroad within the next 2 to 3 years. For example, this might be achieved by offering courses or seminars in English and allocating specific funding to support international academic exchanges.
- 2) The RSU should conduct a feasibility study within the next 2 to 3 years, whose objective is to determine whether there is sufficient demand to justify introducing the existing full-time study option, with the intention to launch such a programme within the next six years if deemed viable.

II - "Economic Security" ASSESSMENT

II - "Economic Security" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1.

The Study Field "Internal Security and Civil Protection" corresponds to the development strategies of RSU and Daugavpils University (hereinafter DU) for 2022-2027. The successful development and implementation of the study field is based on successful cooperation with industry professionals from the State Police, State Revenue Services and other state institutions, as also close cooperation between partner universities RSU and DU. The study programme "Economic Security" organically fits into the study field "Internal Security and Civil Protection"; however, it also has close cooperation with the RSU Faculty of Social Sciences. The study programme is interdisciplinary,

combining economic and financial knowledge, knowledge in civil security, protection of property with legal knowledge regarding economic security and including improvement of competences necessary for qualification of leadership and management (SER, p.110). The programme is offered in two languages - Latvian and English, ensuring implementation of the internationalisation goal of the study field. During the site visit, in interviews with programme management at RSU and DU, the EG received evidence that the programme has high importance in regional development of internal security and civil protection issues.

The study programme "Economic security" fully corresponds to the study field "Internal security and civil defence". It provides a comprehensive education necessary for effective operation in the internal security system and prepares specialists who are able to ensure public safety and stability. The field of study "Internal security and civil defence" covers study programmes that prepare specialists in the fields of internal security, public order and civil defence. The main task of this field is to ensure the security of the state and society, responding to threats and risks, as well as promoting stability and security. The content of the "Economic Security" programme directly meets the requirements of this study field, as its goal is to prepare a Master of Economic Security with cultivated analytical abilities and critical thinking, who uses scientific methods and other forms of cognition to solve various theoretical and practical situations and problems in the prevention of economic crimes, discovery and investigation, as well as to develop science and research in the field of economic security (SER, p.111).

2.1.2.

The study programme "Economic Security" is an academic Master's study programme. The goal of the study programme is to train a Master in Economic Security with developed analytical skills and critical thinking, who uses scientific methods and other forms of cognition to address various theoretical and practical situations and problems in the prevention, detection and investigation of economic crime, as well as to develop science and research in the field of economic security (SER, p.101).

The programme is offered in 2 formats and two languages:

- full time studies, 2 years, in Latvian language, 120 CP,
- full time studies, 2 years, in English language, 120 CP,
- part time studies, 2 years and 6 months, in English language, 120 CP,
- part time studies, 2 years and 6 months, in Latvian language, 120 CP (SER, p.104-105).

The degree to be acquired in all formats is Master's Degree of Social Sciences in Economic Security (SER, p.104). This degree is supposed to replace the previous degree - professional Master's degree in Organisation Security. Based on Cabinet regulations Nr.240 "Rules on State Academic Education Standard", approved on 13.05.2014. (<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/266187-noteikumi-par-valsts-akademiskas-izglitiba-standartu>), section 21.1 (amended on 03.10.2023.), there is no need anymore to indicate the scientific field of the study programme - social sciences. The degree obtained should be formulated as "Master's degree in Economic Security", and the according changes should be done in diploma example, all programme's documentation and in information on the RSU website after the re-accreditation.

Admission requirements are similar to all the formats: professional or academic Bachelor's degree (first cycle higher education) in business administration, management studies, economics, finance, organisational security, internal security and civil protection, police work, law or equivalent. Entrance examination. For studies in English, a minimum B2 level of proficiency in English is required (SER, p.105).

In accordance with Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 322, "Regulations on the Latvian Education Classification", the study programme code is 45861. The first part of the code "45" indicates the type of educational programme - academic education (Master's degree) implemented after acquiring a Bachelor's or professional Bachelor's degree. Study period in full time studies is from one to two years. The second part of the code "861" refers to the group of educational

programmes – protection of persons and property, which is included in the field of civil and military protection (SER, p.110; <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/291524-noteikumi-par-latvijas-izglitiba-klasifikaciju>). Currently, the study process is implemented only in the Latvian language flow, but in the future, as foreign students' interest in the study programme grows, it could also be implemented in the English language flow.

Regulation No. 240 "Regulations on the State Academic Education Standard", p. 21, stipulates that after completing the master's study programme, the student is awarded a master's degree that corresponds to the study results achieved in the relevant field of study. Since the study results of the study program are oriented towards economic security, the wording of the degree has to be specified accordingly - Master's degree in Economic Security. Related changes should be done to the diploma example and all internal and external documents of the study programme, and in the website after re-accreditation (SER Annex 24.1. Model Diploma and Supplement, SER, p.111; Cabinet regulations Nr.240, section 21.1). RSU and DU provides joint diploma for the graduates with logos of both Universities on it.

The title, code, degree to be obtained, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements of the study programme are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation in full time and part time format, as well as the implementation in two languages Latvian and English, are reasonable and fully justified.

2.1.3.

Significant changes have happened in the study programme "Economic Security" during the accreditation period. Due to the internal consolidation of RSU, there was a change of Director of the study programme (RSU) in 2024. This person became the Director (RSU) of the group of study programmes, which includes also study programme "Economic Security" (SER, p.108).

In accordance with amendments to the Law on Higher Education Institutions of 27 September 2022, which provide that credit points shall further be expressed based on the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), the volume of the study programme and study courses is expressed in ECTS. The volume of the study programme is 120 CP (SER, p.108).

The title of the study programme is changed from Joint professional Master's study programme "Economic Security" to Joint academic Master's study programme "Economic Security" due to a coordinated decision of RSU and DU (SER, p.106).

The code according to the Latvian Education Classification is changed from 47 to 45 in accordance with Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 322 "Regulations on the Latvian Education Classification". The code 45 means "academic education (Master's degree), implemented after acquiring a Bachelor's or professional Bachelor's degree; the duration of studies in full-time studies is one to two years; the total duration of full-time studies is at least five years" (SER, p.106).

The objective of the study programme is updated to reflect the target audience and scope of activity of the programme in accordance with the academic programme (SER, p.107).

Tasks of the study programme are updated in accordance with learning outcomes of the study programme (SER, p.107).

Learning outcomes of the study programme are updated to reflect more accurately the knowledge, skills and competences to be obtained during the studies (SER, p.107).

Admission requirements are updated according to an instruction from the Quality Agency for Higher Education Study Quality Commission in the Senates of RSU and DU; these changes take into account the transition to the academic programme (SER, p.108).

The degree to be awarded changes from professional Master's degree in Organisation Security to Master's degree of Social Sciences in Economic Security (SER, p.108).

The need for this transformation was determined by the fact that there are currently two Master's study programmes in the study field. RSU has to distinguish these programmes, defining different goals, learning outcomes and institutional cooperation models. The study programme "Economic Security" is implemented as a joint degree study programme in cooperation with DU. During the site

visit, in interviews with management of the study programme from RSU and DU, as also teaching staff, the EG received evidence, that there are two different study groups – one at RSU and one at DU. Classes are organised in the premises of RSU and DU accordingly. Each partner ensures teaching staff to implement the study programme. The corrections made to the study programme's parameters within the assessment of the study field are clearly analysed, justified and can be supported.

2.1.4.

The study programme “Economic Security” has been developed in close collaboration with various private and state institutions, including the Ministry of the Interior, the State Police, and other law enforcement agencies. This partnership ensures that the curriculum remains relevant and up-to-date, equipping students with practical skills and knowledge directly applicable to their future careers. The program offers a comprehensive curriculum that encompasses theoretical knowledge, practical training, and research activities, ensuring that graduates are well-rounded and capable of addressing complex security issues.

During the winter admission of the 2022/2023 academic year, Riga Stradiņš University admitted its first cohort of 1st-year students, with 11 students enrolled. Similarly, Daugavpils University admitted its first cohort of 1st-year students, with 13 students enrolled. There are no graduates from the program yet (Annex 16 of the SER).

The study programme is implemented in Latvian, and there are no foreign students enrolled.

Graduates of the joint academic Master's study programme “Economic Security” with DU are expected to have wide career opportunities. Such specialists will be highly valued in various law enforcement institutions, including the State Police, Corruption Prevention Bureau, State Revenue Service, Internal Security Administration. These institutions value the practical skills and interdisciplinary knowledge that graduates bring to their roles.

Graduates will also be able to build a career in various public sector roles that require knowledge of economic security, policy analysis and risk management. Their training in economics, law and management make them suitable for positions in government ministries and regulatory bodies.

Interviews with students and teaching staff emphasised that the interdisciplinary nature of the programme also prepares graduates for work in the private sector, particularly in areas such as corporate security, compliance and risk management.

Also, who wish to further their academic careers can pursue doctoral studies or engage in research projects related to economic security. The programme's emphasis on research activities provides a strong foundation for those aiming to advance academic knowledge in the field.

Overall, the joint programme offers diverse career opportunities both within and outside of law enforcement, ensuring that graduates are well-prepared to address complex security issues in a variety of professional environments.

2.1.5.

On 24 April 2019, the RSU concluded an agreement with the Central Finance and Contracting Agency (CFCA) on the project “Reduction of fragmentation of study programmes and promotion of internationalisation of studies at RSU” (project No. 8.2.1.0/18/A/014, Operational Programme “Growth and Employment”, specific objective 8.2.1 “To reduce fragmentation of study programmes and strengthen resource sharing”). Within this project a joint professional Master's study programme “Economic Security” was developed, on the creation of which RSU and DU agreed before the approval of consolidation plans at the Ministry of Education and Science. Within the assessment process, the study programme was transformed from a professional Master's study programme to an academic Master's study programme. The study of the economic security situation is one of the areas of activity of increasing attention, especially given the increasing impact of economic processes on national security and individual foreign efforts to use economic instruments to realise their geopolitical interests. The joint study programme provides unique educational opportunities, but their implementation requires careful planning and effective cooperation. RSU and DU have a

uniform admission procedure that meets the requirements and educational requirements of both universities. In the study coordination process, the use of study plans and study materials is coordinated, regular communication is established between partner universities. The common procedures are established for the management of the joint study programme between the partner universities. During the site visit, in interviews with study programme management from RSU and DU sides, the EG received evidence of very close cooperation between Directors of the study programme from RSU and DU sides in all the fields - creation of joint management structure, including the study quality council, study planning and coordination, study courses and study course requirements, teaching materials, teaching methods and evaluation criteria that they are consistent in both universities, quality assurance and monitoring procedures with analysis of students' and faculty feedback (SER, p.115-116).

