

Expert group joint opinion

Evaluation Procedure: Assessment of Study Field

Higher Education Institution: Alberta College

Study field: Law

Experts:

1. Ingrīda Veikša (Chair of the Experts Group)
2. Regina Valutyte (Secretary of the Experts Group)
3. Gatis Litvins
4. Rūdolfs Aleksandrs Strods
5. Vedran Đulabić

Summary Assessment of the Study Field

Summary Assessment of the Study Field

Summary of the assessment:

The aim of the study direction is clearly defined and attainable and goes entirely in line with the College's vision and mission, which emphasize the graduates' success in finding well-paid jobs in their field, entrepreneurship, continuous development, and professionalism. The need for the programme was well explained during the meetings with the students. Therefore, the programme can be regarded as meeting the needs of the labor market.

In general, the management (administration) of the study direction and the relevant study programme's management (administration) reflect international educational standards and enable the continuous development of the study direction. Given a relatively small number of students in the study direction at the moment, the fact that the study direction contains only one programme, the study programme is currently administered effectively enough. Since the head/director is the same person, operational decisions may be taken quickly and the practical problems may be solved efficiently. However, the excessively wide scope of the functions presents the risk for the programme's effective management, not to say the development of the study direction.

Internal quality assurance system is established and functional. The quality policy is established and available for everyone. The system for review of the study programmes is in place mostly in the form of surveys. However, as recognised by the staff, participation in these surveys is low which limits the data available for the improvement of the studies. The involvement of employers in the quality assurance system is unclear. Due to the small size of the Institution and the assessed study programme, the study programme's director addresses quality issues on an individual basis.

There are some insufficiencies when it comes to specific regulations. The internal regulation for students at College has not been updated since 2010. The Ethical and academic integrity code of the College establishes academic integrity principles for the academic community and the mechanisms for compliance with these principles. The students and the academic staff are aware of the regulation. However, there is no special operational rules to ensure academic ethics during the online assessment.

The studies at the College are mainly fee-based, which poses a significant risk to the study direction's financial stability. This is especially important because Alberta College has a small number of students in the study direction, as well as the College has not a clear and sustainable plan for managing this problem.

Alberta College has appropriate infrastructure and the material and technical provision required for the implementation of the study direction, except for the library resources in the field of law. Availability of the library and the databases to the students are provided, however, the number of books and databases in foreign languages is insufficient.

The College has a functional and user-friendly e-learning system. The moodle and e-environment as a whole is monitored closely and it is ensured that information is up to date and that everything complies with regulation. Alberta College as a small institution knows the needs of the students and has a well-functioning support system responding to the needs.

Alberta College has defined, implemented and observed procedures for attracting qualified teaching staff. The elected teachers are selected in accordance with the procedures specified in Latvian laws. The qualification of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme complies with the formal requirements for implementing the study programme and the requirements outlined in the regulatory enactments. The programme has a sufficient number of teaching practitioners in the study programme to ensure that the teaching is in line with practice. Almost all members of academic staff of the programme are involved in scientific research. However, only few members of the permanent teaching staff publish publications consistently. Most

of the research in the field of law is published nationally.

Main strengths:

1. Strategic documents of the study direction are in line with international trends of research and study management
2. The network of the partners in Latvia and internationally is sufficient to carry out activities contributing to the study programme and study direction
3. Well-developed and functioning traineeship system
4. An effective virtual learning environment corresponding the needs of the study direction and study programme; meaningful cooperation with EKA University.
5. Good location of the College and the premises corresponding the needs of the study direction and study programme
6. The small size of the programme and direction ensures that a lot of the issues can be resolved efficiently
7. Both direction and management staff is dedicated to their work which ensures higher quality for the direction.
8. Quality Assurance Policy adopted and set in place on the level of formal documents.
9. Efforts to involve the students in scientific research are systematic

Main weaknesses:

1. Low students' participation in the internal quality assurance system
2. Unclear involvement of the employers in the quality assurances system in practice
3. Poor offer of the courses offered in foreign languages, especially in English
4. Lack of a clear plan for internationalization of studies' curriculum
5. Budget sources are not sufficiently diverse
6. Small number of students and unclear strategy/plan to increase number of students in future
7. Small number of students enrolled in the assessed programme could affect the sustainability of the programme in the long run
8. Due to the small number of students, credit mobility for studies is scarce
9. No transparent system for research funding
10. No publications in journals indexed in Scopus or Web of Sciences
11. The number of available legal books in foreign languages in the library is insufficient, and the availability of databases in the AC digital environment should be more expansive
12. Outdated legal regulation governing students life at the College
13. Unbalanced allocation of responsibilities resulting in excessive workload of the study direction and programme director

1. Management of the Study Field

Analysis

The study direction aims to provide qualified, socially active, and responsible law specialists who can successfully integrate into the labor market and are oriented towards further education. The aim goes entirely in line with the College's vision and mission, which emphasize the graduates' success in finding well-paid jobs in their field, entrepreneurship, continuous development, and professionalism. The aim of the study direction is clearly defined and attainable.

The study direction and the relevant study programme comply with the main directions of the College's strategic development. "Alberta College Development Strategy 2019-2023" establishes

five directions of strategic development for the next five years: preparation of high-quality specialists fitting the current job market requirements; student centered approach; professionalism of teaching staff, research-based teaching, collaborative approach; efficient management and steady development; openness to public. Despite the shortcomings still present in delivering the study direction and the programme, the study direction's strategic documents reflect the main trends of the College's strategic development.

Explaining the need for the study direction and the programme, the self-evaluation report proposes several arguments: business law element in the title of the programme; statistical data for the vacancies to the position of a legal assistant, and the previous requests to open the programme. In this regard, the most compelling argument proving the need for the study direction and the programme is the number of the applicants to the programme once the programme is already established. Since 2016/2017, the study direction has faced the dropping number of matriculated students, the number of the students is small. During the site visit it was demonstrated that the programme had regained its potential to attract students, since the number of the students during the admission of 2020 has increased. The need for the programme was also well explained during the meetings with the students. Therefore, the programme can be regarded as meeting the needs of the labor market.

