

Expert group joint opinion

Evaluation Procedure: Assessment of Study Field

Higher Education Institution: Rēzekne Academy of Technologies

Study field: Management, Administration and Management of Real Property

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Summary Assessment of the Study Field

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This report includes the assessment of the study field “Management, Administration and Real Estate Management” (hereinafter - the study field) at Rezekne Academy of Technologies (hereinafter RTA). The study field at RTA has been implemented since 1993 and since then it has been accredited repeatedly for 6 years. Currently there are four study programmes included in the study field: 1) Academic Bachelor's study programme "Business Management", 2) Professional Bachelor's study programme "Entrepreneurship" with qualification Company Manager, 3) Academic Master's study programme "Management Science", 4) Doctoral study programme "Economics and Business" (hereinafter - the study programmes). In 2020, the total number of students in RTA was 1650, which unfortunately shows a slight decrease from 2017 with the peak of 1881 students, but its importance for the Latgale Region is unquestionable.

As the main positive aspects of the study field and its related study programmes can be mentioned the following:

- 1) RTA has a strong reputation in Latgale region as a centre for culture, qualitative studies, technology and innovations, which is good base for further improvements;
- 2) the study field has high importance in RTA portfolio of study programmes, there is high demand for entrepreneurs and managers in the region;
- 3) big investments are done in RTA infrastructure, uniting all the facilities in the same territory, providing comfortable and sustainable environment for work and studies;
- 4) centralised, but well-integrated into the whole RTA, efficient structure of the management of the study field and its four study programmes, which lets to involve all stakeholders in the development of the study field, and at the same time to take fast, efficient decisions;
- 5) RTA has one centralized budget for the whole Academy, funds are split between study fields based on their needs, the study field has never faced severe funds shortage;
- 6) student-centred approach is introduced and implemented in teaching, learning and science in the study field, students can contact management and teaching staff any time when there is a need;
- 7) all four study programmes of the study field are provided in Latvian and English languages, it lets the study field to attract full-time international students, international teaching staff and researches, as also to position RTA and the study field in international academic and scientific environment, sign more cooperation contracts with foreign partners, for example, double degree or joint degree study programmes, which many of the interviewees have mentioned as key point for successful future development of the study field and its programmes;
- 8) broad possibilities to participate in Erasmus+ exchange studies and internship are mentioned by the interviewed students and Alumni as a valuable part of the study process and possibility for their career development;
- 9) strong academic integrity culture and anti-plagiarism measures are implemented at RTA and in the study field with its four study programmes;
- 10) active and successful attraction of EU Project funds for infrastructure, research and administration goals; in 2020, EU project funds consisted 38% of RTA revenues and were split between the study fields;
- 11) state funding is available for students to study at RTA and in the study field;
- 12) new “Research Institute for Business and Social Processes” is established to foster scientific work and project activities at RTA and the region;
- 13) teaching staff of the study field and its four study programmes is very active in scientific work, project work in national and international environment;
- 14) teaching staff of the study field and its four study programmes is taking part in different training (English language, digital competences, leadership);
- 15) introduction and enforcement of problem-based learning and student-centred teaching into

study process of the study field and its four study programmes;

16) conference proceedings of RTA international scientific conference "Environment. Technology. Resources." are indexed in SCOPUS database;

17) conference proceedings of RTA international scientific conference "Society. Integration. Education." are indexed in the Web of Science database;

18) RTA has a reasonable number of international partners;

19) study programmes mix in the study field allows to develop locally grown researchers and teaching staff.

As the main negative aspects can be mentioned the following:

1) there is no strong evidence of the active role of RTA Student Council in the daily life of students; nobody from the interviewed students has mentioned Student Council as a community to be related to;

2) there is no evidence of active role of Alumni Association in support of RTA and the study field;

3) big dependence on EU Project funds in revenue planning is a risk factor in the circumstances when numbers of students are decreasing; in case of no projects, financial sustainability of RTA and the study field, and their attractiveness to high-quality teaching staff might become questionable;

4) small and continuing to decrease number of students is a risk factor for financial stability of RTA and the study field in the long run, at the same time availability of RTA funds for reserves and for future investments in attraction of international students is rather limited in the total budget;

5) decreasing number of local and international students, no clear evidence how RTA and the study field are going to attract them and get out of this situation;

6) there is no evidence of clearly defined unique key selling points and unique value proposition of RTA and the study field with its four study programmes; employees involved in promotion of the study programmes to students could name general benefits of studies in Latvia, but not to stress out uniqueness of RTA and the study field with its programmes;

7) key performance indicators to assess achievement of strategic goals of RTA and of the study field are not clearly stated and communicated to the staff of the study field;

8) insufficient visibility of RTA and the study field with its four study programmes outside Latvia;

9) limited funds available per person for teaching staff to participate in international scientific conferences with publications annually might become an obstacle to increase teaching staff mobility, number of publications and promotion to PhD level;

10) because of centralised budgeting process at RTA, there is a limited possibility to the management of the study field and its four study programmes to analyse financial results of the study field, and to assess viability and future sustainability of the study field and each of its study programmes.

11) implementation and documentation of the Quality Policy and the Quality Assurance System does not seem to match;

12) students seem to be unaware of the support mechanisms available at RTA outside the formal in-classroom study process;

13) the academic staff seems to lack support to maintain a better work/life balance and might be at risk of personal and professional burn-out;

14) lack of international academic staff, despite the availability of all study programmes in English language;

15) low level of academic staff mobility;

16) lack of copyright control of study materials, like case study, books, teaching notes and articles, uploaded to Moodle system;

17) based on interviews during the on-site visit, lack of premises for individual and teamwork of students and academic staff;

18) based on interviews during the on-site visit, lack of technical administrative support to teaching staff in writing of project application, as also acquiring and implementation of projects, releasing

time for research;

19) low dissemination of scientific research results on international level;

20) RTA has not very successful experience with international joint study programmes.

1. Management of the Study Field

Analysis

1.1. The aims of the study field are clearly defined and attainable. The study field and its four study programmes comply with the strategic development goals of RTA and meet the needs of the society, economic and cultural development of Latgale regions, development trends and needs of national economy of Latvia. RTA was founded in 1993 with the aim to develop culture, education, and science in Latgale region and throughout Latvia. In 2016, it has strengthened its focus on technological (STEM and creative industries) knowledge and research and defined its goal as the following: to provide students with academic and professional higher education that is competitive in the European education space and complies with the level of scientific development and Latvian cultural traditions, by developing regional studies and research. The study field at RTA has been implemented since 1993 and currently includes four study programmes: Academic Bachelor's study programme "Business Management", Professional Bachelor's study programme "Entrepreneurship" with qualification Company Manager, Academic Master's study programme "Management Science", and Doctoral study programme "Economics and Business" (https://www.rta.lv/study_programmes).

The aims of the study field are defined as the following: prepare high-level management specialists in accordance with the requirements of the job market, competitive not only in Latvia, but also internationally; contribute significantly to the economic development of Latgale region using the scientific potential of teachers and students, as well as opportunities for cooperation with municipalities of Latgale region. According to the Self-Assessment Report (hereinafter - SAR) of the study field, Annex 3, the aims of the study field are defined based on the following strategic documents of RTA, EU and the Republic of Latvia: "Guidelines for the Development of Education for 2014-2020", "Europe 2020", "European Higher Education System Modernisation Programme", "Latvija 2030", "Latgale 2030", "Development Strategy of RTA for 2016-2023", and can be found in RTA document "Development Plan of Study Direction 2019-2025". "Development Strategy of RTA for 2016-2023" positions RTA as a regional development centre for innovations, science, education and entrepreneurship; and provides that RTA is going to become an internationally competitive University of Latgale in integrated engineering, social sciences and humanities in the European Higher Education and Science Area with motivated and creative students in demand on the job market and with an open and dynamic academic and scientific environment for sustainable development of society. The main strategic priorities of RTA are implementation of STEM and innovative technologies; development of science-based, interdisciplinary study programmes; unity of pedagogical and research work; modern and sustainable RTA infrastructure; developed attractiveness of the region. "Development Strategy of RTA for 2016-2023" last time was updated in October 2019. The strategy is published on the website, anyone interested can read it. Mission and vision of the study field and its four study programmes are closely related to mission and vision of RTA.

All four study programmes of the study field are provided in two languages – Latvian and English, to prepare students and graduates for international career and get broader possibilities for RTA international positioning and cooperation. Academic staff is actively involved in scientific research and publishing. RTA has obtained funds for investments into infrastructure, for example, laboratories, built an on-campus student hostel to attract more international students. During the on-site visit, students, Alumni, employers, and academic staff have described RTA as a regional centre of culture, knowledge, education, and technology. RTA has established Eastern Latvia

Technology High School to foster technological education in the region. Many students and Alumni stay within the region and create job places. During the on-site visit, it was confirmed by the top management of RTA, that the study field is very important for the Latgale region. Availability of entrepreneurship and management programmes is very high in Riga, as also holding a degree in social sciences is quite popular in Latvia, but in the regions, availability of highly educated entrepreneurs and managers is limited, that's why RTA considers the study field with its four study programmes as the one of the most important and the most demanded in Latgale region. Business courses are popular among international students as well. Graduates of the study field will contribute to the development of the regional economy. As the main tasks management of RTA have mentioned (written in "Development strategy of RTA for 2016-2023", applicable to the study field) the following: 1) to increase number of international and local students (because of new reforms in higher education of Latvia regarding the minimum required number of students, RTA analyses students' movement very carefully), 2) to ensure stable financial situation of RTA and revenue planning, 3) to ensure sufficient level and composition of the teaching staff (67% of the academic staff hold PhD, RTA has internal personal development strategy and support academic members to achieve promotion to the next level in their academic and scientific career), 4) to strengthen RTA reputation in scientific life, study environment in Latvia and in Europe, 5) to offer science-based, interdisciplinary study programmes focusing on acquisition, application and development of innovative technologies, attractive and modern study and research environment, preparing competitive professionals for regional, national and international job markets and enhancing study quality.

RTA has a well- establish bottom-up strategy development process. Strategic goals are analysed annually and approved by the Senate. In RTA strategy re-evaluation group, all RTA units are involved (with 1-3 representatives from each). Only after discussions in RTA structural units, RTA goals using the bottom-up approach are developed to the next stages. During strategy re-evaluation process, meetings with partners are organized in RTA Convent, who use outside views on their strategic draft. To ensure regional engagement RTA involves representatives of the municipality and local entrepreneurs, who are quite often the graduates of the Academy, to participate in the process.

As the main drawbacks can be mentioned the following: there are not clearly defined and shared with the staff key performance indicators to assess achievement of the goals of RTA and the study field. During the on-site visit, administration and teaching staff of the field have shown rather limited knowledge about main strategic goals of RTA and the study field, key performance indicators, and the steps of their achievement, as also could not formulate the key selling points and unique value proposition of the study field and each of its four study programmes. As the key selling points were mentioned Erasmus+ exchange opportunities, good infrastructure, four seasons in a year, and a calm city, but almost all higher education institutions in Latvia can mention these features as their strong ones, therefore for RTA it is important to define and promote uniqueness of the study field and each of its four study programmes. During the on-site visits, the Experts Team has received evidence from students, Alumni, employers, and teaching staff about their satisfaction with being a part of RTA: good quality of studies and preparation for international career, successful cooperation with the regional municipality, leading companies, and institutions of the regions; opportunity to obtain full-cycle higher education in proximity to the place of living. Alumni are interested to come back for life-long learning or next level studies; all interviewees considered RTA as a regional centre of qualitative education, culture, innovations, and technology.

1.2. RTA has established clear and well-developed structure of the management of the study field and its study programmes, which has leadership capacity to take decisions in timely and efficient manner and is oriented towards the development of the study field and its study programmes. The support provided by the administrative and technical staff to the academic staff, students and other involved stakeholders meets all the needs of the study programmes of the study field. RTA is an autonomous state educational and scientific institution with self-governing rights. RTA management

and staff can independently determine the content and forms of study programmes, student enrolment regulations, basic directions of scientific research work, organizational and management structure, wage rates. Organizational structure of the study field is provided in SAR Annex 4, and consists of the following bodies: Faculty Council (Dean, Professors, Heads of study fields, students at least 20%), Study Field Board (Directors of study programmes and modules), Study Field Self-Assessment Working Group (Head of Study field, Directors of the study programmes, technical staff and students), and Meeting of Study Field staff (all teaching, study and science staff involved in the related study programmes). Such study field organization structures are successfully integrated into RTA organizational structure, providing comprehensive channels for effective networking and cooperation between different RTA structures. After the on-site visit, management of the study field provided a table showing the study field's representation in the different decision-making bodies of RTA. In general, the study field is represented proportionally and that seems to be sufficient to take part in the decision-making processes. The main RTA decision-making bodies, where the study field is represented, are as follows: Constitutional Assembly, Senate, Student Council, Study Council, Science Council, Faculty Council, and Study Field Council. The description of the structure and power of each of these decision-making bodies is clear and well-explained. The whole organizational structure of RTA is provided in SAR Annex 2. The main decision-making bodies and processes are clearly described in RTA procedures and regulations, which are available as a part of SAR of the study field, in RTA internal document system, and RTA website, with translation into two languages – Latvian and English. All these documents are of high quality and meet the international standards. The students' representation in all decision-making bodies is sufficient.

During the on-site visit, the Experts Team analysed coherence of the study field level and RTA level in decision making processes. Taking the example of the financial planning, they found a very high level of centralization of the financial management. That does not support the study field management to be fully aware of the financial performance of the reviewed study programmes and make well-established plans for future purposes. Looking at the finances from the strategic point of view, the Experts Team asked for additional information regarding the study field's revenues and cost structure within RTA. Information provided by RTA shows, that cross-financing is typical, expenses are covered from the main RTA budget, and calculation of the breakeven point per group per study programme in the study field is 10 students per group. This number looks very low and indicates lack of detailed strategic financial analysis of each study programme of the study field.