The study programme fully complies with the requirements of the Law on Higher Education Institutions on joint study programmes (SER, p.116, SER Annex 15 "Compliance of the academic study programme "Economic Security" with the requirements set for the joint study programme (Section 55.1 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions)"). Both Universities are accredited the same level higher education institutions. There are unified requirements in respect of the implementation of the joint study programme. Graduated will receive the joint diploma with the joint degree, with jointly specified annex. There is initial cooperation agreement, based on the project. From 2020 to 2022, RSU and DU implemented cooperation in the development of the project, the initial cooperation agreement was concluded, but at the end of development, a cooperation agreement in the development and implementation of the joint professional Master's study programme "Economic Security" was developed and mutually coordinated in joint work (signed on 22 March 2022, No. 3-L11/16/2022) (SER Annex 15, p.1-3). Based on RSU provided information about the study plan for full time and part time studies, 54% of study courses are ensured by RSU, 29% of courses are ensured together by RSU and DU, and 17% of study courses are ensured by DU, placement is organised by the RSU, thesis defence is organised by RSU or together RSU and DU (SER Annex 19). It proves that the programme is jointly organised. At the same time, during the visit, the EG received evidence that there are two separate groups - one at RSU and one at DU. It questions the ability of partners to meet the initial goal "to reduce fragmentation of study programmes and strengthen resource sharing". More collaboration is suggested in technical implementation of the study programme and joint use and sharing of resources.

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

The Study Field "Internal Security and Civil Protection" corresponds to the development strategies of RSU and DU for 2022-2027. The study programme "Economic Security" organically fits into the study field "Internal Security and Civil Protection", as also has close cooperation with the RSU Faculty of Social Sciences. The study programme is interdisciplinary, combining economic and financial knowledge, knowledge in civil security, protection of property with legal knowledge regarding economic security and including improvement of competences necessary for qualification of leadership and management. The study programme is a joint degree academic Master's study programme. The programme is offered in full time and part time formats and two languages - Latvian and English. The programme ensures Master's Degree of Social Sciences in Economic Security. The programme clearly differs from another Master's programme "Protection of Economic Security" in the same study field.

Admission requirements are similar to full time and part time formats. For studies in English, a minimum B2 level of proficiency in English is required.

The study programme code is 45861, "45" stands for the academic education (Master's degree), "861" refers to the group of educational programmes - protection of persons and property, which is included in the field of civil and military protection.

Currently, the study process is implemented only in the Latvian language flow, but in the future, it could also be implemented in the English language flow.

The title, code, degree to be obtained, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements of the study programme are interrelated, and should be changed in all programme's documentation and on the website in accordance with the latest transfer from the professional to the academic study programme. Based on Cabinet regulations Nr.240 section 21.1, the degree should be formulated as Master's degree in Economic Security. The according changes should be done to the diploma example, all internal and external documents of the study programme. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation in full time and part time format, as well as the implementation in two languages Latvian and English, are reasonable and fully justified. Significant changes have happened in the study programme "Economic Security" during the accreditation period: change of the Director, transition to CP equal to ECTS, change from professional to academic study programme and related changes in the code, objective, tasks, learning outcomes and admission requirements. The degree to be awarded is changed from professional Master's degree in Organisation Security to Master's degree of Social Sciences in Economic Security.

Classes are organised separately at the RSU and DU, there are two different groups at the RSU and DU, which do not interfere with each other. Each partner ensures teaching staff to implement the study programme.

Management of the study programme from RSU and DU sides has very close cooperation in discussing issues related to quality assurance, study programme content and curriculum, joint management procedures of the study programme.

There is no clear evidence of reducing fragmentation of the study programme and efficient resource sharing in the joint degree programme. Each university organises the programme by itself and based on its own capacity.

Strengths:

- 1) The study programme fully complies with objectives, tasks and learning outcomes of the related study field;
- 2) Changes done to the study programme during the accreditation period are justified and allow to clearly distinguish the study programme from another Master's study programme in the same study field;
- 3) The study programme provides broad admission opportunities, full time and part time format and implementation in Latvian and English languages, that increase programme's chances for future development and successful attraction of local and international students;
- 4) The study programme has high regional importance, providing unique study opportunities for students in Daugavpils region;
- 5) The programme unites experience and best practices from RSU and DU sides;
- 6) There is very close cooperation between programme management from RSU and DU in discussion of quality assurance, programme joint management, programme content and curriculum issues;
- 7) The study programme complies with RSU strategic goals;
- 8) The title, code, degree, aims, tasks, learning outcomes and admission requirements of the study programme are interrelated.

Weaknesses:

- 1) There is no evidence of reducing fragmentation of the study programme and efficient resource sharing between RSU and DU;
- 2) Currently, there is no group with studies in English language;
- 3) The degree in diploma example and all the internal and external documents is formulated not based on the Cabinet regulations Nr.240 section 21.1.

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1.

The “Economic Security” study programme is a joint programme between the RSU and DU. Each partner delivers a number of courses that together make up the complete programme. They also share the quality assurance for the programme (SER, p.110; interviews with management staff and Programme Directors). Currently it is only delivered in the Latvian language but there is a possibility of delivering the programme in the English language in future, depending on the uptake by overseas students (SER, p. 111). Currently there are only 11 students taking the programme, 10 of which are funded by the State (SER, p. 114).

Appendix 19 of the SER lists the courses within the Study Programme and which of the two universities (RSU and DU) offer a particular course. An analysis of Appendix 19 shows that exactly 50% are offered by RSU alone, 20% by DU alone and 30% offered by both RSU and DU.

The programme spans four semesters (five for part-time students) and incorporates a blend of academic coursework, practical placements, and research activities. The curriculum is designed by RSU and DU as a balanced approach between knowledge transfer and co-creation methods, blending traditional lectures with interactive teaching formats such as seminars and real-world simulations.

The first semester introduces core topics like financial and tax law, human resources management, and national security, laying a foundation for students to pursue more specialised studies in subsequent semesters. The programme also offers international students tailored courses, such as the Latvian Language Course and Economic Security Management (although there are currently no international students undertaking the programme).

In the second semester, students build on their foundational knowledge by studying advanced topics such as money laundering prevention, strategic resource management, and economic cybercrime. This semester also features a practical component – a placement that allows students to apply their classroom learning in professional settings. This placement is designed to enhance students' understanding of real-world challenges in economic security, strengthen their professional networks, and provide material for their master's thesis, which is developed in later semesters.

Students are able to choose elective courses based on their educational background and career goals, such as cybersecurity, crisis communication, and conflict management.

In the final semester, students concentrate on developing and defending their master's thesis, which is supervised by academic staff and supported by industry partners. The thesis represents a culmination of the students' learning, allowing them to conduct research on issues critical to the economic security sector. This final research project not only showcases their expertise but also contributes to solving real-world problems within the industry.

Finally, the EG confirms that the changes made during the transition from a professional to an academic Masters means that the ‘Economic Security’ study programme meets all of the relevant national requirements for this level and type of education. There are eleven requirements within the national rules on the standard of state academic education that are applicable to this programme. The RSU set out clearly in Annex 17.1 of the SER how they have met these requirements (for example, in terms of mandatory parts of the Masters) and the EG confirmed these either by examination of documentary evidence (both in advance and during the assessment visit) or during interviews.

2.2.2.

The Master's degree in “Economic Security” focuses on scientific achievements and developments, combining theoretical knowledge, independent study, and practical skills. To meet modern demands for economic security personnel, the programme emphasises practical competences, including using digital crisis simulations to train students in decision-making under stress.

Lecturers employ various teaching methods, such as discussions, simulations, and case studies, and

regularly update course content with current topics and literature. Instructors are also involved in international curriculum development, such as the Resilience and Security Curriculum. Students engage in practical tasks, such as creating continuity, civil protection, cybersecurity, and physical security plans, applying their knowledge to real-world scenarios. A war game is used to help students understand crisis management procedures. Practical examples and case studies reinforce theoretical knowledge, and students are encouraged to critically assess their work and that of others.

Independent study, supported by reading, tests, and preparations, culminates in a Master's thesis. The thesis integrates theoretical and practical learning, requiring students to apply scientific methods and present original findings.

In terms of the programme being based on the relevant field of science clearly there is no universal agreement on what constitutes 'Economic Security' when studied at postgraduate level at universities. However, there are a number of other universities that offer similar programmes (such as Johns Hopkins University and the University of Thessaly) and there are also professional standards on which to draw. The EG examined some of these and all contain study of the theoretical foundations, focusing on the interplay between global economic systems and security concerns; include risk assessment (such as evaluating threats to critical infrastructures and national economies); emphasising the global nature of economic security; include sector-specific studies, such as cybersecurity. Practical research and application are also integral. Programs typically culminate in a research project or thesis, where students apply theoretical knowledge to real-world challenges in economic security. In all these respects the RSU Study Programme is drawing on accepted achievements and findings of the scientific field. However, many of the Master's programmes elsewhere also involve the development of quantitative and analytical skills, with courses designed to teach statistical analysis, econometrics, and modelling techniques. In this respect the RSU programme, whilst covering "scientific methodology in one course" ("Scientific Research in Economic Security" in Appendix 11 of the SER) is perhaps lacking.

2.2.3.

The two partner universities (RSU and DU) involved in the joint study programme endeavour to implement equal admission processes, with both institutions adhering to a common set of criteria regardless of where the student begins their studies (SER, p. 120). Although applications are submitted separately to each university, the EG were informed that the requirements and procedures are identical (interviews with programme directors). The study process at both universities is conducted through face-to-face classes in Latvian, complemented with online classes when required (by students or staff) (interviews with staff and students).