In general, the management (administration) of the study direction and the relevant study programme's management (administration) reflect international educational standards and enable the continuous development of the study direction. The head of the study direction, who is also the director of the study programme (hereinafter - the head/director), is a key person in the programme's managerial structure. The head/director has numerous functions, ranging from mentoring the students in the whole study process to searching for the programme's teaching staff. The excessively wide scope of the functions presents the risk for the programme's effective management, not to say the development of the study direction. Given a relatively small number of students in the study direction at the moment, the fact that the study direction contains only one programme, the study programme is currently administered effectively enough. However, the current result is also the outcome of the high enthusiasm and commitment of the present head/director. The implementation of numerous operational functions leaves little time for the study direction strategic development. Therefore, it is recommended to review the allocation of the responsibilities of the study programme director.

This finding is slightly mitigated by the fact that the head/director is assisted by Programme secretary, Study programme secretaries, E-coordinator. The site visit left no doubt that the administrative and technical staff provides the support to meet the study's needs of the study direction. However, this support, which is consultative, administrative, and technical, does not eliminate the imbalance driven by the variety of the functions different in nature allocated to the head/director.

Since the head/director is the same person, operational decisions may be taken quickly and the practical problems may be solved efficiently. Formally, the students are involved in the decision-making at both strategic (in the Council) and study programme level (in methodological commissions), so their interests are duly represented.

The admission procedures are defined in the "Rules on Admission", which undergo the democratic scrutiny of the Council each year. The rules comply with the relevant national requirements. The system of recognition of previous studies functions effectively in the practice of the institution. The professional experience may also be recognized; however, there has been no practice of this

recognition so far.

Regulation on the Procedure of Studies and Examination set the evaluation criteria, types, and procedures of the learning outcomes. It is commended that the teaching staff is encouraged to apply more attractive and innovative evaluation forms (business games, roles play). The evaluation procedures are logical and efficient.

The Ethical and academic integrity code of the College establishes academic integrity principles for the academic community and the mechanisms for compliance with these principles. The students and the academic staff are aware of the regulation. The issues related to the infringements of academic ethics were addressed during several events. The students discuss the rules governing academic ethics in the study course "introduction to the profession". For detecting plagiarism, the College started using the Common Computerized Antiplagiarism Checking system, which is also used by different Latvian institutions and is a positive step in fighting plagiarism. However, the procedure to be followed to establish the plagiarism once the system detects the matching text, lacks clarity. When it comes to the consequences for academic misconduct, the study agreement foresees the fine as a consequence (this penalty is also envisaged in the Ethical and Academic Integrity Code). This creates the impression that the student can only pay for the violation.

Additionally, the institution accepts the difficulty of ensuring academic integrity in practice. It is commended that the discovered breaches of academic ethics prompted the College to take relevant actions. However, the meetings with the teaching staff and the students left the impression that the College presumes e-environment to be immune to academic infringements. For instance, the tests in Moodle environment are not invigilated, no specific steps are taken to ensure the identity of the person taking the test. In this regard, it is recommended to set special operational rules to ensure academic ethics during the online assessment since the study direction widely uses the digital environment as the form of studies.

The information published on the College's website regarding the relevant study programme of the study direction complies with the information available in the official registers. It provides sufficiently relevant information for the candidates and the current students in Latvian - the language in which the study programme is implement.

Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

Conclusions:

- The study direction and the relevant study programme, despite the shortcomings still present in implementation, comply with the main directions of the College's strategic development.
- The aim of the study direction is clearly defined and attainable and goes entirely in line with the College's vision and mission, which emphasize the graduates' success in finding well-paid jobs in their field, entrepreneurship, continuous development, and professionalism. The need for the programme was well explained during the meetings with the students. Therefore, the programme can be regarded as meeting the needs of the labor market.
- In general, the management (administration) of the study direction and the relevant study programme's management (administration) reflect international educational standards and enable the continuous development of the study direction. Given a relatively small number of students in the study direction at the moment, the fact that the study direction contains only one programme, the study programme is currently administered effectively enough. Since the head/director is the same person, operational decisions may be taken quickly and the practical problems may be solved efficiently. However, the excessively wide scope of the functions presents the risk for the

programme's effective management, not to say the development of the study direction.

- The admission procedures are defined in the "Rules on Admission", which undergo the democratic scrutiny of the Council each year. The rules comply with the relevant national requirements.
- The Ethical and academic integrity code of the College establishes academic integrity principles for the academic community and the mechanisms for compliance with these principles. The students and the academic staff are aware of the regulation. However, there is no special operational rules to ensure academic ethics during the online assessment.

Strengths:

- 1) Strategy of the study direction is in line with international trends of research and study management
- 2) The Institution has well-developed system for the admission of students

Weaknesses:

- 1) Unbalanced allocation of responsibilities resulting in excessive workload of the study direction and programme director
- 2) No special operational rules to ensure academic ethics during the online assessment

2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System

Analysis

Alberta College bases its quality policy upon several documents that have been developed and formally adopted by the Institution. The main document is Alberta College Quality Assurance Policy (25 pages), which establishes the main quality policy elements. The document has been adopted in July 2019 and is publicly available on the institution's website. It established six core principles of the College (Social and legal responsibility; Leadership and involvement; Efficiency and goal orientation; Regular internal and periodic external assessment; Continuous improvement towards greatness; Communication and notification) and sets its vision and mission. However, the document's implementation started on the 1st of September 2020, so there are no sufficient data and information to assess its impact on the quality of Alberta College.

Alberta College undertakes various surveys regularly. The last survey on students' satisfaction was conducted in December 2019. During the visit, experts were informed that at least 3 more student surveys were conducted at Alberta College after submitting the self-assessment report. In January and June 2020 – about study courses and teachers' work; in April 2020: about the College environment, work of the administration, content of the study program and material and technical resources of the College.

Due to the small size of the Institution and the assessed study programme, quality issues are addressed on an ad hoc basis. The site visit has demonstrated the dedication of the study programme's director and management staff to address the problems of each and every student. Although such an approach allows to solve most of the issues effectively, it can undermine efforts to deal with the improvement of the quality assurance policy systematically. Therefore, it is strongly recommended to establish a permanent Quality Assurance Committee comprised of representatives of internal (teachers, student, administration) and the external stakeholders (alumni, employers, courts, bar association, etc.).

When it comes to the ESG the Institution especially emphasizes three of them. According to the Self-assessment report (p. 34), the student-centered approach and the study process's quality are the two areas where the Institution pays particular attention. Most challenges are connected with the

programme's financial sustainability, which is not surprising due to a very small number of enrolled students (see part 3 of the Report).