During the on-site visit, the Experts Team met representative of RTA Student Council and was informed, that Student Council is actively involved in all the processes related to development of the study field and its study programmes. At the same time, in interviews with students, the Experts Team did not get any evidence of Student Council's activities targeted on organization of events to students, communication and networking. The same situation is with Alumni Association, none of the graduates could recall any activities organized by this Alumni representation body. From strategic point of view, this is an obvious drawback not to integrate students and Alumni into RTA life in a maximum volume.

1.3. RTA has established clear, well-described system and well-developed procedures for the admission of students to the study programmes of the study field, the recognition of the study period, professional experience, and the previously acquired formal and non-formal education, as well as for the evaluation of the achievements and learning outcomes of the students. These procedures provide full understanding of the admission and recognition rules, which are based on related legal acts, are logical and efficient, are approved by the Senate of RTA, and are clearly communicated to the public. Admission requirements to the study programmes of the study field are open, publicly available, fair and add contest-based approach to attract high-quality potential students, who already have shown their leadership and active participation in previous studies. RTA statistical data shows, that in 2020, there was a competition in the following study programmes of the study field: 2.6 students for one place in academic Bachelor's study programme "Business

Management", 2 students in academic Master's study programme "Management Science", 2.8 students in professional Bachelor's study programme "Entrepreneurship". A limited number of state-funded places increases the competition in the study programmes.

Admission requirement to undergraduate programs is to have previously completed upper secondary education. Students are admitted to an open and equal competition based on the results of centralized exams. The RTA enrolment rules include three centralized exams with which candidates take part in the competition: Latvian, Mathematics, and foreign language. To select the most successful and most motivated students, RTA has defined additional points for winners of the 1st, the 2nd, and the 3rd place in Latvian National Olympiad in Mathematics, Russian, German, and French, as well as graduates of the Eastern Latvia Technology High School, and students who have successfully acquired Latvian Academy of Entrepreneurship and Management (LUMA) interest education programme "Be a leader". RTA follows student-centred approach, and cases different from the traditional admission procedure are also considered. For example, Admission Regulations of RTA for 2021, Clause 2 of the Competition Procedure provides for that if an applicant is a person who has acquired education before 2004 or abroad, or a person with special needs who has received a doctor's exemption from taking centralized examinations, or a person who has been exempted from taking centralized examinations for special merits for the benefit of the State of Latvia, he/she still participates in the common competition. In these cases, they follow a different calculation scheme of scores. RTA has developed and implemented clear, consistent, and publicly available procedures for the recognition of competences acquired outside formal education or acquired through professional experience and the learning outcomes achieved in previous education, as also organization of examination and tests. These procedures are based on student-centred approach, study quality system based on study results. One of the main goals of the study field is to attract the best local and international students. Reflecting on the decreasing number of local students, RTA would like to increase the number of international full-time students. Professional Bachelor's study programme "Entrepreneurship" was the most successful in this effort: since 2014 it could attract 78 students from abroad. The most successful study year was 2018/2019, when 42 new international students were enrolled. The other programmes did roughly the same: Academic Bachelor's study programme "Business Management" attracted 18 and Academic Master's study programme "Management Science" 17 international students. In 2018/2019, there were enrolled 9 international students to academic Bachelor's study programme "Business Management", 42 to professional Bachelor's study programme "Entrepreneurship", and 4 to academic master's study programme "Management Science". In 2019/2020, these results are 1, 2 and 2, respectively. It seems to a strategic challenge that these figures dropped by almost one third by 2020 and the revenue and cost level has fallen. The reason of this severe drop in number of international students can be Covid-19 travel restrictions and fear of pandemic threats.

RTA has developed informative guidebook for international students "My Academy", which provides all necessary information about RTA admission, study rules and requirements. This guidebook is updated annually and together with other regulatory documents is available on the website of RTA. RTA is very interested in attraction of international students, and clear admission and study procedures are very important for RTA and the study field with its four study programmes. International students are enrolled at RTA in accordance with the admission procedure: for undergraduate programmes, a final mark for the year in the subject in a document certifying secondary education, which is equated to centralised examination (Mathematics; Basics of Economics; English Language), additional online test in Mathematics and interview about studying at RTA; for Master's study programme, second-level higher education or an academic Bachelor's degree in Economics, Commerce, or Administration, additional interview about their studies at RTA; for Doctorate level, an interview on the issues covered by the research proposal and/ or a collection of submitted publications, evaluation for the Master's project, number of articles in cited publications and participation in scientific conferences, number of articles in general publications and

participation in local conferences, experience in management or analytics. All international applicants must submit English language proficiency certificate at least B2 level.

During the on-site visit, the Experts Team met students and graduates of the four study programmes of the study field, all of them were very satisfied with their study programmes, they can build on the training they get; confirmed that the evaluation of the achievements and learning outcomes of the students, and the related procedures are logical and efficient. Learning outcomes normally are included in course descriptions and most of the academic staff members discuss them at the very beginning of the course. To avoid the overlaps within the same programme, academic staff members meet regularly (sometimes 3 times in an academic year) and discuss academic issues. These meetings are coordinated by the Programme Director.

1.4. RTA has defined strong academic integrity principles and mechanisms, uses several appropriate plagiarism detection tools, which are effective (previously have already detected few plagiarism cases) and contribute to the development of the internal culture of the academic ethics and integrity at RTA. All RTA stakeholders have confirmed awareness of these tools during the on-site meetings. Principles of Academic Integrity and their application in RTA are governed by the Senate-approved regulations on "Regulations on plagiarism control and prevention in RTA", which is consistent with Copyright Law, Code of Ethics for Scientists, Code of Ethics of RTA and RTA Students regulations. Plagiarism control and prevention measures at RTA are applied to the study process and to the academic and scientific activities of the academic staff. During the study process, measures to control and prevent plagiarism are taken during the formative assessment of students' research works, as also in academic and scientific activities of the academic staff. To control plagiarism, RTA uses publicly available anti-plagiarism platforms, such as plag.lv, plagium.com, plagiarismchecker.com, plagiarisma.net. Since 2014, the final study research works at RTA are tested in the unified computerized plagiarism control system of the universities of Latvia. Each case of data coincidence is evaluated at the Study field Council meeting, inviting the Director of the respective study programme and the Supervisor of the final study research work. If the findings are qualified as plagiarism, the Study field Council shall propose to the Dean the student's exmatriculation. In 2019/2020, RTA started to work on connecting automated plagiarism identification tools to RTA's electronic journal site <http://journals.ru.lv>, which also publishes articles written by the teaching staff and students of the study field. During the on-site visit, the Experts Team has received the evidence, that thesis works are not available in RTA Library, and the plagiarism check is a departmental duty. During the on-site visit, the Experts Team examined the copyright of certain materials and found out, that in case of downloadable materials, RTA does not control following of copyrights. Here the Experts Team should mention the responsibility of the academic staff to consider availability and copyrights of study materials they plan to upload into Moodle (case study, books, teaching notes, articles). Tutorial to students and teaching staff, related to this issue, would contribute a lot to the solution of this problem.

1.5. Information published on the website of RTA about the study field and its 4 study programmes complies with the information available in the official documents of RTA. All regulatory documents related to admission, study process and research, RTA operation and strategic goals, quality assurance and ethics are publicly available on the website and/or internal documentation system of RTA. It provides important information for the candidates and the students, and is published in Latvian and English languages, in which all study programmes of the study field are implemented. It is very easy to find the following information in Latvian and in English: study programmes implemented by RTA, RTA study fields' Self-Assessment Reports, RTA Study Programme Register, and study plans.

Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

The main conclusions are the following:

The aims of the study field and its four study programmes are clearly defined, attainable and comply with RTA operation and development strategical goals, regional development needs and development trends of the national economy of Latvia. The aims of the study field were developed based on National-level, regional level, and RTA-level main strategic development documents. RTA is a serious player on the higher education market of Latvia, the study field and its study programmes meet the needs of the society and can do positive changes in regional development and Latvian economy. At the same time, management, administration and academic staff of the study field and its study programmes lack knowledge and understanding of main strategic goals and key performance indicators of RTA and the study field, key selling points, and unique value proposition of each study programme in the study field.

The structure of the management of the study field and its four study programmes is clear, well-developed, and capable to take timely and efficient decisions, initiate changes, and force development of the study field, provide all the necessary administrative and technical support to all the involved stakeholders. Centralised financial planning and budgeting at RTA limits the ability of the management of the study field and its four study programmes to do separate financial analysis of each study programme and assess its viability and future development.

RTA has established a well-developed system of procedures for admission of students, valuation and recognition of the study period and learning outcomes obtained in previous formal, informal education and/ or professional experience, as also of organization of examinations and tests. All these procedures are available on the website of RTA and in RTA internal documentation system in Latvian and English languages and can be easily obtained by any interested person.

RTA has developed and implements strong academic integrity principles and mechanisms in studies and research of the study field and its four study programmes. Plagiarism detection tools are widely applied in students' works, academic and scientific research works. Plagiarism detection rules together with RTA Code of Ethics ensure RTA internal culture based on strong ethical academic and research principles, and all related stakeholders are aware of these principles, tools, and mechanisms.

The copyright of the certain materials uploaded in Moodle system can be questioned, RTA does not ensure any control procedures regarding following of copyrights of downloadable materials like case study, books, teaching notes, articles, and their publishing by the academic staff in Moodle.

Information provided on the website of RTA provides the same information, which is available in official document registers of RTA; it provides sufficient information in Latvian and English languages to potential and existing students about RTA, its culture, study process and research.

During the on-site interviews, students, Alumni, employers, and teaching staff have shown high level of satisfaction with being a part of RTA and as the main valuable points have mentioned good quality of studies and preparation for international career; successful cooperation with the regional municipality, leading companies, and institutions of the regions; opportunity to obtain full-cycle higher education in proximity to the place of living; good administration of the study field and its study programmes; clear and efficient admission and study assessment rules.

As the main strengths can be mentioned the following:

- 1) RTA has developed clear and attainable strategic goals for the whole institution and the study field with its study programmes;
- 2) RTA has a strong reputation in Latgale region as a centre for culture, qualitative studies, technology and innovations, which fully complies with RTA strategic goals;
- 3) Students and Alumni in the region consider the opportunity to obtain full-cycle higher education in proximity to their place of living as a serious competitive advantage of RTA and the study field, as also consider RTA as a regional development centre for innovations, science, education and entrepreneurship;
- 4) the study field has high importance in RTA portfolio of study programmes, there is a high demand for entrepreneurs and managers in the region, it fully complies with RTA strategic goal to become a

- regional development centre for innovations, science, education and entrepreneurship;
- 5) RTA has established centralised, but well-integrated into the whole RTA structure, clear and efficient management structure in the study field and its study programmes;
 - 6) all four study programmes of the study field are provided in Latvian and English languages, broadening the pattern of potential students and following RTA strategic goal of higher education export and internationalization of the study process;
 - 7) RTA has developed strong academic integrity culture and established effective anti-plagiarism measures, which are supported by all the stakeholders;
 - 8) RTA has developed informative and efficient website, which provides all the necessary information about RTA, its study programmes, admission requirements and internal rules; this information fully complies with RTA internal documentation;
 - 9) RTA has well-developed, transparent, flexible, merit-based admission policy for both local and international students.

As the main weaknesses can be mentioned the following:

- 1) RTA Student Council as a student-representative body is not active in the daily life of students; nobody from the interviewed students has mentioned Student Council as a community to be related to;
- 2) Alumni Association is not well developed and respectively is not active in support to RTA and the study field, is not actively involved in strategic development and daily activities of the field and its study programmes;
- 3) management, administration and teaching staff of the study field lack knowledge of strategic goals and key performance indicators of RTA and the study field, could not mention them during the on-site visit;
- 4) management, administration and teaching staff of the study field lack knowledge of unique key selling points and unique value proposition of each study programme in the study field, could mention only general things during the on-site visit;
- 5) centralised budgeting process at RTA limits ability of the study field management to analyse financial results, viability and potential future development of each study programme in the study field;
- 6) RTA does not have any system to control copyright of the certain materials like case study, books, teaching notes, articles, and their publishing by the academic staff in Moodle.

2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System

Analysis

2.1. During the on-site meetings, management representatives of RTA and the study field, as well as representatives of academic staff and Alumni spoke of the importance of high-quality standards that the study process must obtain and how well RTA has improved over the last period of evaluation. Given that no evidence was obtained that the quality management system complies with the ISO series of standards or the EFQM model of excellence, the Team of Experts can only assess compliance with the ESG standard. The RTA Quality Manual is general and contains a theory of the 8 quality management principles, the content of the Deming circle and content of the EFQM model, suitable for educational purposes, but not very useful in daily quality assurance work within RTA. It would not be desirable to leave references to quality system standards and models in publicly available documents that have not been implemented or will not be implemented in the RTA in the foreseeable future.

The published RTA Quality Policy lacks a couple of elements mentioned in the ESG standard: attitude towards academic fraud, guarding against intolerance of any kind or discrimination against the students or staff, the involvement of external stakeholders in quality assurance.

Both during the on-site visit and in the SAR, multiple references were made to the Quality

Management Handbook (2019; https://www.rta.lv/study_quality_management_system), which is also available on the RTA's website. It provides a short description of RTA's quality assurance policy and a more detailed account on the quality management principles, models, and structural organization. The aim of this Quality Policy, according to the Handbook, is to implement RTA's mission, strategic goals (p.3). However, once asked to elaborate on the practical implementation of the theoretical models mentioned in the Handbook (i.e., EFQM excellence model on p.5; ISO9001: 2015 Standard on p.3), the person, Manager of the Quality Assurance System in RTA, explained that the mentioned models are still in the early stages of implementation. It was highlighted that they have identified 3 main processes they have decided to focus on in the quality assurance system: 1) study and basic activity process, 2) supportive process, 3) management process. These processes are further described in the Handbook (p.13) only by having activity types listed under each category. The planned implementation of, for example, "academic field and maintenance of programmes" or "ensuring information and communication" is not provided in this or other publicly available document on the aforementioned website.