The SER (pp. 120 -121) states that a number of study methods used in this joint programme include a variety of interactive approaches, such as lectures, seminars, group work, practical exercises, and independent tasks. It goes on to explain that these methods are designed to promote creative participation, encourage critical thinking, and foster collaboration both within teams and on an individual level. Each course concludes with an assessment of students' theoretical and practical skills, which is evaluated based on clear grading criteria aligned with the course's learning objectives. Examples are to be seen in Appendix 21 of the SER (20.1_Anx_Course_Descriptions_ED). An analysis of Appendix 21 shows that an 'average' course consists of 55 % of lectures (475 lectures from a total of 863) and 45 % of 'classes' (388 from a total of 863). The latter include practical work, seminars and tutorials. The RSU also cites in the SER (p.120) an example of a course like "Scientific Research in Economic Security" which include practical sessions in environments such as a 'moot courtroom' (viewed by the EG as part of the site visit), where students discuss strategic economic and security issues. However, the entry under 'Scientific Research in Economic Security' in Appendix 21 has no mention of this.

In line with European standards for quality assurance, the universities encourage students to take an active role in shaping their educational experience. This is achieved through self-directed learning,

continuous cooperation between students and staff, and the incorporation of student feedback in course design and evaluation. Evidence of this was found by the EG when interviewing students, staff and programme directors. Students also have the opportunity to take elective courses as free listeners, further enhancing their flexibility in learning.

Assessment in the programme is both formative and summative, with ongoing feedback during the course and final evaluations at the end. For example, the Study Course Description for the 'Administration of Customs Cases' in Appendix 21 lists two formative assessments and two summative assessments (including a written test). These assessments are guided by predefined criteria that students are informed of in advance, an approach which the EG believes fosters transparent and fair evaluation (SER, p. 122). Summative assessments can take the form of written tests or oral discussions, and students are required to complete a thesis under the supervision of an advisor. Additionally, students participate in course evaluations, ensuring that the curriculum is regularly updated based on their feedback, and their representation in Faculty Councils further strengthens their involvement in decision-making processes.

However, there could be more room for innovative and alternative forms of assessment that go beyond traditional exams and written or oral tests. Methods like portfolios, reflective journals, or peer assessments might further encourage critical thinking and self-reflection. The EG also notes the relatively high proportion of lectures in some courses.

2.2.4.

The study placement is considered by RSU to be a crucial component of the Economic Security programme, requiring students to be placed in law enforcement agencies specialising in this area (SER, p. 122). The placement, supervised by industry professionals, allows students to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world settings, enhancing their professional skills and competencies. It is recommended by the RSU that students seek placement outside their current workplace to ensure knowledge transfer and bring improvements back to their organisations. However, during our interviews with students it became apparent that most were undertaking placements within their own organisation, or State law enforcement agencies.

The placements are structured with clear regulations, focused on aligning tasks with the programme's goals. The Ministry of the Interior's recommendations are considered when selecting placement sites (SER, p. 122).

Employers are actively involved in the placement process, and placements aim to connect theoretical knowledge with the latest trends in economic security, enabling students to analyse complex cases and solve non-standard situations. The placement also deepens the students' understanding of institutional functions and internal processes. Students have been placed in various state institutions like the State Police and Financial Intelligence Unit, but no foreign placements were provided as there were no overseas students (SER, p. 133). However, there are plans to offer placements in English-speaking environments through cooperation with international companies and organisations, as well as Erasmus+ opportunities for internships abroad. Virtual internships are also being considered to facilitate remote placement experiences (ibid).

There is comprehensive documentation provided to both student and placement organisations and supervisors, that include detailed descriptions of goals, knowledge and skills to be developed, assessment and (importantly) the regulations governing the relationship between RSU and the placement provider (to be found in Appendix 9 in the SER - note that the Appendix in English is headed 'Professional Master's study programme' but the EG assume this is the intended document). The placement carries 6 credit points on the Masters programme (Appendix 21 of the SER). The assessment is essentially a set of documents that reflect the student's cognitive process, placement diary, and self-assessment. Additionally, the report includes the placement supervisor's opinion and assessment (ibid). The report must adhere to the RSU's Academic Regulations.

2.2.5.

Not applicable.

2.2.6.

In the winter/spring semester of the academic year 2023/2024, students at a RSU are in their third semester, during which they choose topics to work on for their research, which they will focus on in the autumn semester of 2024/2025 (SER, p. 123). At the partner Daugavpils University, students are in their second semester, during which they are in the planning stage of their research (ibid). Lecturers from both universities have proposed several potential Master's thesis topics, which are summarised in Table 2 of the SER (pp. 128-129). These topics cover a wide range of subjects related to modern technologies, economic and financial crime, cybercrime, national and international regulations, civil protection, national security, tax planning, digital financial literacy, and historical transformation of economic crime. The topics also include issues surrounding dual-use technology regulation, the role of expert and auditor reports in economic crime cases, and legal regulation concerning deep fakes in the European Union and Latvia.

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

In conclusion, the joint "Economic Security" Master's programme between the RSU and DU represents a collaborative and well-structured approach to equipping students with both theoretical knowledge and practical skills in the growing field of economic security. With both institutions sharing course delivery and quality assurance responsibilities, the programme is designed to offer a comprehensive educational experience. Although the programme is currently taught only in Latvian, discussions are underway to potentially offer it in English to attract a more diverse international student body.

The curriculum provides a balanced blend of academic coursework, practical placements, and research activities, allowing students to engage in real-world applications of their knowledge. Key topics include financial law, national security, cybersecurity, and crisis management. Notably, the programme uses interactive teaching formats, such as simulations and case studies, to foster critical thinking and decision-making. The inclusion of practical placements further strengthens students' professional skills and networking opportunities, providing them with insights into real-world challenges in the economic security sector.

Students are assessed through a combination of formative and summative evaluations, with an emphasis on transparency and fairness. Although the programme incorporates a variety of assessment methods, there is potential for more innovative approaches, such as reflective journals or peer assessments, to further promote critical thinking. The programme also emphasises student involvement in shaping their educational experience through feedback mechanisms and representation in Faculty councils.

While the programme aligns with international standards and trends in the field of economic security, it could benefit from further development in quantitative and analytical skills, areas emphasised by similar programmes at other institutions. Nevertheless, the RSU and DU have created a solid foundation for their students, offering them the tools to become professionals capable of addressing complex economic security issues.

The study placement is an important component of the Economic Security programme, requiring students to gain experience in law enforcement agencies specialising in this field. Supervised by staff in partner organisations, these placements allow students to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world settings. Although students are encouraged to seek placements outside their current workplace to foster knowledge transfer, interviews revealed that most are completing their placements within their own organisations. The placements are governed by regulations to ensure alignment with the programme's goals, and the Ministry of the Interior's recommendations are considered when selecting placement sites. While placements have been primarily domestic, there are plans to expand international opportunities through Erasmus+ and cooperation with international companies, including virtual internships.

Strengths:

- 1) The joint programme between the RSU and DU ensures a shared responsibility for course delivery and quality assurance, providing students with diverse perspectives and expertise from both institutions;
- 2) The programme offers a mix of theoretical knowledge and practical skills, combining traditional coursework with interactive teaching methods like simulations, case studies, and real-world placements, preparing students for professional challenges in the economic security field.

Weaknesses:

- 1) The programme lacks emphasis on quantitative and analytical skills, such as statistical analysis and econometrics, which are often included in similar programmes at other institutions;
- 2) There is a relatively high proportion of lectures compared to more interactive teaching formats, which could limit opportunities for active learning and critical engagement in some courses;
- 3) Currently, the programme is only offered in Latvian, restricting its accessibility to non-Latvian speakers and limiting its potential to attract a diverse international student body;
- 4) While the programme includes formative and summative assessments, there is room for more innovative forms of evaluation, such as portfolios, peer assessments, or reflective journals, to promote deeper learning and self-reflection.

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The curriculum, teaching materials and research interests of academic staff for the study programme are clearly based on the accepted corpus of knowledge that underpins Economic Security.

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1.

Study resources, scientific resources, informative resources (including libraries), material and technical resources, and financial resources correspond to the specifics and implementation conditions of the study programme, create pre-conditions for the achievement of learning outcomes and evidence of the possibility of ensuring high-quality study process also in the future (SER, p. 125).

The education process at RSU: Auditoriums equipped in a modern way and maintained in good quality, which are fully compatible with the study methods planned for the implementation of study programme "Economic Security", including e-learning environment, video lectures, online visiting lectures, debates, business games, innovative technological solutions in the study and teaching process (SER, p. 125).

The education process at DU is provided in the DU study building at Parādes iela 1, Daugavpils, where the Faculty of Social Sciences is located and lecturers involved in the study programme work on a daily basis. The resources and provision of the study programme fully complies with conditions of the implementation of the study programme and for the achievement of learning outcomes. Resources are available to students. The programme uses the necessary technical equipment (computers with licensed software, projectors, interactive boards, etc.), different teaching methods are used (group work, role plays, simulations, seminars, discussions, etc.) (SER, p.126).

In interviews with students and staff members they were satisfied with conditions and resources. After the on-site visit, SER and interviews with staff, students, managers and stakeholders EG can say that the resources and provision of the study programme are sufficient and meet the conditions for a high quality study process. Resources are aligned with programme goals.

2.3.2.

Not applicable.

2.3.3.

The overhead costs for full-time study programmes are proportionally higher than for part-time programmes due to more intensive use of the RSU and DU infrastructure. It is planned to finance the study programme from state budget funding (10 budget funded study places in total), as well as from the funding of individuals and legal entities. Under the RSU discount regulation, an excellence discount may be granted, which would set the tuition fee at EUR 3,000 per year or EUR 6,000 per year for 2,0 years. The planned number of students in the study programme is 16 students, incl. 10 budget students. The minimum number of students for the study programme to be profitable is 14 students (SER, p. 130).