Internal quality assurance system is established and functional. The quality policy is established and available for everyone. The system for review of the study programmes is in place mostly in the form of surveys. However, the number of respondents is low which limits the data available for the improvement of the studies. During the visit, administration representatives explained to the experts that annual study program director meetings are organized with each student group due to the small number of students. The aim of these conversations is to establish the students' level of satisfaction with the study environment, the environment, the study process, contents of study courses, the examination process, teachers' work, etc. This approach helps to solve individual problems, however, it does not guarantee the objective feedback on the quality of the studies. The involvement of employers in the quality assurance system is unclear.

Alberta College established a functional and user friendly e-learning system. The moodle and e-environment as a whole is monitored closely and it is ensured that information is up to date and that everything complies with regulation.

There are some insufficiencies when it comes to specific regulations. The internal regulation for students at Alberta Koledža" has not been updated since 2010 (see: https://www.alberta-koledza.lv/upload/AK_ieksejas_kartibas_noteikumi_studejosiem.pdf). It includes the old currency of Republic of Latvia (Lats), which then conflicts with the study contract which contains Euro as a fine for plagiarism. Additionally, the Student council regulation does not comply with the national law. According to the Law on Higher Education Institutions every student has a right "to elect and to be elected to the self-governance body of students, to participate in all levels of self-governance bodies of a higher education institution". Section 50 of the College's Student Council regulation restricts this right by setting additional mandatory requirements to the candidates who can be "Gada Alberts". The regulation must be reviewed, it is recommended to seek the advice from the Student Union of Latvia regarding this regulation.

Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

Conclusions:

- Internal quality assurance system is established and functional. The quality policy is established and available for everyone. The system for review of the study programmes is in place mostly in the form of surveys. However, as recognised by the staff, participation in these surveys is low which limits the data available for the improvement of the studies. The involvement of employers in the quality assurance system is unclear. Due to the small size of the Institution and the assessed study programme, the study programme's director addresses quality issues on an individual basis. Although such an approach allows solving most of the issues effectively, it can undermine efforts to deal with the improvement of the quality assurance policy systematically.
- Alberta College established a functional and user-friendly e-learning system. The moodle and e-environment as a whole is monitored closely and it is ensured that information is up to date and that everything complies with regulation.
- There are some insufficiencies when it comes to specific regulations. The internal regulation for students at Alberta Koledža" has not been updated since 2010. Additionally, the Student Council regulation restricts excessively the right to students' representation by setting additional mandatory requirements to the candidates who can be "Gada Alberts".

Strengths:

- 1) The small size of the programme and direction ensures that a lot of the issues can be resolved efficiently.
- 2) Both direction and management staff is dedicated to their work which ensures higher quality for the direction.
- 3) There is a strong policy established regarding the e-environment and its quality.
- 4) Quality Assurance Policy adopted and set in place on the level of formal documents.

Weaknesses:

- 1) Low students' participation in the internal quality assurance system (surveys etc.)
- 2) Unclear involvement of the employers in the quality assurances system
- 3) Outdated legal regulation governing students' life at the College
- 4) The Student Council regulation is too restrictive on the students' rights to participate
- 5) There is no permanent Quality Assurance Committee which should be comprised of representatives of internal (teachers, student, administration), as well as from the external stakeholders (alumni, employers, courts, bar association, etc.).

3. Resources and Provision of the Study Field

Analysis

Alberta College is a private institution, so the studies are mainly fee-based. The College states that cost-per-student is 1079.92 EUR per year, so the study fee covers most of that. The most significant part of the College's expenses (57%) are salaries (for academic staff).

Alberta College has developed a system to determine the financial resources required to implement the study direction and the relevant study programme. The amount of financial resources required for the College's study direction and programme is determined according to a pre-defined methodology. The Self-evaluation report indicates income and expenditure items.

A significant risk to the study direction's financial stability is posed by the fact that the main source of funding is tuition fees. This is especially important because Alberta College has a tiny number of students in the study direction. The experts were not convinced during the site visit that the College has a clear and sustainable plan for managing this problem. In order to fulfil a very ambitious vision set for the Institution (by 2023, to be the most recommended Latvian college according to Latvian employers, having over 150 graduates per year, who quickly find well-paid jobs in their specialty, and dare to start their businesses and are oriented towards continuous development, Quality Assurance Policy, p. 4) a number of enrolled students in the law programme should be increased.

Additionally, the College must differentiate the budget's financial resources to a bigger extent and minimize the consequences of the problem of relatively small student numbers. Erasmus+ structural funds, sponsors, participation in the state procurements are identified as possible alternative financial resources, however, the College does not have a clear plan how to attract this funding.

Academic staff can fill in an application to get finances for carrying out the research and going to present their research outcomes in conferences. In experts' opinion, based on the self-evaluation report and the conversations with the academic staff, this system is not fully transparent. On the one hand, in general the College offers financial support for research, on the other hand, teachers do not have clear information about the conditions for this funding. According to self-evaluation report, only four instructors received funding for seminars and conferences, so it remains unclear what is the budget for research and how the high demand for the support is managed.

The College has the necessary infrastructure, material and technical support to implement the study direction and programme. Students have access to auditoriums equipped with the tables and chairs needed for study needs, multimedia, and stationary presentation equipment. The College staff and students can use both the study rooms and the computer class and the library. The College also provides Internet connection and access to internal information systems, where study materials are available, and internal normative documents and databases. The infrastructure and material and technical support is shared with EKA University.

The facilities for administrative needs and academic activities are well-equipped technically for both day-to-day administrative work and academic activities. Students especially praise the location of the College (in the center of Riga), which facilitates the geographical availability of the College. Infrastructure and material and technical support are sufficient.

Alberta College students and academic staff are already provided with a well-developed IT infrastructure and virtual study environment. The College students and academic staff have access to e-studies environment with study materials and assessments possibilities. The e-learning environment is accessible for students, and there is a user manual available for using the e-learning portal, and technical support can be reached if necessary. The support for online learning for the students is provided via e-mails and calls; the user manual is available on the e-learning platform.

The library is equipped with the collection of legal books, as well as some relevant databases. Very few book are in foreign languages. This is not sufficient for the provision of the study programme, not to say the development of the direction. Apparently, there is a limited funding for library collection in the study direction. Since the infrastructure is shared with EKA University, the Institutions could cooperate in formation of the library collection (avoiding a possible duplication of the books, purchasing more new shared books).

It is positive that the library's working hours are suitable for students' needs. The number and area of the premises are suitable for permanent study and research work.