However, throughout the on-site visit there was clear evidence that the practices in RTA are striving to several ESG standards. For example, the design and evaluation of study programmes are regulated by a documented procedure ("Procedure of Annual Self-evaluation of Study Direction and Respective Study Programmes at RTA", approved at the Study Council meeting on 11.12.2019., available online), which, according to testimonials of teaching staff and student representatives, is followed. Elements of student-centred learning, teaching and assessment were present – study schedule and timing of classes is adjusted, to a reasonable extent, according to the results of a survey given out to students in the beginning of the respective semester; the teaching methodology in some courses is updated according to the feedback of students; the results of assessment can be appealed and there is a formal procedure ("Regulation for the Procedure of Examination and Test Session in RTA", approved by RTA Senate on 08.05.2012. with latest amendments on 25.09.2018., available online). However, on the issues of the appeal of evaluation and possible conflict resolution, students during the on-site visit pointed out that, if they needed to do so, they would turn to their Professor, another Professor, the study programme Director, or the Dean for guidance, depending on with which of them they have the closest understanding on the matter. While students expressed that they feel comfortable with this, it signals that communication on the formal procedures might not be fully clear to students or simply are too informal.

It is hard to read and understand RTA SWOT analysis provided in the SAR, as it seems wrongly prepared: it looks more like just statements about situation and not a risk management tool. SWOT analysis is correct when columns differ by helpful / harmful for achieving objectives and lines should be sorted as internal origin (Strengths, Weaknesses) and external origin (Opportunities, Threats). RTA has prepared SWOT analysis in plain text format, not in a table. SWOT analysis for the next year's self-evaluation and quality assurance system is one of the things that should be updated by using correct SWOT analysis methodology as a given long term recommendation.

There is a document on RTA web page "Studiju rezultātos balstīta studiju kvalitātes sistēma RTA" that is more than 10 years old and even contains previous name of the establishment. It is good to show long history and progress towards improvements, but in this case, it looks more like outdated document that has not been revised and updated, maybe no one uses it. All documentation should be periodically revised and updated or removed.

2.2. RTA has the procedure of annual self-evaluation of the study field and its four study programmes at RTA (approved at the Study Council meeting on 11.12.2019., available online) in force, which aims to review and improve the study field and the respective study programmes. The procedure describes the process of self-evaluation by pointing out the distribution of responsibilities between RTA's structural units. Procedure also includes evaluation on the execution of the plan for following recommendations received in the previous accreditation process of the study field and its four study programmes, and licencing process of the study programmes. Every year, according to

the procedure and information received during the on-site visit, the SWOT analysis of each study programme is re-evaluated, involving opinion of all stakeholders. The procedure also describes how study programme admission results are summarized for analysis, how statistics on the number and movement of students is reviewed, how the measures for improved academic integrity are tracked and evaluated, how study literature is to be analysed, student and academic staff mobility data gathered and inspected, internship agreements, professional standard for professional study programme, study course problem-based approach implementation, student achievements and material-technical basis and academic staff evaluated. However, the criteria for analysis of problem-based approach implementation in study programmes, apart from yes/no status, is not described. Neither are more details on student achievement and material-technical basis evaluation or any further use of its evaluation. This procedure covers the most important aspects that should be reviewed and re-evaluated, however, there are aspects that should be refined to provide more transparency and clarity on the matter.

Both during the on-site visit and in the SAR of the study field, it was highlighted that feedback from the stakeholders is mainly collected in form of surveys. In this procedure, Annex 3 provides a table of the types of surveys RTA employs to reach its stakeholders. Student group during the on-site visit also confirmed that they are obliged to fill out a survey at the end of each semester and at the end of the study course, as well as sometimes they receive surveys on their study experience, as it was once the distance learning began due to restrictions in place to prevent the spread of Covid-19. Alumni group, however, was unsure about the regularity of the surveys. Meanwhile employer group drew attention to the fact, that they are involved in meetings where the development and SWOT analysis of the study programmes are discussed, as well as to their participation in the Study Field Council.

In the SAR of the study field (p.31), the self-evaluation reports are said to be available on RTA's webpage, reporting on the previous 5 years. After exploring the information available on the website, under the section of relevant study field self-evaluation reports, 2017/2018 is the last available report. More recent reports (2018/2019, 2019/2020) are missing in case of all study fields or have not yet been published, which raises a question of whether the evaluation procedure is still in active use every year. During the on-site visit, this question was not met with a clear answer.

SAR of the study field, p.30 Paragraph 2.3. asks for case study of student complaint and proposal management process, tracing a specific complaint from the moment it is submitted until it is resolved, and improvements are made or rejected. Only the theoretical part, listing the related internal procedures, is submitted. During the on-site visit, students did not show awareness about specific formal procedures related to complaint and request resolution.

There are clear procedures for the evaluation of academic staff and principles for the development of academic careers. Top management confirmed that complaints about the quality of Lecturers' work would be addressed immediately. Academic staff do not have certain indicators at which point they should worry about the quality of their work not to get into a problem situation and possible exemption from lecturing.

2.3. According to the annual self-evaluation procedure, gathering and analysing data plays an important role in the annual assessment of the study field and its four study programmes. Data for analysis is collected every year on the last year's admission results, student movement, student and academic staff mobility, dropout statistics and reasons. According to the SAR of the study field (p.35), RTA data on student attendance enables them to assess the situation with local and foreign students on monthly basis and check-up, if the student needs additional academic support. As of the autumn semester of 2019, this data is recorded on the website www.vis.rta.lv. In collaboration with the State Employment Agency, RTA also follows the statistics on how many of RTA Alumni have registered for status of unemployed person, however, the criteria for further analysis on this data is not described. Another area for data collection the SAR of the study field briefly describes is the statistics on the qualification of academic staff, especially the proportion of elected and unelected

academic staff and their qualification relevant to the programme. Additionally, during the on-site visit, it was especially stressed by the academic staff and administrative staff that there is a high percent of RTA's staff, who themselves are graduates of RTA.

Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, during the on-site visit it was confirmed that RTA collects the feedback of graduates on their experience in RTA, feedback of employers and traineeship organizers on the performance and readiness of RTA's students and graduates, feedback of students on their study process and experience in RTA. The analytical data, according to information acquired at the on-site visit, is used in the decision-making process on the future development of the programme and the strategic priorities set for the next planning period.

2.4. As explained above on the matter of Internal Quality Assurance System and Quality Policy, there are several procedures in action that align with the guidelines provided in the ESG Part 1, however, they are not documented and described further in the Policy of RTA. The aim of the Quality Policy indicated in the "Procedure of annual self-evaluation of study fields and respective study programmes at RTA" is very broad and vague, referring to the joint quality assurance in the institution, not specifying the matters regarding the study field and its four study programmes. As for encouraging and ensuring academic integrity, RTA has developed Regulations on "Plagiarism Control and Prevention at RTA" (n/d., available on RTA webpage). To guard against intolerance, RTA has also developed "RTA's Code of Ethics" (Approved by RTA on 30.01.2006, last amended on 26.10.2010.).

As for other points in the ESG standard, RTA has provided a description of how the guidelines are followed in the SAR of the study field (p.36). Regarding study programmes' development and approval, RTA has established regulation on development of a new programme as well as a procedure of existing programme and study field annual evaluation (see explanation above). However, the procedure described in the regulation regarding design process of a new study programme does not include an explanation, if and how stakeholders are involved in the development process. A work group is mentioned, but there are no details on the members of it. However, during the on-site visit, a couple of informants briefly explained that graduates and local employers, alumni members had taken part in the development of a newly introduced study programme, confirming that such procedure is in practice.

It is commendable that RTA has acknowledged student-centred learning as the main learning approach, recognizing the individual students and appreciating their diversity (SAR of the study field, p.36). During the on-site visit students and Alumni confirmed that the individual and personalized approach is one of the strong points for RTA, ensured by the relatively small number of students per class. However, to fully incorporate student-centred learning, there should be a transparent student appeal system in place, which students should be informed about. From the information gathered during the on-site visit, students at their time of studying were not aware of any procedure in place to process their complaints and applications for appeal. Considering that the number of students within the class is low enough to spot out the person who wishes to discreetly file a complaint, there should be a clear system that allows room for anonymity in the event when open conversation is no more productive. A similar scenario is applicable to collecting and analysing small-size course student feedback. Students mentioned that they were attending courses with 3-5 classmates. RTA management did not want to confirm this and stated that the minimum class size is 10 students.

Procedures for matriculation and exmatriculation of students in RTA is described in "Regulation on matriculation and exmatriculation at RTA" (Approved by the RTA Senate on 10.01.2005, last amended on 27.11.2018.), and recognition of previous formal study experience - in "Regulation on academic recognition of study courses by the RTA" (Approved by the RTA Senate on 27.05.2005., last amended on 27.02.2018.), and recognition of previous professional experience or competences acquired outside formal education - in "Regulation on recognition of competences acquired outside the formal education or through professional experience and learning outcomes acquired in prior

education by the RTA" (Approved by the RTA Senate on 18.12.2018.). The criteria are clear, and the documents are available on the webpage of RTA.

Regarding teaching staff, the ESG standard requires to establish a supportive environment to the academic staff for development and academic creation (ESG 2015, p.13). The on-site visit confirmed the professional development opportunity system mentioned in the SAR of the study field (p.37), as well as the transparency of the requirements and criteria for career growth and election process for the elected academic staff. However, it noticed that the administrative duties and workload entrusted on some of the academic staff members affects their performance in academic and research activities, which might lead to staff burn-out. If the work responsibilities disrupt the work/life balance, there is little time or incentive left to take part in professional development opportunities provided by RTA.

For teaching resources and student support standard the description provided in the SAR of the study field on its incorporation is very brief, noting that there are both physical resources, human resources, and support services available for local and foreign students. Most of it was also confirmed during the on-site visit. Once asked to elaborate on student support services, international student office was mentioned as support point for foreign students, while for local students the final thesis supervisor, study department, study programme Director or Dean are the persons students are used to turning for help and guidance in a range of topics. The role of Student Council did not come up in the conversations, neither was any form of Alumni Association familiar to students or Alumni.

Similarly, information management is very briefly described in the SAR of the study field (p.37), noting only that all the necessary data is collected and analysed for further use in reporting on it and publishing it. Meanwhile, the standard recommends paying attention to KPI's, target student population profile creation, career path mapping of graduates, which, according to the answers in the on-site visit, are data sets yet to be discovered and analysed.

RTA does publish up-to-date information on its activities on their webpage (www.rta.lv), as well as the regulations, procedures and other relevant documents describing the processes of the study direction and study programmes within it.

The monitoring and review of study programmes is carried out by annual self-evaluation, described in more detail above, and it includes all stakeholders.

Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

The main conclusions are the following:

RTA has established a quality policy, which is publicly available, it also has developed and maintains a quality assurance system, which contributes to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study field and its four study programmes. The system is aimed to ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study field and its four study programmes. But several drawbacks were found out.

Overall, there seems to be an ongoing discussion over what is and what is not part of RTA's quality assurance system and quality policy. During the on-site visit, the managerial structure, decision-making process within the hierarchy, division of authority was explained and presented as a part of the implemented quality assurance model. As well-intentioned as it is, the quality assurance system, according to ESG 2015 standards should be improved and properly documented. The proceedings themselves taking place in RTA to review and evaluate annual performance of the study direction and programmes are aimed at improving and developing a higher standard of quality, as well as reaching the learning outcomes set out before them.

There are established procedures for both developing and reviewing of the study field and its four study programmes, which partially are based on the input received from stakeholders. Self-evaluation procedure takes place annually and covers a wide variety of topics; the report is

discussed in the Senate and later published on the webpage. A system of collecting and analysing feedback of RTA's stakeholders is in place, ensuring that opinion of students, graduates and employers is considered in the future development of the programme. However, a feedback to the persons participating in the survey could be enabled, providing them with a chance to view summary and results of these surveys.

Information (both qualitative and quantitative) about the study field and its four study programmes is collected to improve the decision-making process on the future developments of the study field and its four study programmes.

RTA has identified how the standards set out in the ESG are or are in process of being integrated in the procedures of RTA and applied for improvement of the study field and its four study programmes. While the SAR of the study field provides a table of descriptions, how each of the standard points is being implemented, none of the points are set out by them as posing challenges or requiring special attention; however, the on-site visit suggests that some of these points could benefit from more attention and improvement in their execution.

As the main strengths can be mentioned the following:

- 1) regular involvement of all stakeholders in the strategy-planning and evaluation, re-evaluation processes of the study field and its four study programmes;
- 2) good contacts and cooperation with external stakeholders;
- 3) collection of qualitative and quantitative data on relevant study programme's progress and affect metrics (data on the student body structure, feedback on study experience, feedback on students/graduates performing outside the RTA, class attendance and drop-out data, data on academic staff qualification);
- 4) implementation of the ESG standards is identified, each standard incorporation is at least briefly described;
- 5) there are well-produced procedures and regulations on the study programmes' development and re-evaluation, recognition of previous formal and informal experience.

As the main weaknesses can be mentioned the following:

- 1) implementation and documentation of the Quality Policy and the Quality Assurance System does not seem to match;
- 2) there is place for improvement to fully meet the ESG standards, yet none of the standards have been recognized by RTA as challenging or requiring more attention;
- 3) students seem to be unaware of the support mechanisms available at RTA outside the formal in-classroom study process;
- 4) the academic staff seem to lack support to maintain a better work/life balance and might be at risk of personal and professional burn-out;
- 5) RTA Quality Policy is not in accordance with the related requirements of standards as even ESG standard suggests to cover more topics in the policy and involve external stakeholders;
- 6) risk management processes and analysis lack some application methodology, for example, SWOT analysis is prepared with some deficiencies;
- 7) despite the well-prepared theoretical part of documentation, there are cases of missing important documentation for daily usage.