In interviews with managers and stakeholders were satisfied with funding and expressed that funding is sustainable.

After the on-site visit, SER and interviews with staff, students, managers and stakeholders EG can say that the funding available to the study programme, funding sources and the use of funding ensures full implementation of the study process.

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

These resources are sufficient and compliant with the study programme objectives.

The study provision, scientific provision, informative provision, material and technical provision and financial provision comply with specific features and the conditions for the implementation of the study programme, create prerequisites for the achievement of the learning outcomes and indicate the possibility to ensure a high-quality study process.

The funding available to the study programme, funding sources and the use of funding ensures full implementation of the study process.

Overall the analysis indicates that the programme's resources and provisions are adequate and sustainable.

Strengths:

- 1) Resources are sufficient and compliant with the study programme objectives;
- 2) Mostly study programme from state budget funding.

Weaknesses:

- 1) None.

Assessment of the requirement [6]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The resources and provision of the study programme are sufficient and meet the conditions for a high-quality study process. Resources are aligned with programme goals.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1.

SER page 134 states that the study programme has more than 5 professors and more than 5 assistant professors. Section 55, Paragraph One, Clause 3 of Latvian Law on Higher Educational Institutions requires at least a total five professors or associate professors and hence the EG concludes that the regulatory requirements are met.

The qualifications of academic staff in both HEIs meet the requirements of the Law on Higher Education Institutions, as all lecturers have a Master's degree or doctoral degree in science. Teaching staff with a Master's degree can teach study courses – both elected and visiting lecturers (SER, p.134).

The lecturers involved in the implementation of the study programme are industry professionals. The experience of lecturers working in different positions in the industry allows the content of study courses to be enriched with practical examples that students appreciate, as mentioned in study course assessment surveys (SER, p. 133).

The programme has more than the minimum required number of professors and assistant professors as required by Latvian Law. It's important to say that involved lecturers are industry professionals.

2.4.2.

There have been insignificant changes in the composition of the lecturers since the commencement of the implementation of the programme. Lecturers were invited in the following study courses: "International Security" and "Scientific Research in Economic Safety". The change of lecturers was related to the load of lecturers and the involvement of new specialists (SER, p. 137).

For the lecturers involved in the study field and programme implementation, the teaching load is planned according to the study plan of each academic year and study semester. Study courses can be organised in modules and the load is reviewed according to necessity and regulations. RSU promotes a balanced workload for lecturers and promotes a healthy lifestyle to reduce and eliminate the risk of burnout for teaching staff (SER, p. 138).

The RSU has reported insignificant changes to its teaching staff, primarily driven by lecturer workload and the need to integrate new specialists. To manage these changes and maintain the quality of the study programme, the university plans teaching loads according to annual and semester study plans. Courses can be organised in modules, and the workload is regularly reviewed to align with regulations and needs. Additionally, the RSU is actively promoting a balanced workload and healthy lifestyle for its teaching staff to prevent burnout. These measures aim to ensure that changes in staff composition do not negatively impact the programme's quality or compliance with regulatory requirements.

2.4.3.

Not applicable.

2.4.4.

Publications of academic staff of the study field "Internal Security and Civil Protection" in the ZDIS Pure 01.01.2018 - 31.05.2024 Annex 6.4. and list of academic staff members confirms that each member of the academic staff in the last six years has not published in peer-reviewed editions, including international editions.

2.4.5.

A mechanism for mutual cooperation between teaching staff members has been established. It promotes the improvement and interconnection of study courses/modules. Teaching staff of both DU and RSU cooperate with each other both in the development of study course descriptions and in the planning of study course content, jointly agreeing on the objectives, tasks, learning outcomes and content of study courses to be developed and taught. The logical sequence of implementation of study courses is discussed and evaluated not only within the scope of the study programme, but also within the scope of the study direction "Internal Security and Civil Protection", as well as at department meetings, which helps to avoid overlapping of specific topics in different study courses (SER, p. 139).

There are regular meetings and working groups involving lectures with the aim of aligning course content, teaching methods and learning outcomes (interviews with teaching staff). Collaborative mechanism among teaching staff, designed to enhance the quality and coherence of the study programme.

Overall, this collaborative approach aims to improve the quality of the study programme by ensuring that courses are interconnected, logically sequenced, and aligned with the programme's overall aims and learning outcomes.

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

The teaching staff of the "Economic Security" study programme at RSU meets the regulatory requirements set by Latvian Law on Higher Education Institutions which mandates at least five professors or associate professors, and it enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses. The lecturers involved in the implementation of the study programme are industry professionals. The experience of lecturers working in different positions in the industry allows the content of study courses to be enriched with practical examples that students appreciate, as mentioned in study course assessment surveys.

Annex 6.4 confirms that each member of the academic staff in the last six years has not published peer-reviewed editions, including international editions.

There are regular meetings and working groups involving lectures with the aim of aligning course content, teaching methods and learning outcomes. Collaborative mechanism among teaching staff, designed to enhance the quality and coherence of the study programme.

Strengths:

- 1) A mechanism for mutual cooperation between teaching staff members has been established;
- 2) The lecturers involved in the implementation of the study programme are industry professionals;
- 3) RSU promotes a balanced workload for lecturers, and promotes a healthy lifestyle to reduce and eliminate the risk of burnout for teaching staff.

Weaknesses:

- 1) Annex 6.4 confirms that each member of the academic staff in the last six years has not published peer-reviewed editions, including international editions.

Assessment of the requirement [7]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The qualifications of academic staff in both HEIs meet the requirements of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

The experience of lecturers working in different positions in the industry allows the content of study courses to be enriched with practical examples that students appreciate, as mentioned in study course assessment surveys. Each member of the academic staff in the last six years has not published peer-reviewed editions, including international editions. But they have work experience. In general, fully compliant.

2.5. Assessment of the Compliance

Requirements

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Compliance of the joint academic master's study programme "Economic security" with the national education standard 17.1 appendix describes the compliance. But there is a wrong formulation of the degree obtained, should be Master's degree in Economic Security. Corrections should be done in diploma example, internal and external documents of the study programme.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Study course descriptions and study materials are prepared both in English and Latvian, and they satisfy the requirements written in the Law on Higher Education Institutions.
See Annex 20.1.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

A sample of the issued document matches the 6th attachment of "The procedure for issuing documents certifying higher education recognized by the state" regulations and contains all the necessary information.
See Annex 24.1.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

RSU has handed in a confirmation where they acknowledge that of the 48 lecturers that teach this study programme - 3 are professors and 6 are associate professors, which means that the requirement by law is fulfilled. See Annex 24.7.1.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The academic staff has sufficient Latvian language knowledge indicated by their CVs and the signed certification by the RSU rector confirms that the teaching staff members comply with the Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No. 733 of 7 July 2009. See Annex 24.4 and 6.2.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

RSU has handed in a rector's signed confirmation that the teaching staff members' English language proficiency is at least B2 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. See Annex 24.5.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The study agreement includes all the necessary parts set forth in Latvian legislation (Cabinet of Ministers regulation no. 70). In the agreement the university has not specified its rights. It would also be advisable to expand the agreement and include information about the guarantee of compensation losses. See Annex 24.6.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

RSU has handed in a rector's signed confirmation that students will have an opportunity to continue their studies in the RSU professional master's study programme "International Business and Law" if the implementation of the study programme is discontinued. DU has handed in a rector's signed confirmation that students will have an opportunity to continue their studies in the DU professional master's study programme "Social and Institutional Management" if the implementation of the study programme is discontinued. See Annex 24.2.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

RSU has handed in a rector's signed confirmation that it will compensate all losses to the students of the study programme if it fails to be accredited or loses its licence and the student does not agree to study in a different study programme. See Annex 24.3.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Compliance of the academic study programme "Economic Security" with the requirements set for the joint study programme annex 15 describes the compliance. Students receive both HEI diploma and there is a joint agreement between both of the universities. See agreement Nr. 8.2.1.0/18/A/014 and Annex 24.1., 15.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Assessment of the requirement [8]

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Compliance of the academic study programme "Economic Security" with the requirements set for the joint study programme annex 15 describes the compliance. Students receive both HEI diploma and there is a joint agreement between both of the universities. See agreement Nr. 8.2.1.0/18/A/014 and Annex 24.1., 15.

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

RSU and Daugavpils University. As an interdisciplinary programme, it brings together knowledge from economics, finance, civil protection, and law, together with leadership and management. Close cooperation within the RSU's Faculty of Social Sciences strengthens the programme, while its structure as a joint degree offers students a comprehensive understanding of economic security. Whilst currently only delivered in Latvian, the plans to expand the offering into English will broaden its appeal to international students and enhance the programme's future prospects.

The teaching staff is highly experienced, bringing practical insights from industry to the classroom, which students value. Collaborative efforts among staff help align course content and maintain teaching quality.

Despite the close collaboration between HEI and DU in terms of programme management, quality assurance, and curriculum development, there remains a lack of effective resource sharing between the institutions. Each university independently manages its portion of the programme, which limits the full realisation of joint Masters benefits. Future efforts to reduce fragmentation and improve cooperation would strengthen the programme's joint nature.

The study programme effectively blends theoretical knowledge with practical applications, preparing students to address real-world challenges in economic security. However, there is room for improvement in expanding the focus on quantitative and analytical skills, areas commonly emphasised in similar programmes. Additionally, while the curriculum is rich in traditional teaching methods, more interactive formats and innovative assessment tools could further enhance student engagement and critical thinking.

Evaluation of the study programme "Economic Security"

Evaluation of the study programme:

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Economic Security"

Short-term recommendations

- 1) To consider whether a stronger focus within the joint Economic Security programme on quantitative and analytical skills, such as statistical analysis and econometrics, is required. A working group should be formed within the next three months. This group, made up of faculty members with expertise in quantitative methods, will review the curriculum and benchmark it against similar programmes. They will deliver recommendations within six months, focusing on course enhancements or new offerings in statistical analysis and econometrics.
- 2) The programme should introduce at least one innovative assessment method, such as reflective journals or peer evaluations, by the start of the next academic year. This would provide more opportunities for critical thinking and self-reflection, enhancing the educational experience.
- 3) A targeted initiative to increase the use of interactive teaching methods should be implemented within the next two academic years. This could involve integrating additional simulations, problem-based learning exercises, and case study workshops to ensure a greater balance between traditional lectures and active learning formats.
- 4) The degree should be changed to Master's degree in Economic Security in diploma example, all internal and external documents of the study programme.