Alberta College has defined, implemented and observed procedures (for the study direction and the corresponding study programme) for attracting qualified teaching staff. The elected teachers are selected in accordance with the procedures specified in Latvian laws. Competitions for academic and scientific positions, as well as for general staff positions are announced publicly. The established procedure is one that ensures the appropriate selection of the teaching staff in accordance with the capabilities and needs of the College.

The College has a well-thought strategy and activity plan for staff development according to an instructor's image. However, it is not clear to what extent this plan is implemented (the College could not provide the sample of individual academic staff development plan mentioned in the self-evaluation report). In any case, the College organizes numerous in-house activities ranging from discussions to teaching methodological conferences that address most of the teaching staff members' collective needs.

Teaching staff participates in both outgoing and incoming mobility, which provides added value for the implementation of the study process and the quality of studies. However, mobility management system is insufficiently developed. During the last six years, only small part of the lecturers went to teach abroad. During the same period, the College hosted more incoming lecturers than sent abroad. In the reporting period 32 mobilities of academic staff were conducted, where the College's academic staff went to a foreign institution to exchange experience, and 26 mobilities took place

where foreign university academic staff came to Latvia.

Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

Conclusions:

- The studies at the College are mainly fee-based, which poses a significant risk to the study direction's financial stability. This is especially important because Alberta College has a small number of students in the study direction, as well as the College has not a clear and sustainable plan for managing this problem.
- Alberta College and EKA has cooperation agreement about sharing the infrastructure and the material and technical provisions. Alberta College has appropriate infrastructure and the material and technical provision required for the implementation of the study direction, except for the library resources in the field of law.
- Availability of the library and the databases to the students are provided, at the same time the number of books and databases in foreign languages is insufficient.
- Alberta College has defined, implemented and observed procedures for attracting qualified teaching staff. The elected teachers are selected in accordance with the procedures specified in Latvian laws.
- Alberta College has a well-thought strategy and activity plan for staff development according to an instructor's image. However, it is not clear to what extent this plan is implemented.
- Teaching staff participates in both outgoing and incoming mobility. However, mobility management system is insufficiently developed.
- Alberta College as a small institution knows the needs of the students and has a well-functioning support system responding to the needs.

Strengths:

- 1) An effective virtual learning environment corresponding the needs of the study direction and study programme; meaningful cooperation with EKA University.
- 2) Good location of the College and the premises corresponding the needs of the study direction and study programme

Weaknesses:

- 1) There is no sufficient diversity in budget sources, the study direction and the study programme is mainly funded by the tuition fees
- 2) Still small number of students and unclear strategy/plan to increase number of students in future
- 3) No transparent system for research funding
- 4) The number of available legal books in foreign languages in the library is insufficient, and the availability of databases in the AC digital environment should be more expansive
- 5) Teaching staff outgoing mobility is insufficient

4. Scientific Research and Artistic Creation

Analysis

The directions of scientific research in the study direction comply with Alberta College's development aims of and are relevant to the study direction and the respective industry. According to the self-evaluation report, in science and research development the College seeks to become the leader among Latvian colleges in the development of science and research and come as close as possible to the university level. However, during the visit, the experts were not convinced that enough attention was being paid to the development of the research. In each interview, it was emphasized that the main focus is on the acquisition of professional skills. While the acquisition of

professional skills is undoubtedly important in the professional education programme, this approach does not correspond to the ambition of the College mentioned above.

The relation between scientific research in the study direction and the study process has been defined and ensured, and it is efficient. Scientific research and the outcomes thereof are integrated into the study process in the study programme, however, due to a small number of publications of the teaching staff, a tiny number of courses are taught by the teachers who do the research themselves. In order to improve the connection of scientific research and the study process, the College has developed and implemented the Scientific Research and Innovation Development Strategy 2024. College's academic staff and students have the right to freely choose the topic, directions and methods of their scientific research by evaluating the urgency of each individual activity and publishing the research results. Academic staff is involved in scientific research. However, most of the research in the field of law is published nationally. There are no publications in journals indexed in Scopus or Web of Sciences. However for the professional college level programme such a requirement is excessive, so the level of scientific research in the College is considered to be adequate.

International cooperation in the field of scientific research within the study direction is ensured by a relatively wide range of cooperation agreements, however, they should be implemented in practice once the College has the ambition to do international research. The College collaborates with L. N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University and with CTL Eurocollege in Cyprus. During the site visit experts were not convinced that international cooperation improved in a target-oriented manner.

In general, the mechanisms for the involvement of the teaching staff in scientific research exist in the College. The College provides institutional support for the scientific research of academic staff and students in compliance with College Council-approved research and scientific activity directions and annual research and creative activities programme. In order to ensure scientific and research activities, College organizes a students' conference, a business conference (forum), an international scientific conference, and business games. Conferences and business games are organized in collaboration with the College's strategic partner, EKA University. Research is funded on individual request, no specific funds are provided for it (the shortcomings of the funding are elaborated in part 3 of the Report). Although research work can be funded, there was no assurance from the teaching staff that this funding motivates them to conduct research. The teaching staff produces a small amount of publications, in 2019 and 2020 only 4 publications were published, none of them in Scopus or WoS databases. These numbers leave the impression that the mechanism for the involvement of the teaching staff in scientific research is not efficient in practice.

The College has developed mechanisms to promote the involvement of the students in scientific research. According to the self-evaluation report, the focus of scientific research for the College is applied research initiated by employers, industry associations, non-governmental organizations, partners, public administration institutions, and implemented by College academic staff and students. However, during the visit, the experts were not convinced that employers provided students with research topics that were relevant to them. The students confirmed that they are invited to participate in student conferences. The most successful students are invited to participate in the conference even after graduation.

Innovative solutions in the study process. There are two types of distance learning in the College: 1) e-learning, which takes place remotely according to the schedule, when lecturers read lectures online, providing written study materials, as well as recorded lectures, 2) distance learning in its classical format, providing written study materials, as well as recorded lectures.

Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

Conclusions:

- The directions of scientific research in the study direction comply with Alberta College's development aims of and are relevant to the study direction and the respective industry. In science and research development the College seeks to become the leader among Latvian colleges in the development of science and research and come as close as possible to the university level. However, it was emphasized that the main focus is on the acquisition of professional skills.
- The relation between scientific research in the study direction and the study process has been defined and ensured. Scientific research and the outcomes are integrated into the study process, however, due to a small number of publications of the teaching staff, a tiny number of courses are taught by the teachers who do the research themselves.
- International cooperation in the field of scientific research is ensured by a wide range of cooperation agreements. However, no convincing evidence was found that international cooperation improved in a target-oriented manner.
- Mechanisms for the involvement of the teaching staff in scientific research exist in the College. Conferences and business games are organized in collaboration with the College's strategic partner, EKA University. However, there was no complete evidence that the mechanism for the involvement of the teaching staff in scientific research is efficient in practice.
- The College has developed mechanisms to promote the involvement of the students in scientific research. The students and graduates are invited to participate in student conferences.
- Innovative solutions are used in the study process. Along with distance learning, e-learning has been introduced, which also includes online scheduled lectures.