3. Resources and Provision of the Study Field

Analysis

3.1. Regarding the financial resources, RTA has total common budget for the whole Academy, and has developed funding system for the implementation of the study field and its four study programmes. The system is described in the SAR of the study field (p.37, 38). During the on-site visit, the Experts Team asked to provide additional information about financial resources and separate budget of the study field and its four study programmes, additional information was

provided in document "Virz_uzn_ba_akr_2.xlsx". Based on the provided information, 2/3 of the revenues normally come from state funding and 1/3 from paid services, including tuition fees. The Experts Team can point out as a positive fact ability of RTA to apply and successfully obtain EU Project funds in high volume, at the same time, it indicates the risk of RTA of being dependable on EU Project funds, while revenues from state funding and tuition fees are decreasing. In the SAR of the study field and its four study programmes, it is stated that all study programmes of the field have calculation of the cost of one full-time student per year for domestic and EU students, and for non-EU students (p.40-41). When the Expert Team asked for this information, the management of the study field and its four study programmes could not provide it. Later it was clarified that RTA calculates break-even point in terms of necessary number of students that pay tuition fee for the study field to be profitable, and the latest calculation shows, that break even number of students in a group is 10 students.

As it is stated in the SAR of the study field, scientific research funding is not divided by study fields, but allocated for the whole RTA (p.38). As it was stated during the on-site visit, the annual budget for scientific work support (travel, conferences) for each teaching staff member is defined, and this amount is rather limited per year. It is important to find funds for these activities and make them available for all members of the teaching staff.

The funding of the study field and its four study programmes depends on the agreement between Directors of the study field and its four study programmes, and RTA management. During the on-site visit, it was pointed out by RTA management, that there is enough fund to cover all the expenses within the study field and its four study programmes, practically revenues and costs are on the same level. The management of study field and its four study programmes seems not to be strong and independent when talking about financial management. They feel comfortable within the RTA system, however, the traditional, rigid rules do not motivate them to do more detailed financial analysis of the study field and each study programme, to get better understanding of financial sustainability, to revise the study programmes (very low number of students) or initiate innovation.

3.2. RTA infrastructure is described in the SAR of the study field (Chapters 3.2 and 3.3) and was also observed during the on-site-visit. RTA has its campus with several existing buildings and additional buildings that are still in progress in the totals size of 4,2 hectares, divided into 4 study blocks. Several parts of this infrastructure are shared among faculties, such as Library. Library has several parts, such as reading room, a collection and cataloguing sector, a bibliography and information sector, all together almost 500 m². It provides students and teaching staff with the opportunity to use computers and access different databases like LAIS, scientific journal and article collections EBSCO, ScienceDirect, Web of Science and other. Library includes relevant literature mostly in Latvian and English language. The literature provision rules describe a process for obtaining new literature for teaching staff and students. During the on-site visit, there was an evidence of improvement of availability of study literature in English available for local and especially foreign students. But still choice and number of core text books for the specific course might not be available for the whole group. In study course descriptions, some teaching staff members have shown Amazon.com as a source for a specific book, it looks like the Lecturer is leaving the problem of finding the necessary literature for the study course as a responsibility of the student. The Experts Team would like to stress out that availability of necessary literature and study materials in RTA Library is very important for the study process in the study field. During the on-site visit, the Experts Team has received information, that Library's annual budget for purchasing of new books and study materials is 20.000 EUR. Considering necessity to pay attention to following the copyrights of the study materials uploaded to Moodle system (case study, books, teaching notes, articles – mentioned already in 1.4. point of this Experts' joint report), part of this budget could be spent for this purpose. The students of the study field and its four study programmes have the possibility to use computers in 3 well equipped computer rooms with all together 66 computers. Two of the computer rooms are a part of the Information Technology Centre but can be shared with the students of the study field.

Unfortunately, the number of accessible software for students seems to be quite low, while the offer is better for teaching staff, for example, SPSS. SPSS availability would be very useful for Master's and Doctoral level students, foreign students would appreciate Financial Accounting software in English language. Students study in very nice lecture rooms, that are renewed with new furniture and ICT equipment. RTA also has a larger auditorium for 130 persons, where different events can take place. The buildings also offer students possibilities to hang out in the halls and terrace. Teaching staff has their own rooms with good working conditions. There is also a huge conference room with acoustic panels, microphones for interpreting process, interpreter's booth, it is possible to host 140 listeners. Students also have broad facilities for sport, but during the on-site visit, at the interview not all of them were aware of that possibility. Despite of this information gap students are satisfied with their campus, all of them consider it as the 21st century academic site, as also appreciate possibility to study close to their place of living. However, both students and academic staff members have mentioned during the on-site visit, that they are missing more rooms/places for individual and teamwork, where they could get together for teamwork or research discussion.

3.3. RTA teaching staff is regulated via several guidelines, plans, procedures, and laws, as it is described in the SAR of the study field and its four study programmes (p.46). The most important criteria for the selection of the academic staff are scientific and professional competence. During the on-site visit, teaching staff confirmed, that regulations and procedures to apply for election in different habilitation titles are clear and transparent in terms that teaching staff understands what must be achieved to meet the specific criteria. All vacancies for academic staff are advertised in open competition and published in several information sources. There is a lack of international academic staff even though all study programmes are available in both Latvian and English languages.

The workload of teaching staff consists of lecturing, research work, administrative work and working on different projects. Therefore, workload for teaching staff is quite big and it is almost impossible to perform within a normal 40 h/week timeframe. There is a lot of administrative work (e. g. project applications, project management), where additional support should be provided by RTA. Teaching workload is the biggest, meaning there is much less time for in-depth scientific work.

During the on-site visit, teaching staff has confirmed, that they have possibilities to further improve their skills: digital teaching courses, English language courses, conferences for scientific publications, networking and establishing new contacts. They also have opportunity to make an internship in companies which are close to their study courses. Academic staff members valued this opportunity highly and employers were also happy to provide such places. Teaching staff also participates in Erasmus+ and other projects mobility, but still incoming and outgoing numbers are rather low, like 0-3 persons during the year, based on the information provided in the SAR of the study field and its four study programmes.

During the on-site visit, the Experts Team got confirmation, that teaching staff follow the expectations of Directors of the study field and its four study programmes and are also assessed regarding their performance.

3.4. As it is already pointed out above, students have good study conditions in terms of infrastructure: buildings, lecture rooms, computer rooms, library, access to scientific data bases, also in distance studies. As it is stated in the SAR of the study field, RTA also provides support in terms of human resources: teaching staff, study consultants, RTA management (p.50). Students have good access and open communication with the teaching staff. In case of bigger problems, they have the access to study department management or even Dean's office. As it was described by Experts earlier in the Quality Assurance chapter of this Experts' joint report, these procedures are not always formal. The role of informal problem solving is widely accepted, which could create concerns from quality management point of view. RTA also provides services, such as individual psychologist, individual career counselling, customized individual study plans. Professional Bachelor's study programme "Entrepreneurship" also offers a course mentor from the teaching staff.

Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

The main conclusions are the following:

RTA has developed a system to determine the financial resources required for the implementation of the study field and its four study programmes, and these resources are available. There is a system for financing the scientific research activities in place, and this system is efficient, but the amount available per person in the teaching staff is rather low. Availability of more detailed financial information about the study field, its revenues and costs could provide more room for the management team of the study field when they think about financial viability of the study field and each of its study programmes, their financial sustainability, and new investments.

RTA has ensured good infrastructure and necessary resources, material and technical provision required for the implementation of the study field and its four study programmes. The students and the teaching staff have access to the necessary resources. There is a common system and procedures for the improvement and purchase of the material, technical, methodological, and informative provision. There are new developments in infrastructure like new dormitory on campus site for foreign students. Sport facilities are available, but the communication could be developed as not all the students are aware of the sport facilities which are at their disposal. IT infrastructure is good, there are computers available on campus. Now it is time to focus on the professional software and data bases which should be available not just for the academic staff members but for students as well, for example, SPSS for Master's and Doctoral students, Financial Accounting software in English language for international students.

RTA has developed clear procedure how to attract highly skilled teaching staff and motivate for further development in the study field and its four study programmes. The needs of the teaching staff for professional and didactic improvement are identified in a target-oriented manner. Each member of the teaching staff can apply for professional training, participation in seminars and conferences for publication. There is a system of measures to employ and assess progress of the teaching staff in professional development and further promotion. This system was described by management and teaching staff as an efficient one. The teaching staff members take part both in outgoing and incoming mobility, which brings added value to the implementation of the study process and the study quality, but activity is rather low. The academic and research workload of the teaching staff is not well-balanced, there are signs of the potential "burn-out" risk, teaching staff is heavily involved in teaching and project writing and administration, research is done in the evenings and day-offs. There is a need indicated for technical support in writing the project documents.

RTA ensures all the necessary support for the students, but it is more of the informal nature. In case of problems or complaints, students contact teaching staff, administration of the study field or of the related study programmes, and always get assistance. There is a need indicated to develop formal procedure and inform about that all the involved parties.

The main strengths are the following:

- 1) good infrastructure, rooms, computers available for students of the study field and its four study programmes;
- 2) sufficient financial funds for RTA development;
- 3) construction of the new dormitory for international students on the campus site;
- 4) students are satisfied with the study programmes' infrastructure and material facilities, consider RTA campus as related to the 21st century requirements;
- 5) academic staff members are dedicated and supportive towards RTA, are satisfied with RTA support in their professional development and scientific activities;
- 6) academic staff actively improve their skills participating in research projects, different training (English language, digital competences, leadership), company internship projects;
- 7) in the library, there are books and study materials available also in English language.

The main weaknesses are the following:

- 1) lack of international academic staff, despite the availability of all study programmes in English language;
- 2) low level of academic staff incoming and outgoing mobility;
- 3) limited funds per person per year to finance participation of the teaching staff in international scientific conferences with publications;
- 4) lack of detailed financial analysis of the study field and its four study programmes separately from the total RTA budget in order to assess viability and future financial sustainability of the study field and its four study programmes;
- 5) workload of the teaching staff of the study field and its four study programmes is not well-balanced, lack of time for scientific research;
- 6) based on interviews during the on-site visit, lack of technical support to the teaching staff in writing of project applications to obtain EU project funds, and further project reporting;
- 7) based on interviews during the on-site visit, lack of premises for individual and teamwork of students and academic staff;
- 8) limited access of students to professional software, for example, SPSS for Master's and Doctorate students, accounting software in English language for foreign students;
- 9) in the library, availability of all core materials mentioned in study course descriptions is limited, number of books might be sufficient only for small groups, also Amazon.com mentioned as a source looks like it is responsibility of the student to find all the necessary literature for the study courses;
- 10) currently, high dependence of salaries of the teaching staff on the funds from the obtained projects.

4. Scientific Research and Artistic Creation

Analysis

4.1. The directions of scientific research and/or artistic creation in the study field and its four study programmes comply with the development goals of RTA and they are relevant to the study field and the relevant industry. RTA implements Doctoral study programme "Economics and Business" to ensure availability of the scientific degree in the study field in the Latgale region. Since 2013 RTA has a status of a scientific institution (Register of Latvian Scientific Institutions (reg. No. 1172165)). RTA research objectives are defined in the "Strategy of Scientific Activity 2019-2023" approved by RTA Senate on 07.05.2019., which derives from the "RTA Operation and Development Strategy 2016-2023". As it is stated in the SAR of the study field (p.51), the goal of RTA's scientific work is to develop the knowledge-based economic development potential by providing technological excellence and transfer to the development of entrepreneurship and economy. Its main tasks are to provide science, research, and innovation in line with the research directions defined in the RTA's strategy for action and development, to develop scientific research capacity, to increase the number of people employed in science, to renew and develop human resources, technology, and innovation in science, to promote international excellence and quality and maintain and improve scientific infrastructure.

Scientific activity in the study field and its four study programmes is ensured by the Research Institute for Business and Social Processes, which operates in accordance with the "RTA Operation and Development Strategy 2016-2023" and "Strategy of Scientific Activity 2019-2023". As it is stated in the SAR of the study field and its four study programmes (p.52), the aim of the Institute is to strengthen and expand existing scientific capacity by ensuring scientific research in the field of social sciences and related interdisciplinary fields in Latvia, in the European and global context, providing practical support in the study fields implemented by the Faculty of Economics and Management and RTA in general. Research at the Institute is carried out both as systematic research by academic staff in the fields of their competence and as part of the education process

when implementing a corresponding RTA study programme. Research Institute for Business and Social Processes is established to conduct research in the field of social sciences and related interdisciplinary fields; to perform commercialisation of scientific research results, to integrate them into the study process and the national economy; to promote the inclusion of human resources into the international scientific movement in the field of social sciences by strengthening the links between entrepreneurs, the public sector, and RTA; to involve the staff of the Institute and RTA students in scientific projects; to create an environment and conditions for innovative research and activity; based on mutual agreements, to ensure cooperation with other research, industrial and academic partners in the Institute's field for performing academic research and completing industrial orders; to ensure the publicity of the Institute's research results in scientific periodicals, monographs, and international databases; to organise and participate in conferences and other scientific activities. The vision of the Institute is to become the leading institute of social sciences in Latgale region, with the first achievable results to be met within the next 6 years. Already now, each member of the teaching staff of the study field and its four study programmes, works in the institute, every year should publish an article in scientific journal in the frame of the study field and its four study programmes. Teaching staff should involve students in scientific activities, article preparation and project implementations. During the on-site visit, there was some evidence from students' side, that they were involved in some scientific activities together with the teaching staff, but such cases should become more popular.

As it is stated in the SAR of the study field (p.53), in order to strengthen the scientific capacity of RTA, a joint Doctoral study programme "Economics and Business" has been created in cooperation with Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences (ViA) and Ventspils University of Applied Sciences (VeA). This joint study programme will let RTA to ensure full-cycle studies, which are a priority factor in RTA development strategy, as also it will strengthen RTA cooperation with other higher education institutions in Latvia. Doctoral study programme "Economics and Business" will promote the transfer of economic knowledge to the practical business environment, promoting unified development of the Latvian national economy. RTA students and academic staff will benefit from joint academic and scientific resources, and infrastructure of all three involved higher education institutions. It will attract academic staff with a Doctor's degree, promote resurgence of academic staff, transfer of knowledge in the academic environment, and grow the synergy of education and research in the study field and its four study programmes. Leading scientific staff of all three higher education institutions will be involved in the implementation of the programme.

4.2. The relation between scientific research and/or artistic creation in the study field and its four study programmes and the study process are clearly defined and ensured in efficient way, scientific research and the outcomes thereof are integrated in the study process in the study programmes of all levels of the study field.