Long-term recommendations

- 1) A review of the current teaching methods should be conducted to assess the balance between lectures and more interactive methods. This review, led by a committee of faculty and programme coordinators, should be completed within the next year. The committee will analyse the proportion of lectures compared to seminars, workshops, and group activities, and propose necessary adjustments to reduce lecture-based instruction. The goal is to implement any recommended changes by the start of the second academic year.
- 2) Within the next two to three academic years, take concrete steps to reduce the fragmentation of the study programme between the RSU and Daugavpils University (DU) by establishing regular joint meetings between both institutions to ensure better coordination of resources, teaching staff, and academic content. This should include exploring opportunities for collaborative projects between the two groups of students to enhance cohesion and ensure efficient resource sharing between RSU and DU.
- 3) In the next two years, develop and implement a strategy to promote the study programme in international markets to attract foreign students. This can involve creating targeted marketing campaigns, participating in international education fairs, and offering scholarships or incentives to international applicants. Additionally, consider making the programme available in English to widen its appeal and increase accessibility for non-Latvian speakers.
- 4) Over the next six years, to motivate each member of the academic staff to publish their research results in the peer-reviewed editions in Latvia and abroad.

II - "Protection of Economic Security" ASSESSMENT

II - "Protection of Economic Security" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1.

On 25 October 2022, RSU, the Ministry of the Interior, the College of the State Police and the University of Latvia (LU) signed the foundation agreement of the consortium "Internal Security Academy". The purpose of this cooperation is to implement the professional preparation of the personnel of Ministry of the Interiors system institutions and other law enforcement bodies of the Republic of Latvia, to facilitate staff renewal, to provide a quality opportunity of lifelong learning services and to develop scientific research in the field of internal security. A decision has been taken to establish a study programme "Protection of Economic Security". The programme is being developed in addition to the joint professional Master's study programme "Economic Security" implemented by RSU and DU (SER, p.147).

The study programme "Protection of Economic Security" fully complies with the study field "Internal Security and Civil Protection". "Internal Security Academy" and cooperation partners - LU, RSU, College of the State Police, Ministry of Education and Science, State Police, Prosecutor General's Office, State Revenue Service, Ministry of the Interior - were actively involved in the development of this programme. The programme is intended for a wide range of economic security specialists, heads of organisations, institutions, divisions, and employees of Ministry of the Interior and other law enforcement bodies of the Republic of Latvia with an orientation in the promotion of economic security, internal security and civil protection, as well as in the field of legal protection. The idea of establishment of the "Internal Security Academy" is to improve quality of education of law enforcement personnel, to prepare high-level specialists for the needs of the Ministry of the Interior and other law enforcement bodies and attracting the best teaching staff for the implementation of the study programme (SER, p.148).

During the site visit, in interviews with study programme management, teaching staff and employers, the EG received evidence of very close cooperation of the study programme with the industry and the field of internal affairs.

2.1.2.

The study programme "Protection of Economic Security" is a professional Master's study programme. The goal of the study programme is to prepare, for law enforcement purposes, highly qualified specialists in economic security matters, with knowledge in the prevention of financial risks, skills to navigate and apply operational labour legislation, analyse the risks of customs offences, apply profiling methods, to prevent and detect economic offences (SER, p.141). Graduates are provided with the Professional Master's Degree in Economic Security and qualification of Senior Specialist in Economic Security (SER, p.142-143; SER Annex 24.1. "Sample Diploma and Diploma Supplement"). The occupational standard of the 7th professional qualification level "Senior Specialist in Economic Security" was approved on 09/10/2024, Protocol Nr.6 (<https://registri.visc.gov.lv/profizglitiba/dokumenti/standarti/2017/PS-309.pdf>).

The study programme is offered in the following formats:

- part time studies, 2 years, in Latvian language, 90 CP,
- part time studies, 2 years and 6 months, in Latvian language, 120 CP.

The admission requirement for part time studies, 2 years, 90 CP are the following: no less than 2 years' experience in law enforcement in the field of protection of persons and property and being in service or employment relationship with a law enforcement authority and academic first cycle higher education / bachelor's degree or academic second cycle higher education / master's degree (or equivalent). Applicants shall be matriculated in accordance with the conditions of the consortium "Internal Security Academy" and in accordance with the list compiled by the Ministry of the Interior,

considering the selection requirements and evaluation criteria established by the investigative authorities (SER, p.142-143).

The admission requirement for part time studies, 2 years and 6 months, 120 CP are the following: no less than 2 years' experience in law enforcement in the field of protection of persons and property and being in service or employment relationship with a law enforcement authority and professional first cycle higher education / bachelor's degree or professional second cycle higher education / master's degree (or equivalent). Applicants shall be matriculated in accordance with the conditions of the consortium "Internal Security Academy" and in accordance with the list compiled by the Ministry of the Interior, considering the selection requirements and evaluation criteria established by the investigative authorities (SER, p.142-143).

The content of study courses of the programme is directed towards the preparation of qualified specialists for the needs of law enforcement bodies, which are oriented towards detecting, preventing and combating threats to economic security (SER, p.148).

The formulated study results correspond to the degree to be obtained and are consistent with the aims and objectives of the study courses. This connection is clearly shown by the mapping of the study programme in the level 7 descriptions of knowledge, skills and competences of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (LKI) corresponding to the descriptions of the levels of the European Qualifications Framework (SER Annex 18.1. Mapping of study courses for the achievement of learning outcomes").

According to the regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers no. 322 "Regulations on the Classification of Latvian Education" the study programme code of is 47861. The first part of the code "47" indicates the type of education programme – the second-level professional higher education, the duration of which is at least one year in full-time studies. The scope of the study programme is 90 CP, which corresponds to the regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers no. 305 "Rules on the standard of state professional higher education". Currently (as of August 2024), the duration of the study programme "Protection of Economic Security" is two years, since the programme is implemented only in the form of part-time studies, in addition to this study option, a plan has been submitted for part-time studies for 120 CP, with a study duration of two years and six months. The second part of the programme code "861" refers to the educational programme group "Protection of persons and property", which includes civil safety and defence (SER, p.149, <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/291524-noteikumi-par-latvijas-izglitiba-klasifikaciju>).

Admission requirements are closely related to the fact that the only implementation option of the study programme is part-time attendance. Since the students are employed in law enforcement institutions, the study process must be combined with work (SER, p.149).

The 90 CP study programme option gives applicants who have obtained professional education the opportunity to get an education and complete their studies within 2 years. On the other hand, the 120 CP study programme option gives graduates of academic bachelor's study programmes the opportunity to obtain professional education. According to the information provided by the State Police, such a variant of the study programme will be useful for those currently working in the industry. The State Police has approximately 400 officials, while the State Revenue Service has approximately 350 officials with a previously obtained academic bachelor's degree, in general, this means that both institutions have approximately 750 officials with such education. These officials could be potential applicants for the "Protection of Economic Security" study programme (SER, p.150).

The title, code, degree and professional qualification, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements of the study programme are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation in part time mode in Latvian language is reasonable and justified. At the same time, one language of the study programme limits the opportunity to invite foreign lecturers to the study programme. In general, the degree corresponds to the name, purpose, tasks and study results of the study programme. The obtained Master's degree entitles graduates to

continue their education in the third cycle higher education study programme.

2.1.3.

There are several changes done to the study programme “Protection of Economic Security” during the accreditation period.

In duration of implementation, according to the recommendation of the representatives of the State Police, members of the “Internal Security Academy” consortium, in connection with the professional standards and the planned possibility of obtaining the professional qualification “Senior Specialist in Economic Security”, it is planned to add an additional admission option for academic bachelor's degree applicants to the 120 CP study programme, providing for professional practice in total 39 CP; in the new planning (SER Annex 19.2.), a total of 30 CP have been added to the 90 CP programme, making the duration of studies in part time studies 2 years and 6 months (SER, p.146).

Changes on the volume of the study programme consider that an additional plan is added for applicants with academic education - 120 CP, giving the opportunity for applicants with academic bachelor's education to receive professional education (SER, p.146).

In accordance with the above mentioned, the admission requirements have been adjusted, adding requirements for the study programme with a study volume of 120 CP (SER, p.146).

Qualification to be awarded is the 7th level professional qualification “Senior Specialist in Economic Security” (SER, p.146), which was approved on 09.10.2024. Based on additional information provided by the programme management, the study programme was developed in accordance with the draft of the mentioned standard, there is no need to do any updates since the standard is approved. The mapping of the study programme was developed based on the draft of the standard (18.2_Anx_Prof_standart_Mapping_EDA_eng.pdf)

Due to the internal consolidation of RSU, there was a change of Director of the study programme in 2024. This person became the Director of the Group of Study Programmes, which includes the study programme “Protection of Economic Security” (SER, p.147).

The main place of implementation of the study programme is still the RSU building on Kuldīgas street 9C, Riga, but the study programme is expected to be implemented in the premises of the College of the State Police on Ezermalas street 10, Riga, where the classified study courses should be implemented. It is in accordance with the goal of “Internal Security Academy” consortium to share resources to ensure appropriate learning in the study programme (SER, p.147). During the site visit, in interviews with students, the EG received the evidence, that classes are not often organised in the special premises of the College of the State Police.

2.1.4.

The Study Programme has been developed in close collaboration with various state institutions, including the Ministry of the Interior, the State Police, and other law enforcement agencies. This partnership ensures that the curriculum remains relevant and up-to-date, equipping students with practical skills and knowledge directly applicable to their future careers. The programme offers a comprehensive curriculum that encompasses theoretical knowledge, practical training, and research activities, ensuring that graduates are well-rounded and capable of addressing complex security issues.