Strengths:

- 1) Academic staff is involved in scientific research.
- 2) Conferences are organized together with EKA University
- 3) Students are involved in the conferences
- 4) Efforts to involve the students in scientific research are systematic

Weaknesses:

- 1) Most of the research in the field of law is published nationally, no publications indexed in Scopus or Web of Sciences
- 2) Small number of strategic international partnerships produce collaboration results in the field of research
- 3) The mechanism for the involvement of the teaching staff in scientific research exists, but it is not efficient in practice.

5. Cooperation and Internationalisation

Analysis

The list of College's formal agreements with Latvian partners is solid and fully enables developing various external and internal activities. Numerous partners are relevant to the study direction and the study programme. The systematic collaboration with the partners in the realization of the study process contributes effectively to achieving the aims of the study direction, including the study programme.

The list of College's formal cooperative partnerships outside Latvia is wide enough to contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study direction and the relevant study programme if implemented in practice. The efforts should be put to make the existing agreements

to produce the cooperation results, which can already be observed with some strategic partnerships' evolution. Teaching and training mobility, students' mobility, and project activities could be the core of the activities.

The College attracts few staff members for teaching in the study programme (7 out of 26 mobilities); however it leaves no doubts about the successful efforts to bring internationalization elements to the study direction. The lack of internationalization in the curriculum is mitigated by some internationalization activities at home (e.g., staff training week, etc.) where the students and the staff can get international experience without mobility abroad.

Students' mobility in the programme is very scarce (2 students coming for studies over the reporting period). The lack of mobility may be partially explained by the low number of full-time students in the programme, which may obviate any strategic efforts to increase mobility.

The traineeship is a compulsory part of the study programme. The rules for the organization of the traineeship as an element of studies are clear; the number of cooperation agreements for traineeships is expansive to ensure a wide choice of traineeship places. During the site visit, the programme associates (employers) confirmed a high value of traineeship in developing students' competencies; however, none had ever had any of the College's students as trainees.

No joint programmes are envisaged in the study direction.

Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

Conclusions:

- The list of College's formal agreements with Latvian partners is solid and fully enables developing various external and internal activities. The list of College's formal cooperative partnerships outside Latvia is wide enough contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study direction and the relevant study programme if implemented in practice. The efforts should be put to make the existing agreements to produce the cooperation results. Teaching mobility, students' mobility, and project activities could be the core of the activities, since the numbers of incoming professors for teaching and mobility students are rather low.
- The traineeship is a compulsory part of the study programme. The rules for the organization of the traineeship as an element of studies are clear; the number of cooperation agreements for traineeships is expansive to ensure a wide choice of traineeship places.

Strengths

- 1) The network of the partners in Latvia and Internationally is sufficient to carry out activities contributing to the study programme and study direction
- 2) Incoming mobility for teaching is scarce but functioning
- 3) Well-developed and functioning traineeship system

Weaknesses:

- 1) Due to the small number of students, credit mobility for studies is scarce
- 2) Lack of a clear plan for internationalization of studies' curriculum

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

Analysis

College contributed to the analysis of the recommendations and their implementation in view of the specific features of the study programme. The implementation of the recommendations is described in detail. Specific examples are given as well. However, some recommendations have been implemented formally, but not in substance, such as improving of library funds. For example, although it is stated that each year library inventory is supplemented with the newest legal literature, there are still too few books in different sub-branches of law and very few books are in foreign languages.

The previous experts' report had no recommendations for direction.

Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

Conclusions:

The College has indicated that all recommendations have been implemented. Examples of implementation are given. However, not all recommendations have been implemented properly. For example, regarding library funds.

Strengths:

1) The implementation of all recommendations is confirmed by examples

Weaknesses:

1) Some recommendations have been implemented formally, for example, regarding library funds

7. Assessment of the Requirements for the Study Field

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Justification: Due to shortcomings identified in 1.2, 1.4, 1.6, R2-3.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Quality policy has been established and is available to everyone on the web-page of the College (see part 2 of the report).

- 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: Partially compliant

Justification: Employers' involvement in developing the study direction and programme is not sufficiently clear; one person – a programme director, solve numerous issues in the programme. See part 1 of the Report.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: The procedure for the evaluation of the achievements and learning outcomes of the students is transparent and efficient. See part 1 of the Report

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Justification: Legal research necessitates a well-tailored, transparent and targeted financial support system. The procedure, the criteria for getting the support, and its extent lacks transparency and clarity. Despite appropriate strategic steps taken qualification insurance system remains reactive rather than proactive. See part 2 of the Report.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Data for quality assurance is gathered and evaluated regularly, and the College management responds to these surveys. See part 2 of the Report.

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Justification: Too extensive scope of the operational functions allocated to the head/director (see part 1 of the Report); low students' participation in the quality assurance surveys that would ensure the objective feedback given a relatively small number of the students' in the programme; lack of library resources (part 3 of the programme); risk to financial sustainability of the programme due to insufficient diversity in budget resources (see part 3 of the Report).

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Justification: Scarce credit mobility for studies; lack of a clear plan for internationalization of studies' curriculum (see part 5 of the Report)

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Although there are a small number of publications in Scopus and WoS data bases and a lack of international scientific projects, the level of scientific research in the College is adequate for the first level professional education program with the focus on the professional needs (see part 4 of the Report).

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: The College has indicated that all recommendations have been implemented. Examples of implementation are given. However, not all recommendations have been implemented properly. For example, although it is stated that each year library inventory is supplemented with the newest legal literature, there are still too few books in different sub-branches of law and very few books are in foreign languages.