Teaching staff in the study field is active in research that directly corresponds to the aim and content of the study field and its four study programmes, results of the research have value on industry (mostly), regional and national level. The list of teaching staff publications (Annex 8) shows that teaching staff performs its research work in the scientific and professional areas that apply to the study field and its four study programmes. Academic staff of the study field are active in participation in National research programmes, fundamental and applied research project (latest July - December 2020). Since 2018, RTA has implemented a project (SAM) with opportunities for their staff to participate in internships in companies, language training, improving digital competences, leadership, as also invited Professors from other countries. During the on-site visit, the Experts Team has received evidence, that RTA management pays a lot of attention to the quality of their academic staff, as also academic staff of the study field and its four study programmes understand the need of the research for RTA, get involved in all scientific activities of RTA, are actively involved in project writing to obtain funds also for scientific research - participation in conferences and publishing of papers.

As it is stated in the SAR of the study field (p.52), there is a high priority of the synergy of academic and scientific work in the study field and its four study programmes, 31 out of 62 Lecturers employed in the study field (50%) have been elected in both pedagogical and scientific positions. RTA publishes the scientific journal "Latgale National Economy Research", which is available since 2009 in free access on the RTA website <http://journals.ru.lv>. Both RTA Lecturers and students (with the recommendation of supervisors) can publish the results of their research. How it was already described by the Experts previously, teaching staff are very busy with teaching and project writing, research is done mostly on their personal free time. Also amount available per person per year 400-800 EUR to participate in conference and be published is very low and can limit access of teaching staff to valuable international conferences and databases.

4.3. International cooperation in the field of scientific research and/or artistic creation within the study field is ensured and improved in a target-oriented manner. International cooperation is very important for RTA, the study field and its four study programmes. RTA is welcoming guest Lecturers to enhance study process with experiences of teaching staff from abroad. RTA is also involved in several projects, for example, Erasmus+ Program KA 2 Strategic partnership project "Development and Introduction of a Communication Competencies Model for Enhancing and Maintaining a Business Mentor Network", project "Support for international cooperation projects in research and innovation". RTA organizes an annual scientific conference "Society. Integration. Education." with scientists from over 20 countries; as a part of the conference, a series of articles are published, with a separate issue on Economics, which has been published since 2016 and is available free of charge on RTA's electronic site <http://journals.ru.lv>. RTA Faculty of Economics and Management, in cooperation with Kryvyi Rig College of Economics and Management of Kiev National Economic University named after Vadym Hetman (Ukraine) and Bukhara State University (Uzbekistan), has been organising the III International Scientific Congress "SOCIETY OF AMBIENT INTELLIGENCE - 2020" for three years, <http://www.isc-sai.org/>. The congress is organised in all three countries and includes student business plan competitions. A collection of articles has been published in the framework of the Congress in cooperation with ATLANTIS PRESS: Proceedings of the III International Scientific Congress Society of Ambient Intelligence 2020 (ISC-SAI 2020), <https://www.atlantispress.com/proceedings/isc-sai-20>. The proceedings have been submitted for indexing to Web of Science. Teaching staff visits international conferences and is involved in organization of international conferences, such as "Aspects of sustainable development: theory and practice" and "International Scientific Congress SMART SOCIETY - 2020". RTA has also some traditional partners from Lithuania, Poland, and Ukraine, as it is stated in the SAR of the study field and its four study programmes (p.56).

During the reporting period, Lecturers from Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Turkey, Germany conducted classes in the study field and its four study programmes within the framework of ERASMUS + mobility. Teaching staff of the study field during the reporting period have been teaching in Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, Germany, France, Bulgaria, Netherlands, Spain, and Greece within the framework of ERASMUS + mobility (p.49). The list of the outgoing and incoming teaching staff can be found in Annex 7 and it presents very fruitful exchange of teaching staff in both directions. At the same time, the Experts should note, that in the last years outgoing and incoming mobilities have essentially decreased. Rather low dissemination of research results was mentioned as a recommendation from the Experts' side in the previous accreditation of the study field. Increase of the dissemination of the research results and promotion of RTA and the study field in international scientific environment can be ensured through RTA partnerships and collaboration channels, for example, sending informative newsletters to the partner institutions.

4.4. RTA has developed clear mechanisms and science-based internal culture for the involvement of the teaching staff in scientific research and/or artistic creation, and it works efficiently. 67% of teaching staff have PhD degree. During the on-site visit, the Experts Team found out, that RTA management mostly employ new staff that come from graduates from Master's and PhD studies.

RTA is proud about their locally grown researchers and teaching staff. To balance majority of local teaching staff, RTA invites teaching staff and researchers from abroad, to inspire innovations, new ideas, to have a new look from the outside, from other countries and other sectors.

Conference proceedings of RTA international scientific conference "Environment. Technology. Resources." are indexed in SCOPUS database; conference proceedings of RTA international scientific conference "Society. Integration. Education." are indexed in the Web of Science database. It provides excellent publishing opportunities to RTA academic staff and researchers.

4.5. RTA has developed mechanisms to promote the involvement of the students in scientific research and/or artistic creation, academic staff and students are aware of such opportunity. During the on-site visit, the Experts Team got evidence, that students of the study field and its four study programmes are involved in scientific research and/or artistic creation. Of course, majority is in the frame of Doctoral study programme "Economics and Business", where some representatives of the RTA teaching staff are students. The synergy between teaching and research processes is very important for RTA. RTA participates in project competitions in the study field and its four study programmes. It is a requirement to involve Master's and PhD study programmes' students in the projects. RTA teaching staff receives local grants, where they must involve students in the project implementation. Most important is scientific work within the Doctoral study programme "Economics and Business", which students in year 2021 will participate in cross border Doctorials, working remotely in multidisciplinary groups; all teams will be international, one team coach must be provided by RTA. Doctorials are the result of close collaboration between RTA and its partners in joint degree Doctoral programme "Economics and Business".

4.6. There is an evidence of innovative solutions in the study process of the study field and its four study programmes. The most often cited organisational approach in the study process is student-centred teaching and problem-based learning. During the on-site visit, it was emphasized by teaching staff, students, and companies as well. Students are involved in different projects with companies and grant projects (SAR p.61). Teaching staff offers courses for business and companies, where they can present their problems, then throughout the semester, students with a support of teaching staff are working on the solutions. Another study process innovation is due to the Covid-19 situation rather fast and efficient transfer to distance teaching and learning. Already for some time RTA wanted to introduce online studies, Covid-19 restrictions have forced this transfer.

Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

The main conclusions are the following:

The directions of scientific research and/or artistic creation in the study field and its four study programmes comply with the development goals of RTA, are related to the study field, relevant industries, and region. The relation between scientific research and/or artistic creation in the study field and its four study programmes and the study process is clearly defined and followed by teaching staff and students. Outcomes of the scientific research are integrated in the study process of the study field, as also shared with broader public. Here are some examples. The scientific journal "Latgale National Economy Research" is published, available at freely accessible journals.rta.lv. International scientific conference "Environment. Technology. Resources." (held once every 2 years), in which teaching staff of the study field actively participate and publish scientific articles in the conference proceedings, which are included in the SCOPUS database. RTA organizes international annual scientific conference "Society. Integration. Education.", in which teaching staff of the study field actively participate and publish scientific articles in the conference proceedings, which are included in the Web of Science database. RTA Faculty of Economics and Management organizes annual international scientific and practical conference of students and lecturers "Individual. Society. State.", where students present their research results (study papers, diploma papers, Master's theses); since 2018, conference proceedings are freely available at journals.rta.lv.

International cooperation in the field of scientific research and/or artistic creation within the study field and its four study programmes is ensured and improved from year to year in a target-oriented manner. RTA and academic staff of the study field participate in Erasmus+ mobility projects, scientific projects, organize international scientific conferences. Academic staff mobility is rather low in the last few years. Also, dissemination of the scientific research results is low and should be improved, especially on international level.

RTA has developed clear and motivating procedures for the involvement of the teaching staff in scientific research and/or artistic creation. Teaching staff is aware of necessity of scientific research for their remuneration and promotion, receives financial support to participate in scientific conferences and publication of their research results. This motivation mechanism is efficient and well-functioning, as the only minus can be mentioned rather low amount per person per year for participation in conference and publication.

RTA has developed clear and motivating mechanism to promote the involvement of the students in scientific research and/or artistic creation. Academic staff is active in involvement of the students of all level study programmes of the study field in research activities, and students are interested and responsive to participate.

As the main innovations in the study process can be mentioned enforcement of student-centred teaching and problem-based learning, as also fast and efficient transfer to distance studies because of Covid-19 restrictions.

The main strengths are the following:

- 1) new “Research Institute for Business and Social Processes” is established to foster scientific work and project activities at RTA and the region;
- 2) teaching staff of the study field are very active in scientific work, consider research as a mandatory part of their activities;
- 3) introduction and enforcement of problem-based learning and student-centred teaching into study process of the study field;
- 4) involvement of students of the study field in scientific work and challenges of local companies;
- 5) conference proceedings of RTA international scientific conference “Environment. Technology. Resources.” are indexed in SCOPUS database;
- 6) conference proceedings of RTA international scientific conference “Society. Integration. Education” are indexed in the Web of Science database.

The main weaknesses are the following:

- 1) low dissemination of scientific research results on international level;
- 2) teaching staff are doing research mostly in their free time because of unbalanced teaching and administrative workload.

5. Cooperation and Internationalisation

Analysis

5.1. RTA cooperates with the institutions from Latvia and abroad (higher education institutions/ colleges, employers, employers’ organisations, municipalities, non-governmental organisations, scientific institutes, and other) within the study field. These cooperation partners play important role in the development of the study programmes under review within the study field. The cooperation is fully in-line with the strategic goals of RTA and the study field.

The study field and its four study programmes contribute a lot to the development of the Latgale Region. To develop the content of the related study programmes required in the regional and international labour market RTA and especially management of the study field and its four study programmes work in close cooperation with professional practice providers, employers, public administrations, professional organizations, and associations from the Latgale region and the Baltic area. RTA and the study field have very intensive daily based connection with the local employers,

regional governments, industrial companies. The most important strategic partners are: Expert Council in Business, Finance, Accounting, Administration, Latvian Investment and Development Agency (LIDA), Latvian Hotel and Restaurant Association, Rezekne Special Economic Zone (RSEZ), Rezekne Business Association, LR Association of Accountants, Rezekne County Council, Rezekne City Council, Association "Rezekne District Communities Partnership", LLC "Accounting Latvia", LLC "EVIS grāmatvedība", LLC Latvian Rural Advisory Center, SRS Latgale Regional Authority, Bank of Latvia. The Experts Team could meet with the representatives of these companies, institutions and agencies who confirmed the wide variety of their collaboration: companies provide students with professional practice places, they participate in the organization of events, take part in the Career Day, participate in National Final Examination Commissions, participate in the development of strategic documents, company managers are invited as visiting lecturers for students and staff, organize study tours, recommend research topics, in-service practice of academic staff, support students' general education activities (for example, with study tours). This valuable support is recognized by the RTA management and they try to expand the cooperation. They want to establish strong links with the industry. Students accepted by RTA understand that they come for studying there, they have opportunities and practice in the industry, international mobility, and potential place in the labour market. Having strong cooperation with local partners helps students in the study process see the actual challenges and participate in their solutions. Students who are studying at RTA can also participate in different projects abroad.

Industrial partners can inspire new developments, for example, the newly developed Bachelor programme, within which one specialization module - innovation and technology management - will be implemented and taught. They try to attract to this course their academic staff from the Engineering Faculty, who are experienced in close collaboration with IT sector entrepreneurs and are involved in different IT projects. This is how they are trying to get closer to the innovation process. RTA is providing Lifelong Learning programmes as well. These programmes are popular, give 6% of the RTA total revenue and keep RTA connected to practice. Regarding more local cooperation, RTA has long-standing practice agreements with employers in the region. Revision and evaluation of these agreements is part of the annual self-evaluation report of the study field and its four study programmes, as stated in the "Procedure of annual self-evaluation of study directions and respective study programmes at RTA".

PBL (Problem Based Learning) approach is widely used in study courses, like Marketing, Project Management, Marketing Communication, Development and Analysis of Advertisement Texts. This approach requires a very close collaboration with the industry partners. In the Academic Bachelor's study programme "Business Management", they offer a new module "creative industry" which is appreciated by the regional agencies. In the Master's study programme "Management Science", they plan to offer more possibilities, they introduced three versions: 1, 1.5 and 2 years. In this programme, students can gain practical experiences as well. Main goal of the Doctoral study programme "Economics and Business" is to attract young scientists to the region for RTA and companies. It is a joint study program in cooperation with two other regional institutions VeA and ViA (available at http://www.aip.lv/prof_list.htm). The Study Programme Council of the Doctoral study programme "Economics and Business" consists of 6 Programme Directors, 2 from each University. Each University is responsible for implementing a part of the Doctoral study programme "Economics and Business".

RTA is very proud of their scientific activities. They are involved in a project of national research program, project of fundamental and applied research (Jul-Dec 2020). They pay a lot of attention to the quality of their academic staff. Since 2018 they have implemented SAM project with opportunities for their staff to participate in practice in companies, in language training, improving digital competences, leadership skills, and inviting Professors from other countries.

RTA and the study field with its four study programmes have close cooperation with the academic sector in Latvia and abroad. A good example of local cooperation is the establishment of joint

doctoral studies in cooperation with VeA and ViA; Joint Professors' Council: Council of Professors of Management Science of RTA, VeA and ViA (available at http://www.aip.lv/prof_list.htm). RTA has signed agreement with other Higher Education Institutions on the right of students to continue their studies in the event of termination of the programme at RTA: for the academic Bachelor's study programme "Business Management" with VeA, for the professional Bachelor's study programme "Entrepreneurship" with Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences, for the Master's study programme "Management Science" with ViA. Teaching staff of the study field regularly participate in state examination commissions, reviewing Doctoral theses in cooperation with Daugavpils University, Riga Technical University, University of Latvia, Jekabpils College of Agribusiness, College of State Agency of Social Integration. All together RTA listed 25 cooperation agreements in Annex 9.