The study programme is conducted exclusively in Latvian, and there are no foreign students enrolled. Interviews with both students and employers have confirmed that the studies foster professional growth. Even in the first year, students receive more recognition or promotions at work and are entrusted with more challenging tasks.

During a meeting with employers' representatives, the severe shortage of employees in law enforcement agencies was highlighted. Currently, there are 871 vacancies, including highly qualified positions within the State Police alone. Consequently, the State Police greatly values its cooperation with RSU and the opportunity to train high-level employees and future heads of structural units. The vast majority of graduates continue to work in the State Police after completing their studies. The inclusion of interdisciplinary courses, such as economics, law, and management, further enhances

the employability of graduates, even outside of law enforcement entities.

Representatives from the Corruption Prevention Bureau, the State Revenue Service, and the Internal Security Office have also confirmed that RSU graduates are highly valued and welcomed in their institutions.

In the 2023/2024 academic year, the first matriculation of students in the 1st year took place, with 23 students admitted. There are no graduates from the programme yet (Annex 16 of the SER).

2.1.5.

Not applicable.

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

The study programme "Protection of Economic Security" was established under the consortium ISA, launched by RSU, the Ministry of the Interior, the College of the State Police, and the University of Latvia in 2022. This programme clearly differs from another Master's programme "Economic Security" in the same study field.

The study programme fully complies with the Study Field "Internal Security and Civil Protection", was developed and maintained in very close cooperation with the industry and employers. The programme is intended for a wide range of economic security specialists, heads of organisations, institutions, divisions, and employees of the Ministry of the Interior and other law enforcement bodies of the Republic of Latvia with an orientation in the promotion of economic security, internal security and civil protection, as well as in the field of legal protection.

The study programme "Protection of Economic Security" is a professional Master's study programme. Graduates are provided with the Professional Master's Degree in Economic Security and the 7th level professional qualification "Senior Specialist in Economic Security", which was approved on 09/10/2024.

The study programme is offered only in part time studies format with total volume 90 CP or 120 CP, duration 2 years or 2 years and 6 months. This difference is based on admission requirements and allows applicants with previous academic education to get additional practice and obtain professional Master's degree. The potential number of applicants with previous academic education is 750 officials employed in State Police and State Revenue Service.

The title, code, degree and professional qualification, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements of the study programme are interrelated. The duration and scope of the study programme implementation in part time mode in Latvian language is reasonable and justified. At the same time, one language of the study programme limits the opportunity to invite foreign lecturers to the study programme. In general, the degree corresponds to the name, purpose, tasks and study results of the study programme. The obtained master's degree entitles graduates to continue their education in the third cycle higher education study programme.

There are several changes done to the study programme "Protection of Economic Security" during the accreditation period, which are related to duration and volume of the study programme, introduction of professional qualification - the new occupational standard was approved on 09/10/2024, related changed in admission requirements. There is also a change of the Director of the study programme.

In accordance with the goal of "Internal Security Academy" consortium to share resources to ensure appropriate learning in the study programme, classes are supposed to take place also in special premises of the College of the State Police. But these premises are not used very often.

Strengths:

- 1) The study programme fully complies with objectives, tasks and learning outcomes of the related study field;
- 2) The study programme complies with RSU strategic goals;
- 3) The title, code, professional qualification, aims, tasks, learning outcomes and admission

requirements of the study programme are interrelated;

4) The programme is developed under Consortium “Internal Security Academy”, which ensures very close cooperation with employers, College of State Police and University of Latvia;

5) There is a solid potential demand of applicants with previous academic education to continue studies and obtain professional Master’s degree and professional qualification;

6) Changes done to the study programme during the accreditation period are justified and allow to clearly distinguish the study programme from another Master’s study programme in the same study field;

7) The 7th level professional qualification standard “Senior Specialist in Economic Security” is approved on 09/10/2024, RSU can provide professional qualification.

Weaknesses:

1) The study programme is oriented mostly to the local market and has lack of internationalisation, but some students have expressed interest in foreign lecturers, as also short-term visits or internship abroad;

2) Rather specific admission requirements limit the number and scope of potential students;

3) Premises of the College of State Police are not very often used for the classes of the study programme.

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1.

The content of the study programme “Protection of Economic Security” is topical and reflects the latest trends in the internal security field. The programme is established under the “Internal Security Academy” consortium and is developed in close cooperation with the employers. The Ministry of Interior, State Police and State Revenue Service are the main providers of students to the study programme. The content of the study programme and related study courses corresponds to the objectives of the study programme and ensures achievements of learning outcomes, as also meets the needs of the industry, labour market and scientific trends.

SER Annex 18.1. “Mapping of study courses for the achievement of learning outcomes of the study programme” provides detailed information on compliance of study courses with the learning outcomes of the study programme.

SER Annex 19 “Study programme plan” provides study programme planning for the part time programme of 120 CP and 90 CP. 120 CP programme is planned in 5 semesters, 90 CP programme in 4 semesters (SER Annex 19, p.3-6).

The study programme fully complies with the national regulations.

The study programme fully complies with the Cabinet Regulation No. 305 of 13 June 2023, “Regulations regarding the State Standard for Professional Higher Education” (SER Annex 17.1.). The content of the study programme ensures the achievement of learning outcomes, which include the acquisition of in-depth theoretical knowledge and the development of research skills and skills in the field of economic security, by acquiring, respectively, study courses related to security, economics and management, legal science: Methodology and Specific Character of Investigating and Combating Economic Crime (A, 3 CP), Operational Activities and Human Rights (A, 3 CP), Preventing and Combating Money Laundering, Terrorism and Proliferation Financing (in some classes groups with and without clearance are organised) (A, 6 CP). Research paper, creative work, design work and management study courses: Scientific Research in Economic Security (A, 3 CP), Identification of Economic Risks (A, 3 CP). The study programme plan with 120 CP envisages a placement of 39 CP. The study programme plan with 90 CP envisages a placement of 9 CP. State examination involves developing and defending a Master’s thesis 30 CP. Study courses, which ensure the achievement of professional competence in entrepreneurship, if they have not been acquired in a previous cycle

study programme: Identification of Economic Risks (A,3 CP), Financial and Tax Law (B,6 CP), Commercial Law (B, 3 CP) (SER Annex 17.1., p.3-4).

The study programme fully complies with the 7th level professional qualification standard “Senior Specialist in Economic Security” (SER, p.146), which was approved on 09/10/2024. Based on SER Annex 18.2 “Conformity of study programme with professional standard draft (mapping)”, study courses of the study programme meet the 41 requirements of the professional standard.

In the 2023/2024 academic year, the first matriculation of students in the 1st year took place - 23 students were admitted. There are no graduates in the programme, yet. All the students are studying with private budget funds (SER Annex 16 “Statistical Data about the Students”).

Graduates will be encouraged to continue with doctoral studies to develop and promote research activities (SER, p.156).

The content of the study programme is clearly described in SER Annex 19 “Planning of the Study Programme (For Each Type and Form of the Implementation of the Study Programme)”, Annex 20 “Description of Study Courses”, Annex 18.1. “Mapping of the Study Courses for the Achievement of Learning Outcomes of the Study Programme”.

2.2.2.

The study programme “Protection of Economic Security” awards the degree based on the achievements and finding of the relevant field of science. To obtain the degree, students develop and defend a Master’s thesis. In order to ensure that the awarding of the degree takes place based on the achievements and findings of the industry, in accordance with the “Internal Security Academy” cooperation partner agreements with law enforcement authorities, Ministry of Interior submits summarised priority research topics, but the author of the thesis still has the right to propose his/her own topic as well. The topic of the Master’s thesis and the choice of supervisor are coordinated with the selected supervisor and then at the Faculty Council (SER, p.159). During the site visit, the EG got the evidence of very close cooperation between RSU and law enforcement authorities in development of the content of the study programme and provision of themes for the Master’s thesis, as also mentoring and defence of Master’s theses. There is an obvious linkage between the students’ final works and the latest findings in the fields of economic and legal security.

2.2.3.

The study implementation methods, including assessment, of the study programme “Protection of Economic Security” fully contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study courses and the study programme. Student-centred learning and teaching principles are broadly ensured in the study programme.

Based on SER, studies in the study programme are personalised. RSU provides different forms of studies, efficient informative and material support, digitalised study process, placement at workplace, individual study courses, as well as opportunities are provided for continuation of studies at the next level of studies (SER, p.159). During the site visit, in interviews with teaching staff and students, the EG received evidence, that classes are organised in the form of regular lectures, activities in the interactive environment (including online via digital technologies), seminars and discussions, problem solving assignments and practical works, simulations (the Court work), dialogue method. Students with access to the state secret and students without this access are studying related disciplines separately, but still are ensured with everything needed to achieve the planned learning outcomes.

Independent studies are a mandatory part of the study process at RSU, independent work of a student within the scope of a study course, the amount of which corresponds to the credit points of the study course. This includes mandatory and additional literature studies, the performance of routine tests, preparation for classes, seminars, test work and final examinations, according to the description of the study course.

Combining regular and remote study forms makes it possible to balance the needs of the study process, develop the skills of teaching staff and students in the e-environment, break down distance

barriers, allowing students to study regardless of where they live (SER, p.160).

2.2.4.

The practical placement is a part of the study programme "Protection of Economic Security". Students have guaranteed opportunities for the practical placement, as all of them are already employed in the security field. Organization of the placement work is effective; tasks of the placement are clear and related to the learning outcomes of the study programme. The provision of practical placement fully complies with the requirements of the regulatory enactments. Organisation of student placement is described in SER Annex 9 "Description of the Organisation of Student Placement".

Placement is the possibility for students to acquire practical skills, to become acquainted with work processes. In the "Protection of Economic Security" study programme, the different duration of the program consists of practical placement, which is 30 CP longer for applicants with the academic background. Law enforcement agencies, in accordance with the concluded "Internal Security Academy" consortium agreement, provide internships in structural units specialising in the prevention and detection of economic and cybercrimes. These structural units include, for example, the Economic Crimes Bureau and the Cybercrime Bureau (SER, p.159-160).