8. Recommendations for the Study Field

Short-term recommendations

- | |
|--|
| 1. To draft the plan how to increase number of students in future. |
| 2. To draft the plan how to diversify the budget sources. |

- | |
|--|
| 3. To initiate the negotiations for closer practical cooperation between libraries of EKA and Alberta College and introduce regular operating meetings regarding sharing of resources. |
| 4. To update "The internal regulation for students in Alberta College" and Student Council regulation aligning them with national law |
| 5. To develop a more precise regulation of how plagiarism is detected and prevented in students' works |
| 6. To increase the availability of books and databases in the library in the field of law |
| 7. To increase the rate of student participation in giving feedback on the study programme's quality (best practices in the country or region can be should be consulted) |
| 8. To developed specific procedural rules to ensure academic ethics during the online assessment |

Long-term recommendations

- | |
|--|
| 1. To develop and formalize a transparent system of research support, which would include a competitive procedure, clear criteria, and the types of support. |
| 2. To develop motivation system to ensure the students' mobility for studies or traineeship. |
| 3. To review responsibilities of the head of the study direction/director of the study programme |
| 4. To increase the number of publications, in particular those in the field all law, published in the international peer-reviewed journals indexed in Scopus or Web of Sciences databases |
| 5. Establish a permanent Quality Assurance Committee which should be comprised of representatives of internal (teachers, student, administration), as well as from the external stakeholders (alumni, employers, courts, bar association, etc.). |

II. "Legal Regulation of Business" ASSESSMENT

II. "Legal Regulation of Business" ASSESSMENT

1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

The study programme is called 'Legal Regulation of Business' and leads to the qualification of 'Legal assistant'. It can be studied part-time, part time extramural studies, full-time, or part-time extramural studies - distance learning. The language of implementation of the study program is Latvian.

Students must have a secondary education to be admitted to the programme. Considering that the Study programme provides the first level professional higher education, the admission requirements are adequate.

The study programme is compliant with the provisions that are set out in the Latvian Law on Institutions of Higher Education. It also complies with other related Latvian Laws and Regulations.

The aim of the study programme is to 'prepare qualified, competent and competitive legal assistants specialising in legal regulation of commercial activities in compliance with the level four (EQF, level

5) professional standard of a legal assistant, who is able to provide practical assistance to representatives of legal professions, perform the work of office administrator or to work in companies, and who are focused on further education". This is broadly delivered. The title of the programme ('Legal Regulation of Business') correlates with the learning outcomes set for the programme. The title is related to the various applicable national regulatory provisions.

When taught a full-time mode, the duration of the study programme is two years; in part-time and distance learning formats, it lasts two years and six months. The name of the study programme, the professional qualification to be acquired, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and admission requirements are interrelated.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

Conclusions:

- The study programme is compliant with the provisions that are set out in the Latvian Law on Institutions of Higher Education. The name of the study programme, the professional qualification to be acquired, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and admission requirements are interrelated.

Strengths:

- 1) The variety of study forms, with a trend to offer part-time distance studies.

2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

The descriptions of the study courses, the traineeship, and the final thesis are of high quality and comply with the provisions set forth in the regulatory enactments. The content is relevant and complimentary. It complies with the aims of the study programme, ensures the achievement of the learning outcomes, and meets the needs of the relevant industry and the scientific trends.

The title of the programme "Legal Regulation of Business" (instead of general Law) indicates that it specializes in Commercial law and still meets the Professional Standards of Legal Assistant's requirements. However, there are more credit points for business study courses than for law courses. And only three of the elected staff members have been elected in the field of law.

The programme is developed following the requirements of the educational standard. The learning outcomes to be achieved by each study course have been compared in detail with the standard requirements of the legal profession - knowledge, skills, and competencies. Learning outcomes of the entire study programme were compared with the learning outcomes of each study course.

Syllabus of the study courses are standartized, well designed. During the study visit it was discovered that the director of programme drafts study course descriptions (syllabus) by himself. Lecturers only coordinate the descriptions of study courses. This raises doubts as to whether the descriptions of study courses include the topicalities of each study course, as the study programme director cannot be a specialist in all areas of law.

The study implementation methods, including the evaluation methods, contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study courses and the study programme. Student-centered learning and teaching principles are taken into account.

The study programme director verifies the aim, outcomes, content, methods, and topicality of the

study course description, the topicality and actual availability of the literature and sources used. The study programme director performs the mapping of the outcomes of the study course against the aim and the outcomes of the study programme, the image of the College graduate, and the professional standard. If necessary, the course description is corrected with the author's help. The student-centered approach at the College is implemented at the highest level. This is due to the small size of the College, which allows to work individually with each student.

Although the College has a Methodological Commission, it is not clear how the activities are organized in practice, since there are no minutes of the meetings of the Commission. Consequently, it is not possible to ascertain who is participating in these meetings and what decisions are taken.

Although not indicated in the self-evaluation report, so-called "e-learning" is also offered, which takes the form of scheduled lectures on-line. This form differs from distance learning with written materials and recorded on-line lectures. E-learning mode differs from face-to-face training only in the form of lectures (instead of the audience, students see individual lectures online). Exams and tests are taken in the same order as on-site.

The surveys conducted by the students, employers, and graduates are used to improve the quality of studies. Lecturers, students and graduates are involved in the programme's self-evaluation process through meetings and surveys on the study programme's content.

The College conducts two different student surveys: at the end of each semester, a survey evaluating the work of the lecturers is carried out, and once a year, a survey on satisfaction with the study programme and the study process at the College is conducted. Overall, the students' survey results show a positive trend in satisfaction with the study programme and its content, academic staff, the study environment and infrastructure of the College. However, student surveys are not made available to the student self-government, which is recommended to introduce.

Each year, a graduate survey is conducted to determine the graduates' opinion on the studies and possible study programme's improvements, and on their plans to continue the studies. The survey results show that the graduates' overall satisfaction with the studies has been evaluated as "good".

Every year an employer survey is conducted, inviting them to fill in the traineeship supervisor's review. The most employers have highly appreciated College students as trainees.

During the reporting period, there were four students using mobility opportunities. Two outgoing students were benefiting from the mobility for traineeship. Study courses acquired during mobility and obtained credit points are recognized.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

Conclusion:

- The content and structure of the study programme complies with the educational and professional standards set by the laws and regulations of the Republic of Latvia
- The descriptions of the study courses, the traineeship, and the final thesis are of high quality and comply with the provisions set forth in the regulatory enactments. The content is relevant and complimentary. It complies with the aims of the study programme, ensures the achievement of the learning outcomes, and meets the needs of the relevant industry and the scientific trends.
- The college implements various forms of study based on the student's interests. However, in the study program more time (and also credit points) is devoted to business courses than to law study courses.