5.2. Internationalisation is one of the strategic goals of RTA and the study field with its four study programmes. Because of the decreasing number of the local students there is no other way to manage sustainability than attracting foreign students. RTA has managed to attract full-time international students, who are paying tuition fee, which covers the study costs. Unfortunately, number of full-time international students is still rather low. During the past six academic years the study field with its four study programmes could enrol 78 foreign students mainly from Pakistan, India, Finland. They are exploring new markets, for example, Samarkand in Uzbekistan. At the same time internationalisation is extremely important from the Latvian students' point of view, because one of the main reasons why they choose RTA is the ERASMUS+ mobility. Management students are also actively looking for international practice. During the on-site visit, students were very satisfied with their semester abroad and confirmed that it was the most valuable part of their studies. Students also confirmed that there was no trouble in recognition of the acquired ECTS once returning to RTA, and they received support they needed from the Erasmus+ Coordinator.

RTA has 185 cooperation partners from 31 countries and promotes high mobility of academic staff and students (the 2nd-3rd place among all Higher Education Institutions of Latvia). But not all of them are related to the study field. Students from Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Georgia, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Lithuania, Finland, Belarus, Saudi Arabia, and other countries study at RTA. Link to the partners' list is available: <https://www.rta.lv/partners>. Largest part of tuition fee paying students are foreign students. Financial funds are enough to cover all expenses within the study field.

RTA and the study field use the international opportunities quite heavily in case of the Doctoral study programme "Economics and Business" as well. Summer 2021, Doctoral students will participate in a cross border Doctorials, will work in multidisciplinary groups organized remotely. All teams will be international, one Team Coach must be provided by each participating University. Such Doctorials are the result of close collaboration between different Universities who wish to run a programme together. It is partly financed by an initiative in France, partly financed by each university as a participation cost. RTA's collaboration with 9 universities has started last year when they prepared an Erasmus+ application (which did not receive funding).

It is recognized that the study field mostly has academic staff that comes from their own graduates. Graduates typically continue on Master's and then Doctoral level, and later on become RTA staff. RTA is very proud to employ locally grown researchers and teaching staff, but RTA knows that it is a bit of localization. To balance this tendency, time to time RTA invites teaching staff from abroad, to motivate innovations, to generate new ideas, to have a new look from outside, from other countries and other sectors. If a teaching staff member wants to become a researcher, there are limited opportunities in Rezekne. However, if to look at the number of publications, it shows intensive research activities, which show that the teaching staff are motivated, and RTA is trying to do its best to keep their faculty members motivated in research.

The incoming mobility numbers are increasing, but still very low. The typical incoming faculty number is 2-3 per academic year, but there were years when nobody arrived. Students were much more active. In 2014, the study field hosted 12 incoming students from the exchange partners. In 2019 and 2020, this number was 29. It is very important to host international exchange students

since this is the base of the future foreign semester of RTA students abroad. Unfortunately, the Experts Team got only the 2019-2020 outgoing students' number and could not analyse the outgoing trend. In 2019-2020, 21 students left for a semester abroad and 7 students for international practice. These numbers are roughly in balance with the incoming students' number.

During the on-site visit, a heavy emphasis was put on incoming and outgoing mobility on project basis and through Erasmus + mobility framework. These opportunities are also used to attract foreign visiting Lecturers for future study programmes. Aside from this, RTA hosts International week – a renewed tradition, where foreign Lecturers give lectures to students of the Faculty of Economics and Management (SAR, p.65). Students and graduates also confirmed that RTA administrative and academic staff provided support and motivation to take part in international competitions and conferences to challenge themselves. Another means of attracting international input is offering foreign students and teaching staff to participate in RTA's international annual student and Lecturers' conference "Individual. Society. State." In addition, RTA is part of EURAXESS contact points in Latvia, thus, attractive to foreign Researchers and Lecturers, providing information and guidance on scientific career opportunities in Latvia since 2018 (ibid., p.66). Meanwhile, RTA uses EURAXESS Network to obtain information and contacts for support to potential outgoing mobility of researchers.

5.3. The procedure of organization of professional practice at RTA is regulated by the "Regulations on professional practice" approved by the RTA Senate. Professional practices are organised in academic and professional study programmes. As a part of the Professional Bachelor's study programme "Entrepreneurship" two types of professional practice are compulsory. One of them should cover the following areas: starting a business, organisation, and management of processes for 12 CP. In the same programme, there is another practice for 8 CP which is about business/organization activity analysis and development planning. All together practice can give 20 CP. In the Academic Master's study programme "Management Science", there is a compulsory practice for 10 CP titled "Professional practice in Management". RTA has established long-term and successful cooperation with employers and employers' organizations in Rezekne city and Latgale region. In Annex 10, there is information concerning agreements on providing student professional practices. Before commencement of the professional practice, a tripartite professional practice agreement is concluded between RTA, the employer, and the student, specifying the objectives, tasks, deadlines of the professional practice, as well as the Supervisor of the professional practice, and other issues. According to information provided by employers, students often choose the placement of their practice with potential future job opportunities in mind. Employers also confirmed that they use practice placements to hire the best students. Employers were very satisfied with those students who were working for them. After the professional practice, the student submits a professional practice report. In the end, in accordance with the requirements of the cooperation agreement, professional practice defence is organized in a joint professional practice commission, where each student gives an overview of what has been done and is evaluated.

5.4. The joint Doctoral study programme "Economics and Business" is a must, because of the low number (3) of the PhD students at RTA. With this cooperation RTA can optimize its resources and can provide a tailor-made support for each Doctoral student. The cooperation of RTA, VeA and ViA in the development and licensing of the joint Doctoral study programme "Economics and Business" is considered successful.

RTA has a rich history of joint programmes. Since 2014, RTA has implemented two joint academic Bachelor's study programmes with Lithuanian Universities: "Hospitality Management" (with Utena University) and "Technology and Innovation Management" (with Klaipeda State University of Applied Sciences). From 2010 until 2018, the academic Master's study programme had a cooperation agreement with the University of Applied Sciences, Worms, Germany, which provided mutual recognition of education. On the basis of this Agreement, two graduates of the University of Applied Sciences, Worms, received an academic Master's degree from RTA. From 2016 until 2019, the joint

Master's study programme "Regional Planning and Development" was implemented with Polotsk State University in Belarus. RTA has mixed experiences with these joint study programmes. Cooperation with Utena University in implementation of the joint Bachelor's study programme "Hospitality Management" can be considered a success. Cooperation with Klaipeda State University of Applied Sciences in the implementation of the joint study programme was terminated in 2016, because there were disagreements between the partners. The joint Master's study programme "Regional Planning and Development" licensed in 2016 also had serious problems which were related to visa policies in partner states, making payments and the expensive process of taking internationally recognised examinations impossible.

Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

The main conclusions are the following:

The study field contributes a lot to the development of the Latgale Region. To develop the content of the study programmes required in the regional and international labour market, RTA and especially the study field work in close cooperation with professional practice providers, employers, public administrations, professional organizations, and associations from the Latgale region and the Baltic area. Internationalisation is one of the strategic goals of RTA and the study field with its four study programmes. Because of the decreasing number of the local students there is no other way to manage sustainability than attracting foreign students. RTA has established long-term and successful cooperation with other partners, for example, Erasmus + mobility, joint Doctoral study programme "Economics and Business" in cooperation with VeA and ViA.

The main strengths are the following:

- 1) RTA and the study field with its four study programmes have supportive partnership with local industries, agencies and the municipality;
- 2) the cooperation partners play important role in the development of the study field and its four study programmes, participating in the study field Council, providing practice places, mentoring services, inspirations for new developments at RTA and in the study field;
- 3) RTA has a reasonable number of international partners;
- 4) RTA manages to attract full-time foreign students, who are paying tuition fee, which covers the cost of studies;
- 5) local partners are satisfied with the RTA graduates;
- 6) professional practice is compulsory in three study programmes - academic Bachelor's study programme "Business Management", professional study programme "Entrepreneurship" and academic Master's study programme "Management Science";
- 7) RTA has established successful cooperation with ViA and VeA in implementation of the joint Doctoral programme.

The main weaknesses are the following:

- 1) number of foreign students in the study field and its four related study programmes is low;
- 2) orientation on growing and employing mostly locally grown researchers and teaching staff can lead to lack of broader international view on the study content and research;
- 3) RTA has already had negative experience in implementation of international joint study programmes, risks, and mistakes in choosing the partners should be taken into account.

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

Analysis

6.1. Previous evaluation of the study field, according to the SAR (p. 70-71), took place in 2011/2012. The Experts team of that evaluation pointed out that there are seven main points to improve on,

which were considered throughout the reporting period. In Annex 14, a table is comprised by the recommendations and description of how they have been integrated into further development plans or incorporated and carried out in the process. The recommendations to the study field were the following: 1) student research should include comparison with foreign business environments; 2) when designing research projects, students should make greater use of scientific literature in foreign languages; 3) ensure external (including international) dissemination of scientific results; 4) increase the number of student and staff mobilities; 5) increase the range of literature available in the library in foreign languages; 6) examine the opportunities to create joint study programmes; 7) the study field needs to find its own niche, which is not going to be limited to regional needs only.

For example, one of the Experts' recommendations was for supporting students to include a comparison with foreign business environment in their research projects, to which RTA reports in the Annex 14. It reads that as of 2014, students of "Entrepreneurship" programme carry out comparative research projects (diploma projects) regarding cases in hotel industry; local and foreign markets are researched for market research practice purposes, while students of External Relations and Marketing study opportunities to promote local company products internationally, by export market research. This was also confirmed by the examples of thesis works provided to the expert group by RTA upon request on 28.01.2021.

Regarding the recommendation to increase students' usage of scientific literature in foreign language as materials for their research projects, as of 2014, RTA has established both access to relevant databases of scientific periodicals and a Rector-issued order on the minimal number of scientific literature sources (incl. In foreign language) for Master's project and Bachelor's project.

Recommendation, also marked as completed as of 2016, is external (including international) dissemination of scientific results. Corresponding to this suggestion, RTA in Annex 14 points out that the open access database journals.rta.lv has been established, where all scientific journals published by RTA are accessible. However, it might be beneficial to also consider other forms and ways of dissemination, for example, holding events for research finding presentation to those interested in the researched topic from local and/or international background, communicating across the results of scientific study in other digital platforms.

Regarding the changes in the situation with student and staff mobility rates (2011/2012-2019/2020), the aforementioned document provides evidence for a good increase in the numbers of outgoing student mobility (2 students in 2014 and 15 students in 2019), a stable number of incoming mobility students (avg. 2-4 students per year), however it does not mention staff mobility. In the SAR, as well as during the on-site visit, however, there was evidence that the staff mobility is supported and encouraged, too, international partners are invited to take part in it, and they do.

Another recommendation suggested an increase in the literature available in the library in foreign languages, which has been carried out and is an ongoing regular event (2014-2019: 390 books, 40% in ENG). During the on-site visit, students, Alumni and staff members have appreciated library resources and the forthcoming policy on ordering and purchasing books, as necessary for their study process. Every year RTA dedicates 20.000 euros for new books' purchase.

As for the recommendation to examine opportunities to launch a joint study programme, as of 2015 RTA has licensed, accredited and implemented two joint academic Bachelor's study programmes ("Hospitality Management" (with Utena University (Lithuania) and "Innovation and Technology Management" (with Klaipeda State University of Applied Sciences (Lithuania)), and the joint Master's study programme "Regional Planning and Development" (with Polotsk State University (Belarus)). Lastly, joint Doctoral study programme has been licenced. Unfortunately, how it was shared by management with the Experts during the on-site visit, both joint study programmes in Bachelor's level did not provide positive results.

The last study field recommendation suggested finding their own niche that would not rely solely on the regional needs. RTA has marked this as a regular event for incorporation in the study process and they have highlighted that the international cooperation in professional training and scientific

activity has been developed. It does not seem clear for the provided evidence, if and how that established the study field its own niche. During the on-site visit, the Expert Team asked the question about the key selling points and unique value proposition of the study field and its programmes to management, academic staff, employers, students, and Alumni. Rather general features were mentioned, like participation in Erasmus+ exchange, quite city, 4 seasons. These features are usually mentioned by almost all higher education institutions in Latvia. Lack of understanding of the uniqueness of the study field and its programmes is related to lack of the defined niche of the field.

Based on information provided in SAR of the study field and results of interviews during the on-site visit, the Experts Team can conclude, that not all recommendations are fully fulfilled. The recommendations on 1) dissemination of RTA's scientific research, 2) student and staff mobility, and 3) finding study direction's niche, unfortunately, are not fully fulfilled, and RTA and management of the study field should continue to elaborate in these issues. But Experts should stress out, that overall RTA's progress in fulfilment of the recommendations of previous Experts Team are valued positively and are acceptable.

Additional analysis of recommendations of the 2011/2012 Experts' Team regarding the study programmes of the study field is described below.

The SAR also includes recommendations given by the Experts' team within the licensing process of the two new study programmes in 07.04.2020. (p.71). The recommendations already carried out are: 1) renaming of study programmes (adding "Administration" to "Bachelor of Social Science in Management"; omitting "-s" in "Marketing Communications"; changing "Creative Industries" specialisation to "Creativity Management"), and 2) re-evaluating and revisiting study programme course literature, as recommended by the Experts.

Recommendations incorporated in the development plan of the academic Bachelor study programme are the following: 1) updating coursebooks on regular basis, 2) improving guest Lecturers' support system, 3) arranging teaching staff to giving lectures more closely according to their research interests to promote interdisciplinarity, 4) involving more varied foreign Lecturers in the programme implementation (i.e., ESF projects, Erasmus+ mobility activities, international partnerships).

Meanwhile, for the joint Doctoral study programme "Economics and Business", the Experts' Team in the licensing report included the following recommendations, which, according to the SAR have been taken into account (p.71): 1) creation of common admission rules, 2) improving common quality system for the study programme, 3) designed development plan for the study programme, 4) increased proportion of VeA Lecturers in the study programme implementation, 5) revised name of the study programme, 6) Latvian language study course (4 credits) added for foreign students, 7) improved descriptions of study courses under the programme, 8) revised CV's of Study Programme Directors.

Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

The main conclusions are the following:

RTA had received recommendations by the Experts Team during the previous accreditation procedure of the study field in 2011/2012, and in 2020, during the licencing procedure for the two new study programmes: academic Bachelor's study programme "Business and Management" and Doctoral study programme "Economics and Business". The recommendations had been analysed and most of the recommendations have already been implemented or incorporated in the future development plans. The on-site visit also confirms that the solutions already incorporated into RTA's processes are evident nowadays, too.

However, the recommendation to the study field on 1) dissemination of RTA's scientific research, 2) student and staff mobility, and 3) finding study field's niche, unfortunately, do not provide

conclusive evidence for being fully solved and might need more attention in the future. However, overall RTA's progress on the recommended issues is acceptable.

The main strength is the following:

- 1) RTA takes the recommendations to the study field given by the Expert Groups with high level of responsibility and either immediately implements them in the respective process or incorporates it into the plans for future development, according to the topical sphere.

The main weakness is the following:

- 1) The recommendations to the study field that have been only partially implemented are not complimented with the specific plans on the future development of the issue.

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: Not all necessary elements for Quality Assurance are fully documented and implemented. It is written, that Quality Policy is developed involving external stakeholders and including ESG demands. Design and approval of study programmes are not in accordance with ESG (procedures do not comply with the Law on Higher Education Institutions). For example, there is no documented procedure for nonconformities that allows to show problem solving cases for next evaluation. In RTA Quality Policy is mentioned, that this Policy is oriented on implementation of RTA mission, sustainable development, achievement of strategic goals, ensuring qualitative, laws and standards-based study process and scientific activities. But according to ESG 2015, Quality Policy should support QA system (everyone (staff and students) is responsible and involved in QA), academic integrity, freedom, and position against academic fraud, any intolerance or discrimination of students or staff; external stakeholders should be involved in QA. RTA mentions in its Quality policy application of EFQM Excellence model, but there is no evidence of its implementation.

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Justification: There are policy and procedures, but they do not cover all topics needed (ESG 2015 1.1). There were no evidence on EFQM Excellence model implementation within RTA.

- 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: There are partially prepared study course descriptions, they are not available in English for English speaking students, so, there is a procedure, but the procedure is not effective at the moment. For example, in study programme "Business Management", English version is not usable for English speaking students, Study course descriptions are missing important parts according to the Law on Higher Education Institutions (Chapter 56.1.) in both Latvian and English versions. In study programme "Management Science", Study course descriptions are missing important parts according to the Law on Higher Education Institutions (Chapter 56.1.). Procedure in general is not functional, if on 31.10.2019., RTA has approved the unfinished Study course descriptions and missing translation into English language.

- 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: Partially compliant

Justification: Information about criteria, conditions, and procedures for the evaluation of students' results, reassurance of the achievement of the learning outcomes by students is supposed to be mentioned in Study course descriptions. Students have approved, that this information is shared on the 1st lecture. At the same time, Study course descriptions in the study programmes of the study field are missing important parts according to the Law on Higher Education Institutions (Chapter 56.1.), also regarding clearly formulated learning outcomes and assessment of their achievements. Translation into English language is missing in study programme "Business Management".

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: The Experts Team could check the internal procedures and mechanisms for assurance of the academic staff and the work quality. During the site visit, academic staff members confirmed that they are familiar with these procedures and mechanisms.

- 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: Partially compliant

Justification: There is evidence from SAR and the on-site visit, that RTA ensures collection and analysis of the information on the study achievements of students, employment of graduates, satisfaction of students with study programme, efficiency of the work of the academic staff, availability of resources. Students' surveys are organized after each study course and one time in semester. But there is no evidence, that results of the surveys are shared with students, staff or Alumni about the measures taken. Students and Alumni said that there were surveys, but results were never shared. There is no evidence how the results of the survey are summarized, analysed and what reaction is taken. There is evidence, that key performance indicators are not properly communicated to the management and staff of the study field and its related study programmes. Strategy KPI regarding surveys is not fully fulfilled.

- 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: There is no clear evidence that the Quality Assurance system works with information to propose and implement improvements as there are missing some crucial documented information and, for example, there are no cases of evidence that suggestion form students resulted into improvement or at least were discussed and rejected. Missing documented nonconformity management system with documented nonconformities, suggestions, that allow to make analysis later.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: RTA and the study field are in close cooperation with different local and international organisations, like providers of professional practice, employers, municipality, regional development institutions, entrepreneurs. RTA and the study field have broad international cooperation opportunities in scientific research, students' and staff mobility, development of joint degree programmes.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Teaching staff of RTA and the study field is very productive in scientific research. Directions of the scientific research comply with the strategical goals of the study field, RTA, and the region. Outcomes of the scientific research are integrated in the study process of the study field and its four study programmes, as also shared with broader public. Joint Doctoral study programme "Economics and Business" was launched in February 2020. RTA organizes international scientific conferences which proceedings are indexed in SCOPUS or Web of Sciences databases.

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Justification: Three recommendations from seven of the previous Experts Team are still not fully implemented: 1) increase of dissemination of RTA's scientific research, 2) increase of student and staff mobility, and 3) finding the study field's niche.

8. Recommendations for the Study Field

Short-term recommendations

Management of the study field should develop compulsory templates of study course descriptions in Latvian and English languages, which are fully based on legal requirements and are followed by all teaching staff.

To ensure availability of study process documents, books and study materials in sufficient number and both in Latvian and English languages for local and international students.

To do periodical analysis of revenues, costs and break even point of the study field and each of its programmes.

To control following of copyrights of the study materials uploaded to the RTA Moodle system (case study, books, teaching notes, articles); guidelines for academic staff and students should be worked out; part of the Library annual budget can be used for purchasing of the necessary number of the study materials.

To define and properly communicate to all related stakeholder unique value propositions and key selling points of the related study field and its study programmes.

To balance workload of teaching staff, providing the opportunity to do research within the working hours.

To find the way how to provide technical support to academic staff in project writing, hiring employee for this specific function.

To provide some rooms for individual work, teamwork and group discussions of students and teaching staff.

To activate international partnership channels to promote RTA scientific research activities and increase dissemination of the results of the scientific research of RTA teaching staff and students, for example, by sending informative newsletters to the partners, holding events for research finding presentation to those interested in the researched topic from local and/or international background, communicating across the results of scientific study in other digital platforms.

To clearly communicate information about sport and other available facilities to all students.

To develop formal procedure about students' complaints and their solutions.

To think how to organise study process in joint degree Doctoral study programme and to use one Moodle system instead of three.

Quality Manager together with RTA management should improve Quality Assurance and Quality Management at RTA: remove wrong references to Quality Management standards and models, which are not implemented yet in RTA; review RTA Quality Policy in accordance with ESG standards and other guidelines RTA should follow; periodically revise and update internal documentation; collect evidence for fact-based decisions; update SWOT analysis from the improvement point of view.

To develop key performance indicators to assess work of the teaching staff and define steps to be implemented in cases of insufficient work quality and fulfillment.

To communicate properly with management and teaching staff of the study field strategic goals and key performance indicators of RTA and the study field.

In accordance with previous Experts' recommendations, to find clear niche of the study field and its programmes in local and international education environment and markets.

To share with respondents survey results and how they are applied in development and improvement of the study field.

Long-term recommendations

Management of RTA and the related study field should increase number of local students in all study programmes of the study field and define and properly communicate related key performance indicators to all stakeholders.

To increase number of full-time international students in all study programmes of the study field and define and properly communicate related key performance indicators to all stakeholders.

To analyse financial results of the study field and its programmes to assess financial viability of the study field and the related study programmes in a long term.

Management of RTA and the related study field should think about increase of available funds for participation of teaching staff in international scientific conferences with publications.

In the circumstances of the decreasing number of students and volume of state funding, and risk of not obtaining of EU Project funds, management of RTA and the related study field should think about risk management tools, like increase of reserves and provisions for future investments, for example, in promotion of the study field to international students.

To increase number of students and staff mobilities; related key performance indicators should be developed and communicated to all related counterparties.

To think about alternative revenues, for example commercialization of research results, lifelong learning events, services to the industry, sponsorship from companies and Alumni.

To activate role of the Alumni Association in daily operation and future development of RTA and the study field; Alumni Association can be initiated by RTA and the study field first with a minimum investment and later on it could be an independent, self-financed Association.

To activate role of the Student Council in daily operation and future development of RTA and the study field.

To search for reliable, high quality partnership in implementation of double degree or joint degree study programmes with local and international higher education institutions.

To ensure investments in IT software for the study purposes, for example, SPSS for Master' s and Doctoral students, Financial Accounting software in English language for international students.

Management of RTA and the related study field, and Quality Manager should consider implementation of EFQM, ISO 9001 principles at RTA.

To find the ways to attract more international highly -qualified teaching staff.

II. "Entrepreneurship" ASSESSMENT

II. "Entrepreneurship" ASSESSMENT

1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

1.1. The name of the study programme is "Entrepreneurship" and the programme code in accordance with the Latvian Education Classification is 42345. It is a professional Bachelor's study programme with the goal to prepare qualified and competitive specialists in the field of entrepreneurship according to the requirements of the professional standard of the profession of the Company Manager, corresponding to the knowledge, skills, and competences of the LQF level 6.

The name of the study programme, the degree with the professional qualification to be acquired, the aims, objectives, and learning outcomes ('goals', 'tasks', and 'results', respectively, in SAR of the study programme, p.100-101) are interrelated. The Admission requirements are clear and suited for the study programme. The study programme is available in four different versions in Latvian and in English: 1) full time studies in Latvian, 4 years, 2) full time studies in English, 4 years, 3) part time extramural studies in Latvian, 5 years, 4) part time extramural studies in English, 5 years. The admission requirement is clear: successfully completed secondary education. The degree and qualification awarded after the successful completion of the study programme is called "Professional Bachelor's Degree in Business, Company Manager qualification".

The Entrepreneurship study programme in the 2019/2020 academic year had 99 full-time students (incl. 35 foreign students) and 19 part-time students. Every year the number of foreign students (mostly from India, Pakistan) increases. In the academic year 2014/2015 there were 12 students, in 2015/2016 - 14 students, in 2016/2017, - 28 students, in 2017/2018, - 55 students, in 2018/2019 - 59 students, in 2019/2020 - 34 students from abroad. The decrease in the number of students last year is related to visa refusals. In general, the students' number fluctuated during the past 6 years. In 2014/2015 there were 110 students, that number decreased to 106 and 96 in the next two academic years. Following this decline in 2017/2018 there was a peak again with 128 students, but afterwards we can witness another decline in 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 with 126 and 99 students.

Admission requirements for studies in English contain a document certifying language proficiency issued by an international testing institution within the past five years, which certifies the foreigner's proficiency in English at least at the level B2. It is not required to attach the document if the foreigner has acquired the previous education in English. If there is no International Certificate on English proficiency or the language of previous education was not English, the applicant must pass the examination. The result of the examination will be passed if the English knowledge complies at least with the level B2.

According to the description, the professional Bachelor's study programme "Entrepreneurship" aims to form and develop students' skills, abilities and professional competencies in the field of business namely in entrepreneurship. The learning outcomes are fully in-line with the aims of the programme

as they are demonstrating fundamental and specialised expertise typical of an enterprise Manager. The gained analytical skills and creative competences will support the success of the graduates once they will become entrepreneurs. During the on-site visit, students, Alumni, and employers showed high satisfaction with the knowledge and qualification obtained during the studies in this study programme. The programme devotes special attention to awareness of professional ethics; however, the concepts of corporate social responsibility and sustainability are completely missing from the description.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The main conclusions are:

The professional study programme "Entrepreneurship" was established with the goal to prepare qualified and competitive specialists in the field of entrepreneurship according to the requirements of the professional standard "Company Manager", corresponding to the knowledge, skills, and competences of the LQF level 6. The name of the study programme, the degree with the professional qualification, the aims, objectives, and learning outcomes are interrelated. The Admission requirements are clear and suited for the study programme both for local and international students. The study programme is available both as full time and extramural studies. Rather good number of students in the programme shows that the programme is well known in the region and quite popular among the international students as well. The programme provides good combination of theoretical knowledge and professional experience (practice is a part of the programme curriculum).

The main strengths are:

- 1) the study programme is provided in both Latvian and English languages, it provides opportunity to attract local and international students;
- 2) professional Bachelor's degree and Company Manager professional qualification provide well established balance of the theoretical and professional content within the study programme;
- 3) students, Alumni, and employers have shown high satisfaction with knowledge and qualification obtained during the study programme, it has high reputation in the region;
- 4) rather high proportion of international students within the programme;
- 5) professional ethics principles are introduced in the study programme.

The main weaknesses are:

- 1) declining number of local and international students is a risk factor for existence and development of the study programme in the long term;
- 2) corporate social responsibility and sustainability principles are missing in the study programme.

2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.1. The study programme complies with the National Education Standard for the 2nd level Professional Higher Education defined in Cabinet of Ministers Regulation Nr.512 (Programme SAR Annex 2) and the 5th level professional standard "Company Manager" (Programme SAR Annex 3). The latest version of the professional standard "Company Manager" was approved on 18 September 2019. Practice is included in the study programme, 20 Credit Points (30 ECTS), in two parts "Professional Practice I" (12CP/18ECTS) and "Professional Practice II" (8CP/12ECTS), both are related to the professional standard "Company Manager". Description of practice (terms practice, internship, traineeship are used as synonyms) implementation is provided for the whole RTA in "Regulation on Internship in RTA", approved by RTA Senate on 27.01.2015., this document is provided in both Latvian and English languages (Field SAR Annex 12). More detailed description is

provided in study course descriptions " Professional Practice I ", " Professional Practice II " (Programme SAR Annex 6), available for students on www.ekursi.rta.lv. Content of the practices is relevant to the study programme and professional qualification. Requirements for Diploma paper are provided for the whole RTA in "Guidelines for Developing and Defending Study and Graduate Research Papers at RTA" approved by the meeting of the Science Council on 18.12.2018., document in both Latvian and English languages is provided on RTA web site and is available for students. More detailed description in relation to the study programme is provided in description of the study course "Diploma Paper" (12CP/18ECTS), provided in the Programme SAR Annex 6. The descriptions of the practice and Diploma Paper requirements are of high quality and comply with the provisions set forth in the regulatory enactments.