During the site visit, in interviews with students, the EG received evidence, that all students are doing practical placement in the same place of work where they are employed. From the one side, it guarantees practical placement in the studies-related field. But from the other side, it limits opportunities for students to exchange experience, learn the operation of other departments of their organisation. It also limits possibilities for students to do practical placement abroad.

2.2.5.

Not applicable.

2.2.6.

The topics of students' final theses in the study programme "Protection of Economic Security" are relevant to the field and correspond to the study programme.

In the autumn semester of academic year 2024/2025 RSU students choose topics to work on their research in the spring semester of academic year 2024/2025. Topics of priority studies submitted by aggregated law enforcement agencies are placed in the E-learning environment and students are welcome to choose their thesis topic from this list. This ensures a practice-based approach to the development of Master's theses and thus promotes cooperation between academic staff and industry professionals (SER, p.163). There are examples of the themes of the Master's theses proposed by the faculty: Modern technologies: prevention and combating criminal offences in the field of customs; Problems with methodologies of investigating criminal offences in economics; Tactical and methodological specificity of investigation of criminal offences in economics; Economic and financial cybercrime, national and international regulation, its application problems; Jurisdiction of cybercrime, national and international regulation, application problems; Analysis of the tax planning process and methods for ensuring economic activity; Digital financial literacy; Civil protection planning problems (military threats, climate change, etc.); Delegation of national security functions to the private sector; Impact of foreign investments on economic security; Problems of the dual-use technology regulatory framework; Developments in criminalisation of Section 2216 of the Criminal Law in the context of economic security; Means of proving the illicit movement of excise goods; Distribution of responsibilities and rights of public authorities and organisations operating in the country with regard to economic security; Assessment of the norms included in the European Union regulatory framework, which are binding on the Republic of Latvia; Financial management in a specific public authority – rationality, efficiency and justice (SER, p.163-164). As it can be seen from this list, all the proposed themes are closely related to the economic security field.

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

The content of the study programme “Protection of Economic Security” is topical and reflects the latest trends in the internal security field. The programme is established under the “Internal Security Academy” consortium and is developed in close cooperation with the employers. The Ministry of Interior, State Police and State Revenue Service are the main providers of students to the study programme. The content of the study programme and related study courses corresponds to the objectives of the study programme and ensures achievements of learning outcomes, as also meets the needs of the industry, labour market and scientific trends.

The study programme fully complies with the national regulations: Cabinet Regulation No. 305 of 13 June 2023, “Regulations regarding the State Standard for Professional Higher Education” and the 7th level professional standard “Senior Specialist in Economic Security, recently approved on 09.10.2024.

In the 2023/2024 academic year, the first matriculation of students in the 1st year took place - 23 students were admitted. There are no graduates in the programme, yet. All the students are studying with private budget funds. Graduates will be encouraged to continue with doctoral studies to develop and promote research activities.

The study programme awards the degree based on the achievements and finding of the relevant field of science.

The study implementation methods, including assessment, fully contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study courses and the study programme. Student-centred learning and teaching principles are broadly ensured in the study programme. Studies in the study programme are personalised. RSU provides different forms of studies, efficient informative and material support, digitalised study process, placement at workplace, individual study courses, as well as opportunities are provided for continuation of studies at the next level of studies. The classes are organised in the form of regular lectures, activities in the interactive environment (including online via digital technologies), seminars and discussions, problem solving assignments and practical works, simulations (the Court work), dialogue method. Students with access to the state secret and students without this access are studying related disciplines separately, but still are ensured with everything needed to achieve the planned learning outcomes.

Independent studies are a mandatory part of the study process at RSU. Combining regular and remote study forms makes it possible to balance the needs of the study process, develop the skills of teaching staff and students in the e-environment, break down distance barriers, allowing students to study regardless of where they live.

The practical placement is a part of the study programme “Protection of Economic Security”. Students have guaranteed opportunities for the practical placement, as all of them are already employed in the security field. Organization of the placement work is effective; tasks of the placement are clear and related to the learning outcomes of the study programme. The provision of practical placement fully complies with the requirements of the regulatory enactments. In the study programme, the different duration of the program consists of practical placement, which is 30 CP longer for applicants with the academic background. Law enforcement agencies, in accordance with the concluded “Internal Security Academy” consortium agreement, provide internships in structural units specialising in the prevention and detection of economic and cybercrimes. These structural units include, for example, the Economic Crimes Bureau and the Cybercrime Bureau. Currently, all students are doing practical placement in the same place of work where they are employed. From one side, it guarantees practical placement in the studies-related field. But from the other side, it limits opportunities of students to exchange experience, learn operation of other departments of their or other organisation. It also limits possibilities for students to do practical placement abroad.

The topics of students' final theses in the study programme “Protection of Economic Security” are relevant to the field and correspond to the study programme.

Strengths:

- 1) The content of the study programme “Protection of Economic Security” is topical and reflects the latest trends in the internal security field, and meets the needs of the industry, labour market and scientific trends;
- 2) The programme is established under the “Internal Security Academy” consortium and is developed in close cooperation with the employers;
- 3) The content of the study programme and related study courses fully corresponds to the objectives of the study programme and ensures achievements of learning outcomes;
- 4) The study programme fully complies with the national regulations;
- 5) The study programme ensures student-centred approach in learning, teaching and students’ assessment;
- 6) Practical placements are guaranteed to the students, as all the students are already employed;
- 7) The topics of students' final theses are in compliance with the topics requested by the industry.

Weaknesses:

- 1) The choice of practical placement of students is limited by the place of their employment;
- 2) There are limited opportunities to do practical placement abroad

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The study programme awards the degree based on the achievements and finding of the relevant field of science. To obtain the degree, students develop and defend a Master’s thesis. The Ministry of Interior submits summarised priority research topics (SER, p.159). EG got clear evidence of very close cooperation between RSU and law enforcement institutions in development of the content of the study programme, proposal of Master’s thesis themes, mentoring and defence of Master’s theses.

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1.

Study resources, scientific resources, informative resources (including libraries), material and technical resources, and financial resources correspond to the specifics and implementation conditions of the study programme, create pre-conditions for the achievement of learning outcomes and evidence of the possibility of ensuring high-quality study process also in the future (SER, p.164). Given the fact that economic security matters have been little addressed in national scientific literature, all new study courses include scientific literature, including in English. Studies of scientific literature promote scientific research that allows students to combine theoretical knowledge with practice (SER, p. 165). Good example is Mock Court room to develop students' practical skills. In interviews students were satisfied with conditions and resources, managers expressed that resources are sustainable.

After EG on-site visit, interviews with students, managers, teaching staff and stakeholders and analysis of SER the study resources and provisions of the Economic Security programme. EG concludes that the resources are sufficient and meet the conditions for a high-quality study process, aligning with the programme's goals.

2.3.2.

Not applicable.

2.3.3.

The second cycle professional Master's study programme "Protection of Economic Security" is financed from the State budget resources of the programme "Internal Security Academy". The amount of funding for one study place of the programme shall be EUR 5 207. The programme is provided in Latvian in part-time regular studies. In the first year of study, it is planned to admit 30 students, with 5 student dropouts scheduled in the second year. To make the study programme cost-effective, the minimum number of students is 16 (SER, p.168).

In interviews with managers and stakeholders, they expressed that funding is sustainable.

After EG on-site visit, interviews with students, managers, teaching staff and stakeholders and analysis of SER the "Protection of Economic Security" Master's programme receives funding from the State budget, specifically through the "Internal Security Academy" programme. Each study place in the program is allocated EUR 5,207. The programme is offered in Latvian on a part-time basis.

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

Overall, the EG can conclude that the programme's resources and provisions are adequate and contribute to a high-quality learning experience. The emphasis on scientific literature and research further strengthens the programme's potential for fostering students' understanding and expertise in the field of economic security.

The "Protection of Economic Security" Master's programme receives funding from the State budget, specifically through the "Internal Security Academy" programme.

Strengths:

- 1) The programme receives funding from the State budget;
- 2) Resources are sufficient and meet the conditions for a high-quality study process, aligning with the programme's goals.

Weaknesses:

None

Assessment of the requirement [6]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Resources are sufficient and meet the conditions for a high-quality study process, aligning with the programme's goals.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1.

As indicated in 24.7. in the appendix: "Analysis of the composition of the academic staff involved in the implementation of the professional master's study programme "Economic Security Protection"" the implementation of the mandatory and limited elective part of the professional master's study programme "Economic Security Protection" is ensured by 30 lecturers, of which 11 are elected to academic positions at RSU. Of the 11 elected representatives of the academic staff, three are professors and four are associate professors (see Table 1, Fig. 1 of Appendix 24.7), which

corresponds to Section 55, Section 1, Clause 3 of the Law on Universities. (SER, p.169).

In general, it can be concluded that the qualifications of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programme are in accordance with the conditions of the implementation of the study programme and the requirements of regulatory acts (SER, p.171).

Professionals and experienced and practicing researchers in Latvia, as well as academic staff and infrastructure of ISA partners are involved in the implementation of the Professional Master's study programme "Protection of Economic Security" (SER, p.169).

The teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme are qualified in accordance with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements set forth in the regulatory enactments. The academic staff includes professors, associate professors, and experienced and practicing researchers in Latvia.

2.4.2.

The higher education institution RSU purposefully takes measures so that changes in the teaching staff do not negatively affect the quality of the study programme implementation and the compliance of the study programme with the requirements specified in regulatory enactments. (SER, p.171).

In interviews with teaching staff, they expressed support from the managers and possibilities to get counselling. They were satisfied.

The EG, after the on-site visit and interviews with managers and teaching staff and inspecting the SER can confirm that these criteria are complete.

2.4.3.

Not applicable.

2.4.4.

Publications of academic staff of the Study Field "Internal Security and Civil Protection" in the "ZDIS Pure 01.01.2018 - 31.05.2024 Annex 6.4. and 06.1 annex staff list" confirms that each member of the academic staff in the last six years has published peer-reviewed editions, including international editions.