- The study implementation methods, including the evaluation methods, contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study courses and the study programme. Student-centred learning and teaching principles are taken into account. The student-centred approach at the College is implemented at the highest level. This is due to the small size of the College, which allows working individually with each student.
- The surveys conducted by the students, employers, and graduates are used to improve the quality of studies. Lecturers, students and graduates are involved in the programme's self-evaluation process through meetings and surveys on the study programme's content. However, student surveys are not made available to the student self-government, which is recommended to introduce.
- During the reporting period, there were four students using mobility opportunities. Two outgoing students were benefiting from the mobility for traineeship, non-existent outgoing mobility for studies.
- Study courses acquired and credit points obtained during mobility are recognized.

Strengths:

- 1) Different study forms are offered, based on the student's interests

Weaknesses:

- 1) Low mobility among students, non-existent outgoing mobility for studies
- 2) More credit points for business study courses than for law courses.

3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

Alberta College has the necessary infrastructure and material and technical support to implement the study direction and programme.

Students have access to auditoriums equipped with the tables and chairs needed for study needs, multimedia, and stationary presentation equipment. College staff and students can use both the study rooms and the computer class and the library. The College also provides an Internet connection and access to internal information systems, where study materials are available, and internal normative documents and databases. The infrastructure and material and technical support is shared with EKA University.

The library is equipped with the collection of legal books, as well as two relevant databases. Very few book are in foreign languages. This is not sufficient for the provision of the study programme, not to say the development of the direction. Apparently, there is a limited funding for library collection in the study direction.

The students in the programme are supported by a well-functioning system. Informational, methodological, career, technical, and financial support is constantly provided. The site visit has shown the students' and alumni overall satisfaction with the services provided by the Institution in the field.

The analysis in part 3 of the Report on resources and provision of the study direction is directly relevant for this section Since the Study programme is the sole programme in the study direction.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

Conclusions:

- Alberta College has appropriate infrastructure and the material and technical provision required for the implementation of the study direction, except for the library resources in the field of law.
- Availability of the library and the databases to the students are provided, at the same time the number of books and databases in foreign languages is insufficient.
- Informational, methodological, career, technical, and financial support is constantly provided.

Strengths:

1. Infrastructure is constantly developed and meet the needs of the students in the programme
2. Study IT systems are good and supportive for students and teachers
3. The students' support system is based on the needs of the students and is functioning well

Weaknesses:

1. The number of available books and databases in the field of law in the library is not sufficient
2. The financial provision for the study programme is currently sufficient, however, financial sustainability depends mainly on the number of the students

4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

College takes care that the change of teaching staff does not affect the quality of the implementation of the study programme, and compliance with the requirements of the first level education standard and professional standard. The qualification of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme complies with the formal requirements for implementing the study programme and the requirements outlined in the regulatory enactments. Being professional, the programme has a sufficient number of teaching practitioners in the study programme to ensure that the teaching is in line with practice. All legal subjects are taught by the teaching staff having a formal legal education.

The College keeps the proportionate balance between the elected and visiting staff. 52% of them are permanently employed.

It must be noted that almost all members of academic staff of the programme are involved in scientific research. However, only four members of the permanent teaching staff publish publications consistently, half of them are not researchers in the field of law. Additionally, most of the research in the field of law is published nationally; only some publications are published in English language in international peer reviewed journals. The research results are used in the study process; however, it is limited to the subjects taught by the researching teaching staff.

The mechanism for a mutual collaboration between the teaching staff members is not clearly described in a self-evaluation report. It may be inferred that the correlation of the modules is the primary responsibility of the Programme director. The Director cooperates with the academic staff in carrying out the strengths and weaknesses assessment of the study direction, revising content of the study programme and, as it was discovered during the site visit, reviewing the modules descriptions to achieve the highest level of consistency within the programme (see the comments part 2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof). Additionally, the correlation is done in the framework of a Methodological commission, which has frequent meetings and includes different members of the teaching staff at the study direction level.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

Conclusions:

- The qualification of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme complies with the formal requirements for implementing the study programme and the requirements outlined in the regulatory enactments. The programme has a sufficient number of teaching practitioners in the study programme to ensure that the teaching is in line with practice. The College keeps the proportionate balance between the elected and visiting staff.
- Almost all members of academic staff of the programme are involved in scientific research. However, only four members of the permanent teaching staff publish publications consistently, half of them are not researchers in the field of law. Most of the research in the field of law is published nationally.

Strengths:

- 1) Proportionate balance between elected and visiting teaching staff
- 2) Involvement of professionals in the field bringing the knowledge from the practice

Weaknesses:

- 1) Most of publications are published nationally, only half of the actively researching permanent staff members are in the field of law
- 2) The research results are used in the study process, however, they have limited impact on the study process

5. Assessment of the Compliance of the Study Programme "Legal Regulation of Business"

Requirements

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: The sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the first level study programme "Legal Regulation of Business" complies with the procedure laid down by the Cabinet of Ministers 16.04.2013. Regulation No. 202 "Procedures for Issuing State-Recognized Higher Education Documents"

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Alberta College has concluded agreements with EKA University, Turiba University and College of Business Administration providing students with the options to continue the acquisition of education in another HEI programme with the same parameters (same level and same qualification) in case the implementation of the study programme is discontinued.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: The Study agreement envisages the statement (Clause 4.4.) that College guarantees indemnification of losses to students if the study programme does not get accredited due to the actions (activity or lack thereof) of the College or if the study programme license is revoked and the student does not wish to continue their studies in one of the other study programs.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Cabinet 7.07.2009 Regulation No. 733 on the Regulations Regarding the Extent of the Knowledge of the Official Language stipulates that the HEI academic staff must know the official language at least at C1 level.

The statement signed by the Director of the College demonstrates that out of 21 lecturers, for 20 state language is mother tongue, one speaks the language at the C2 level. Consequently, the requirements of the Regulation have been met.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Justification:

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Justification:

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Justification:

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: The sample of the study agreement complies with the requirements of the Cabinet of Ministers 23.01.2007 Regulations No. 70 "Regulations to be Included in the Study Agreement"

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Study programme is implemented in Latvian. So the descriptions of the study courses and the study materials in program are in Latvian. The descriptions of the study courses comply with the requirements set forth in Section 56.1 (Study course), and Section 56.2 (Study module) of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: The study programme meets the professional standard and provides that the completion of the study programme leads to a professional qualification of Legal Assistant. This is confirmed by the attached Appendix No.16, where the professional competencies, skills and knowledge required for the performance of professional qualification of Legal Assistant are compared with the study courses to be acquired in the study programme.

The previous standard of the profession of Legal Assistant is currently not in force (expired with the entry into force of the Cabinet of Ministers regulations "Classifier of Professions, Basic Tasks Corresponding to the Profession and Basic Qualification Requirements" on 01.06.2017). The new regulation sets out only general requirements and basic tasks for the profession of "lawyers and related professionals". The comparison has been made taking into account the new regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers, as well as the requirements of the previous professional standard.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Justification:

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: The compliance of the study programme with the state professional education standard is addressed in Annex 15. The assessment has been performed in accordance with the requirements of the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 141 of 20 March 2001 "Regulations on the State Standard of First Level Professional Higher Education". The study programme complies with the State Standard of First Level Professional Higher Education.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Justification:

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Members of the academic staff have publications within the last six years. However, not all of them are published in reviewed editions, the number of publications in Scopus and Web of Science databases remains small. Each member of the academic staff having no publications published in reviewed editions within the last six years have at least a five-year practical work experience. This complies with the requirements of Section 39 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions regarding professional study programmes.

- 15 P5 - Overall rating

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: All sections from 1 to 14 (excluding those - not relevant) fully comply with requirements

Requirements (R6-R8)

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Justification: The College has the necessary infrastructure and material and technical support to implement the study direction and programme. The infrastructure and material and technical support is shared with EKA University. The library is equipped with the collection of legal books, as well as two relevant databases. However, there is a limited funding for library collection in the study direction and very few books are in foreign languages.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: The Law on Higher Education Institutions stipulates:

- 1) The academic staff of a higher education institution shall conduct scientific research, artistic creation work, and participate in educating students.
- 2) in professional programs - the position of a docent, lecturer, and assistant may be held by a person with higher education without the doctoral degree. In order to elect a person in a position of a docent who has no doctoral degree, such person requires at least a seven-year practical work experience. Lecturers and assistants who do not have a scientific and academic degree need a five-year practical work experience corresponding to the subject to be taught.
- 3) Visiting professors, associate professors, docents, lecturers and assistants have the same rights and obligations as professors, associate professors, docents, lecturers, and assistants, The qualification of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme complies with the formal requirements for implementing the study programme and the requirements outlined in the regulatory enactments. However, only four members of the permanent teaching staff publish publications consistently, half of them are not researchers in the field of law; most of the research in the field of law is published nationally; only some publications are published in English language in international peer reviewed journals. (see part 4 of the assessment of the study programme).

Professional qualification of the teaching staff complies with the formal requirements for implementing the professional study programme. The programme has a sufficient number of teaching practitioners in the study programme to ensure that the teaching is in line with practice.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Justification:

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

Conclusions:

- The study programme complies with the majority of the formal requirements. The name of the study programme, the professional qualification to be acquired, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and admission requirements are interrelated.
- The descriptions of the study courses, the traineeship, and the final thesis are of high quality and comply with the provisions set forth in the regulatory enactments. The content is relevant and complimentary. It complies with the aims of the study programme, ensures the achievement of the learning outcomes, and meets the needs of the relevant industry and the scientific trends.
- The qualification of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme complies with the formal requirements for implementing the study programme and the requirements outlined in the regulatory enactments. The programme has a sufficient number of

teaching practitioners in the study programme to ensure that the teaching is in line with practice. The College keeps the proportionate balance between the elected and visiting staff.

- Almost all members of academic staff of the programme are involved in scientific research. However, only four members of the permanent teaching staff publish publications consistently, half of them are not researchers in the field of law. Most of the research in the field of law is published nationally.
- Alberta College has appropriate infrastructure and the material and technical provision required for the implementation of the study direction, except for the library resources in the field of law.

Strengths:

- 1) College has the necessary infrastructure and material and technical support to implement the study programme.
- 2) The qualification of the teaching staff complies with the requirements for implementing the study programme
- 3) Professional qualification of the teaching staff complies with the formal requirements for implementing the professional study programme.
- 4) The programme has a sufficient number of teaching practitioners in the study programme to ensure that the teaching is in line with practice.

Weaknesses:

- 1) Limited funding for library collection in Law sciences and very few books are in foreign languages.
- 2) Only some members of the permanent teaching staff publish publications consistently, half of them are not researchers in the field of law;
- 3) Most of the research in the field of law is published nationally, only some publications are published in English language in international peer reviewed journals.

Evaluation of the study programme "Legal Regulation of Business"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Legal Regulation of Business"

Short-term recommendations

- | |
|---|
| 1. To develop rules on the composition and functions of the Methodological Commission |
| 2. To make student surveys available to the student self-government |
| 3. To review the curriculum and balance credit points for business and public relations study courses and law courses |

Long-term recommendations

- | |
|---|
| 1. To enhance the development of students' international competences it is recommended to offer subjects in English as elective as part of formal curriculum. |
| 2. To offer the activities of internationalization at home for online programme's students who do not appear physically at the College |

3. To increase the number of teaching staff members in the field of law in elected permanent positions
4. To ensure that the research results of the teaching staff are widely used in the study process

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
Pursuant to Section 5, Paragraph 21 of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education, the higher education institution/ college shall ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study direction whilst implementing their internal quality assurance systems:		Partially compliant	Due to shortcomings identified in 1.2, 1.4, 1.6, R2-3.
R2 - The cooperation with different organisations from Latvia and abroad implemented within the study direction ensures the achievement of the aims of the study direction.		Partially compliant	Scarce credit mobility for studies; lack of a clear plan for internationalization of studies' curriculum (see part 5 of the Report)
R3 - Compliance of scientific research and artistic creation with the development level thereof (if applicable).	Fully compliant		Although there are a small number of publications in Scopus and WoS data bases and a lack of international scientific projects, the level of scientific research in the College is adequate for the first level professional education program with the focus on the professional needs (see part 4 of the Report).

Requirements	Requirement Evaluation			Comment
R4 - Elimination of the shortcomings and deficiencies identified during the previous assessment of the study direction, if it has been conducted, or the implementation of the provided recommendations.	Fully compliant			The College has indicated that all recommendations have been implemented. Examples of implementation are given. However, not all recommendations have been implemented properly. For example, although it is stated that each year library inventory is supplemented with the newest legal literature, there are still too few books in different sub-branches of law and very few books are in foreign languages.

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	Legal Regulation of Business (41380)	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Fully compliant	Not relevant	Good

The Dissenting Opinions of the Experts

None