It's important to mention that there are some significant members of academic staff: Professor J. Grasis, Professor A. Vilks, associate professor A. Lieljuksis (SER, p. 170).

Data analysis confirms that each member of the academic staff in the last six years has published peer-reviewed editions, including international editions and this criterion is compliant.

2.4.5.

A mechanism for mutual cooperation between teaching staff members has been established. It promotes the improvement and interconnection of study courses/modules. In line with the objective and tasks of the establishment of ISA, programme has been developed in cooperation with consortium partners under the supervision of the consortium's collegiate institutions (SER, p.172).

Both University of Latvia and RSU have delegated their representative to collaborate with the other university during the paperwork process (Annija Kārklīņa of University of Latvia and Aldis Lieljuksis of RSU, respectively) (SER, p.172).

In accordance with the provisions of the ISA founding Agreement, RSU, University of Latvia, and the State Police College shall cooperate and continue cooperation (SER, p. 172).

In interviews with teaching staff, they expressed that cooperation is at a good level.

EG on-site visit, interviews with managers, teaching staff and stakeholders the EG can confirm that these criteria are complete.

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

In general, it can be concluded that the qualifications of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programme are in accordance with the conditions of the implementation of the study programme and the requirements of regulatory acts.

The higher education institution/college purposefully takes measures so that changes in the teaching staff do not negatively affect the quality of the study programme implementation and the compliance of the study programme with the requirements specified in regulatory enactments.

Each member of the academic staff in the last six years has published peer-reviewed editions, including international editions. EG judges that in general the RSU is fully compliant in this criterion.

Strengths:

- 1) Qualifications of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study program are in accordance with the conditions of the implementation of the study programme and the requirements of regulatory acts;
- 2) The lecturers involved in the implementation of the study programme are industry professionals;
- 3) Each member of the academic staff in the last six years has published peer-reviewed editions, including international editions.

Weaknesses

None

Assessment of the requirement [7]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

In general, it can be concluded that the qualifications of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programme are in accordance with the conditions of the implementation of the study programme and the requirements of regulatory acts.

2.5. Assessment of the Compliance

Requirements

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Annex 17.1 describes that there is compliance of the professional Master's study programme "Protection of Economic Security" with the State Professional Education Standard.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

RSU in collaboration with ISA has developed and accepted the 7th professional qualifications level professional standard "Senior Specialist in Economic Security" at the meeting of the tripartite cooperation sub-council of professional education and employment on October 9, 2024, protocol no. 6. Professional standards mapping to study programme matches.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Economic Security” at the meeting of the tripartite cooperation sub-council of professional education and employment on October 9, 2024, protocol no. 6. Professional standards mapping to study programme matches.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

A sample of the issued document matches the 4th attachment of “The procedure for issuing documents certifying higher education recognized by the state” regulations and contains all the necessary information. See Annex 24.1.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The academic staff has sufficient Latvian language knowledge indicated by their CVs and the signed certification by the RSU rector confirms that the teaching staff members comply with the Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No. 733 of 7 July 2009. See Annex 24.4 and 6.2.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The study agreement includes all the necessary parts set forth in Latvian legislation (Cabinet of Ministers regulation no. 70). In the agreement the university has not specified its rights. It would also be advisable to expand the agreement and include information about the guarantee of compensation losses. See Annex 24.6.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The university has handed in a rector's signed confirmation that students will have an opportunity to continue their studies in the RSU professional master's study programme "Economic Security" if the implementation of the study programme is discontinued. See Annex 24.2. However, the EG notes that if this alternative programme were to lose accreditation, then the RSU would need to enter negotiations with other HEIs in Latvia.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The university has submitted a Rector's signed confirmation that it will compensate all losses to the students of the study programme if it fails to be accredited or loses its license and the student does not agree to study in a different study programme. See Annex 24.3.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Assessment of the requirement [8]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The occupational standard relevant to the programme was approved after the assessment visit was undertaken. The EG notes that the programme assessed by the EG was based on a draft version of the standard and this draft subsequently became the approved standard. Given that all other regulatory requirements had already been met, a "fully compliant" grade is awarded.

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

The "Protection of Economic Security" Master's programme was established in 2022 in cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior, the College of the State Police, and the University of Latvia. This programme is aimed at a diverse group of economic security professionals, including heads of

organisations, law enforcement employees, and other specialists focused on economic security, internal security, and civil protection.

The programme provides a Professional Master's Degree in Economic Security, along with the qualification of Senior Specialist in Economic Security, which was approved on 09.10.2024. It is currently available only as a part-time programme, offering two formats of 90 or 120 credit points (CP), lasting between two years and two years and six months depending on applicants' previous academic background.

The programme is taught exclusively in Latvian, which limits internationalisation efforts and the possibility of inviting foreign lecturers. Nonetheless, it is closely aligned with the needs of local employers and the labour market. It also complies with national regulations, including Cabinet Regulation No. 305, which governs professional higher education standards in Latvia. Although some changes were made during the accreditation period, such as adjustments in duration, volume, and admission requirements, these alterations have enhanced the programme's relevance and distinction from other offerings.

A major strength of the programme is its close cooperation with employers and law enforcement agencies through the Internal Security Academy consortium. Practical placements are guaranteed, as all students are employed in the security field, although this limits the opportunity for them to gain experience outside their current workplaces. Practical placements in law enforcement agencies like the Economic Crimes Bureau and Cybercrime Bureau are organised in line with learning outcomes, though opportunities for international placements remain scarce.

The programme is designed to accommodate classes at the College of the State Police's special premises, yet these facilities are rarely used, potentially undermining the hands-on, practical learning that the programme aims to deliver. Furthermore, while the students are guaranteed practical placements, these are limited to their current workplaces, which restricts their ability to experience different environments and approaches, both within Latvia and internationally. This lack of diversity in practical experience could hinder students' ability to develop broader perspectives or learn from other organisations.

The programme is designed to be student-centred, with a flexible learning structure that includes regular lectures, remote learning, problem-solving exercises, and practical work. Students study in an e-environment, ensuring accessibility regardless of location.

Overall, the programme offers a relevant and high-quality education for professionals in economic security, supported by adequate resources and qualified teaching staff. While it has some areas for improvement, such as expanding international opportunities and formalising the occupational standard, the programme effectively meets the requirements of local industry and academic regulations, ensuring its sustainability and relevance in the field.

Evaluation of the study programme "Protection of Economic Security"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Protection of Economic Security"

Short-term recommendations

1) Within the next six to 12 months, develop a plan to attract foreign lecturers to the study programme by expanding recruitment efforts, creating partnerships with international institutions, and offering competitive incentives. For example, this might be achieved by advertising opportunities at international conferences and exploiting existing academic networks to promote the programme.

2) Within the next two academic years, work with the College of the State Police to schedule more frequent use of their special premises for teaching practical components of the programme. This will involve coordinating with the College's administration and identifying specific courses where the use of these facilities can enhance hands-on learning experiences for students.

3) By the end of the next academic year, establish a framework that allows students to undertake practical placements outside of their regular place of employment. This could be achieved, for example, through partnerships with external organisations, both within and outside law enforcement.

Long-term recommendations

1) As a long-term strategy, within the next two to six years, collaborate with other higher education institutions to create contingency plans that ensure continuity in case the programme is discontinued. This could include establishing transfer agreements with similar programmes at other universities.

2) Over the next two years, explore opportunities for students to participate in international placements or exchange programmes abroad. This may involve setting up Erasmus+ agreements or other partnerships with foreign institutions that specialise in economic security or internal security and ensuring the necessary logistical and financial support is in place to make these opportunities accessible.

3) Over the next six years, to motivate each member of the academic staff to publish their research results in the peer-reviewed editions in Latvia and abroad.

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

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

Assessment of the Requirements for the Study Field

Requirements	Requirement Evaluation		Comment
R1 - Pursuant to Section 5, Paragraph 2.1 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions, the higher education institution/ college shall ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study field whilst implementing its internal quality assurance system:	Fully compliant		<p>RSU fully complies with the requirement of the Law on Higher Education Institutions, Section 5, Paragraph 2.1</p> <p>It ensures continuous improvement and efficient performance of the study field, has established well-developed quality assurance system and successfully implements it. RSU has created a well-developed framework of internal documents to support the internal quality system, which are followed by all stakeholders (Annex 1.3.) Information provided on the RSU website should be updated after the re-accreditation.</p> <p>In the next chapters of the report, there are no severe violations of QA system at RSU, that's why fully compliant.</p>
R2 - Compliance of scientific research and artistic creation with the level of development of scientific research and artistic creation (if applicable)		Partially compliant	<p>The Study Field is actively engaged in research which is relevant to the scientific field of "Internal Security and Civil Protection".</p> <p>However, there are concerns over the decline in research output and its uneven distribution over the academic staff. There is a need for targeted support and development initiatives to encourage more widespread engagement in research activities.</p>
R3 - The cooperation implemented within the study field with various Latvian and foreign organizations ensures the achievement of the aims of the study field.		Partially compliant	<p>The EG is convinced that the cooperation between RSU, other educational institutions, state institutions, and employers (Annex 7 of the SER) effectively helps achieve the set study goals. However, the EG also expresses concern that the challenge to realize student mobility could have impact on the study development, as students could additionally have the opportunity to broaden their experience with comparing the education at RSU with that of other countries and recommend improvements if necessary. (SER, Annex 8.2</p> <p>8.2_Anx_Sat_data_on_stud_mobility_IDCA).</p>

Requirements	Requirement Evaluation			Comment
R4 - Elimination of deficiencies and shortcomings identified in the previous assessment of the study field, if any, or implementation of the recommendations provided.	Fully compliant			The vast majority of recommendations have been implemented (excluding those whose implementation proved to be impossible on practical or professional grounds). However, a number of the recommendations made have only been partially implemented, but the EG notes that there are still several years remaining to do so.

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	Police Work (44861)	Not relevant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Good
2	Economic Security (45861)	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Good
3	Protection of Economic Security (47861)	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Good

The Dissenting Opinions of the Experts

The experts are united in their opinions.