Study course descriptions are not always complete, there is no full information available about Study course contents, there are no Study Course descriptions for all the Study Courses in the programme. There is missing crucial information according to ESG standard demands. Study course descriptions could be better prepared. At the same time, overall content of Study Courses seems to be updated and actual. The content of the study programme is relevant and complementary, and it complies with the aims of the study programme, ensures the achievement of the learning outcomes, and meets the needs of the relevant industry and the scientific trends in Latvia. Content of the study programme in general complies with this new version of the professional standard.

2.2. Evaluation methods are defined in Study Course descriptions and available to students. There were no complaints during the on-site meetings from student side that something was not clear to them during the study process. There was clear evidence of satisfaction regarding RTA's care about students and their needs during the study process. The Expert Team witnessed high quality of English language proficiency among students in RTA.

2.3. There are surveys, but there is no direct connection to improvements as all received feedback is positive and therefore no improvements are introduced. As these surveys are done and communication between students, graduates, and employers is good, there are no doubts that worse results - if any - from surveys would be used for improvements.

2.4. Students are active in incoming and outgoing mobility and satisfied with this experience. There are written procedures "NOLIKUMS PAR STUDIJU KURSU AKADĒMISKO ATZĪŠANU RĒZEKNES TEHNOLOĢIJU AKADĒMIJĀ (RTA)" that support recognition of the passed study courses outside RTA.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The main conclusions are the following:

The study programme complies with the National Education Standard for the 2nd level Professional Higher Education and the 5th level professional standard "Company Manager". The content of the study programme is relevant, complies with the aims of the study programme, ensures the achievement of the learning outcomes, and meets the needs of the students and employers. External stakeholders appreciate RTA's work, have good feedback in surveys and most of them recommend RTA as an educational institution to their friends and acquaintances. Students are actively taking advantage of mobility opportunities, academic staff are also actively taking advantage of opportunities to participate in guest lecturing abroad and improve their skills in the industry. Great efforts have been made to make this study programme attractive to everyone, but its study course descriptions do not always meet the requirements.

The main strengths are the following:

- 1) students are active in international mobility;
- 2) full compliance of the programme with higher education and professional standards;
- 3) high evaluation of the study programme from students, Alumni and employers' side.

The main weakness is the following:

- 1) part of study course descriptions lacks important information according ESG standards.

3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

3.1. The infrastructure of the RTA was described in the assessment of the study field and the description applies for the study programme "Entrepreneurship" as well. The study provision, scientific support, informative provision, material and technical provision, and financial provision comply with the specific features and the conditions for the implementation of the study programme. Prerequisites for the achievement of the learning outcomes (such as critical thinking, problem solving through Problem-based Learning, etc.) are created and indicate the possibility to ensure a high-quality study process also in the future.

The financial structure is also done at the level of the study field and it is very similar for each study programme. Nevertheless, RTA calculates the necessary number of students and income from student tuition fees to determine breakeven point. The number of students in study programme "Entrepreneurship" is sufficient for the programme to be financially viable, although the number of students is slowly declining. At the same time the programme is quite popular among foreign students which can guarantee the long-term financial sustainability. However, there are some risks in the current situation as Covid might have a negative impact on the number of foreign applicants and the new visa regulations might take foreign students away.

There are mentioned books in Study Course descriptions that are not available in Library according to Library's database:

P.N. Harikumar & Sussha D. (2018). Total Quality Management (TQM) Publisher: Abhijeet Publications.

Clayton M. Christensen (2016). The Innovator's Dilemma: When New Technologies Cause Great Firms to Fail (Management of Innovation and Change). Kindle Edition.

Ries Eric (2019) Lean Startup, the: How Constant Innovation Creates Radically Successful Businesses. Penguin Books. 324.lpp

Evans M.D. International Law. 3rd edn. Oxford University Press, 2010.

These were checked randomly from different Course descriptions and in each check there were obligatory literature that were not available in the database so it's not clear how students can access it.

The basic prerequisites for the achievement of the learning outcomes and high-quality study process are met.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The main conclusions are:

The "Entrepreneurship" programme due to its practical relevance is playing an important role within the study field. Employers are very active in this programme: they take part in diploma projects, attend the diploma defence commissions. They feel that their suggestions to improve the programme are listened and built in the new developments. However, if the visa problem will not be solved soon, we can predict a serious fall in the number of international applicants, which will decrease the international visibility of the programme and the institution as well.

The main strengths are:

- 1) quality of RTA infrastructure, students and teachers;
- 2) the programme has very good co-operation with employers;
- 3) Problem - Based Learning is in-line with employers' expectations.

The main weaknesses are:

- 1) slowly decreasing number of students;
- 2) fear of not attracting more international students due to the Covid-19 situation or other restrictions, for example, entrance visa or residence permit is not provided to international students;

3) study course descriptions contain lots of obligatory literature that are not in the RTA Libraries database so it is not clear how students can access and read it.

4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

4.1. The teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programme is 32 people, 75 % of them are elected at RTA, and 8 or 25 % are guest lecturers (Application form, page 123). 40% of teaching staff has PhD, meaning they are also engaged in scientific work. However, during the reporting period international guest lecturers and industry professionals were employed and the number of lecturers with a doctoral degree has increased. Since this is a professional study programme a large part of teaching staff comes from professionals with academic and - very important - professional experience. RTA undertakes measures in a target-oriented manner to avoid negative effects on the quality of the implementation of the study programme and the compliance of the study programme with the requirements set forth in the regulatory enactments, as a result of the changes in the composition of the teaching staff. They try to keep a balance of the academic and professional staff.

4.2. The biographic and bibliographic data of included teaching staff shows that they possess appropriate knowledge and competences to be included into study process within the study programme "Entrepreneurship". RTA academic staff planning is mostly regulated by the RTA Activity and Development Strategy for 2016-2023 and Academic Staff Development Guidelines for 2016-2020, with addition to several other documents (Application form, page 124). Students and graduates admit that the teaching staff has up-to-date knowledge.

The study programme includes also guest lecturers from companies and from other institutions / countries.

4.3. Not relevant

4.4. The involvement of teaching staff has been presented in the description of study field. 2/3 of teaching staff is involved in Research Institute for Business and Social Processes which guarantees the necessary research background to teach this study programme. Academics involved in the teaching of this programme are facing to the same problems which have been already discussed in the study field part e.g. unbalanced work-load, work-life balance, high dependence of their salaries on research project income.

4.5. Each study programme has its Programme Director who is in charge of ensuring quality of study process and study content as well as coordinating the collaboration of teaching staff within the study programme. The collaboration takes place also on the level of the study field as the teaching staff is mostly involved in more than one study programme within this study field. The discussion of topics takes place in a formal manner (meetings on the level of study field and study programme) and informal between teaching staff.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The main conclusions are the following:

The structure and quality of teaching staff within the study programme "Entrepreneurship" is good. It is a good mixture of academic teaching staff and professionals with practical experiences. Students and graduates are satisfied with the teaching staff knowledge and study process in general. Study programme includes guest lecturers from companies and other institutions. The collaboration between teaching staff is ensured in a formal and informal way.

The academic staff involved in the study programme "Entrepreneurship" (42345) are in compliance with the requirements posed by the regulatory enactments, their relevant qualifications and

proportion of them in the implementation of the study programme are satisfactory, as is their engagement with scientific activities and use of the results and experience gained in them to improve and develop the contents of the study programme and student's possible involvement in scientific activity of their own.

The main strengths are the following:

- 1) quality and structure of teaching staff; academic staff is involved in various activities to improve their knowledge and experience in the field both locally and internationally;
- 2) up-to date knowledge, mixed with practical experiences of teaching staff;
- 3) collaboration mechanisms between study programme management, teaching staff and guest lecturers ensured;
- 4) the requirements on the academic staff qualification and proportion, as according to the regulatory enactments, are met;
- 5) highly skilled academic staff members both academically and professionally in the field of the study programme;
- 6) the proportion of academic staff members with doctoral degree has increased over the reporting period;
- 7) implementation of problem-based learning has increased in the reporting period.

The main weaknesses are the following:

- 1) unbalanced workload of the teaching staff;
- 2) high dependence of academic salaries on research projects;
- 3) the collaboration between academic staff members implementing different courses needs more attention, to enable higher contribution to improvements of the study courses aside from the participation in the formal study direction meetings.

5. Assessment of the Compliance of the Study Programme "Entrepreneurship"

Requirements

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Sample of a diploma to be issued upon completion of the programme is provided in Annex 7, enclosed with the Self-Assessment Report of the programme.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Justification provided in Annex 8, enclosed with the Self-Assessment Report of the programme.

The document certifies that "in case the RTA professional bachelor's study program "Entrepreneurship" (duration 4 years, 160 CP) and academic master's study program "Management Science" (duration 1-2 years, 60- 80 CP), ViA undertakes to provide opportunities to continue studies in the professional bachelor study program "Business Management", to be awarded the degree "Professional bachelor degree in business management", qualification "Company and Institution Manager" (duration 4 years, 160 CP) and professional master's study program "Business environment management" (duration 1.5 - 2 years, 60 - 80 CP)."

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Justification provided in Annex 9, enclosed with the Self-Assessment Report of the programme.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Justification provided in Annex 5, added to the study programme "Entrepreneurship " Self-Assessment Report - Other mandatory attachments in the Description of Study programme.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: The justification is provided in the Annex 10, added to the study programme "Entrepreneurship " Self-Assessment Report - Other mandatory attachments in the Description of Study programme.

- 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: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Justification provided in the study programme "Entrepreneurship" Self-Assessment Report, Section 4.1., 4.2., pp.123-125.

- 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: Justification is in Annex 11.

The sample study agreement attached to the Other mandatory annexes (Annex 11) complies with the mandatory provisions.

- 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: Partially compliant

Justification: Translation is partial and study course descriptions may not contain all necessary requirements of regulatory enactments. Some course outlines are missing LOs: knowledge, skills, competences.

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 complies with professional standard Company Manager.

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: Not relevant.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: The study programme complies with the State Professional Higher Education Standard.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Justification: Not relevant

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: Justification provided in the Annex 8, attached to the Self-Assessment Report, part II, section 4.

15 P5 - Overall rating

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Justification: Study courses descriptions are not prepared fully correctly.

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: It's not clear where students can get obligatory literature that is not available in the library for some of study courses and there are shortage of available software (e.g. SPSS) licences and possibility to choose from for studies.

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: Qualification of the teaching staff fully complies with the requirements.

- 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: Not relevant.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The main conclusions are the following:

The Entrepreneurship professional bachelor study programme has high reputation in the region and quite popular among the foreign students as well. It is a good combination of the academic knowledge and professional experience. Students have internship and employers are very satisfied with their performance. The Entrepreneurship professional bachelor study programme is compliant with the requirements.

The main strengths of the professional Bachelor's study programme "Entrepreneurship" are the following:

1. Well established balance of the academic and professional content within the programme
2. Great reputation among the employers
3. Satisfied graduates
4. High proportion of foreign students within the programme
5. Students are active in international mobility
6. Academic staff are involved in various activities to improve their knowledge and experience in the field both locally and internationally
7. High evaluation from students, graduates and employers side
- 8.. Quality of RTA infrastructure, students and teachers
9. Very good co-operation with employers
10. Problem Based Learning is in-line with employers' expectations
11. Quality and structure of teaching staff
12. Up-to date knowledge, mixed with practical experiences of teaching staff
13. Collaboration mechanisms between study programme management, teaching staff and guest lecturers ensured

The main weaknesses of the professional Bachelor's study programme "Entrepreneurship" are the following:

- 1) Declining number of foreign student as a risk factor
- 2) Part of Study course descriptions lack important information according to ESG standards.
- 3) Fear of not attracting more international students due to the Covid-19 situation
- 4) Consequences of the visa issues
- 5) Unbalanced workload of teaching staff
- 6) High dependence of academic staff salaries on research projects

Evaluation of the study programme "Entrepreneurship"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Entrepreneurship"

Short-term recommendations

| |
|--|
| Try to increase the number of international students. Start to advertise the programme among the international partners first. |
| Develop course outlines in accordance with legal requirements. |
| Increase cooperation with Alumni. |
| Promote mobility for traineeship. |
| Update library with variety of sources in English language. |
| Academic staff should check availability and copyrights of study materials and information sources before publishing them in Moodle. |
| Promote application of SPSS for researchers, PhD students. |
| Ensure finance and accounting software for study purpose also in English language. |

Long-term recommendations

| |
|---|
| In order to have motivated teaching staff, start to balance the workload institution wise. |
| Increase the students number, both local and international. |
| Define and share with the staff unique value proposition, niche of the study field, key selling points. |
| Enforce development of entrepreneurship through cooperation with local and international business. |
| Find the tools or introduce changes to students' support system to decrease and prevent the drop-outs. |

II. "Business Management" ASSESSMENT

II. "Business Management" ASSESSMENT

1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

The name of the programme is Business Management and the programme code in accordance with the Latvian Education Classification is 43345. It is an academic bachelor study programme with the goal to prepare students for work in the field of business management in the public and private sectors, as well as to direct students to scientific research work, thus ensuring the competitiveness of graduates in the Latvian and international labour market.

The study programme is available in four different versions in Latvian and also in English: 1.) Full time studies in Latvian, 3 years, 2.) Full time studies in English, 3 years, 3). Part time extramural studies in Latvian / 3 years, 6 months, 4. Part time extramural studies in English, 3 years, 6 months. Students should earn all together 120 CP which is equivalent 180 ECTS. The admission requirement is clear: successfully completed secondary education. The degree awarded after the successful completion of the study programme is called "Bachelor of Social Sciences in Management

Administration" is consistent with the requirements of Cabinet regulations No. 322..

Admission requirements for studies in English contain a document certifying language proficiency issued by an international testing institution within the past five years, which certifies the foreigner's proficiency in English at least at the level B2. It is not required to attach the document, if the foreigner has acquired the previous education in English. If there is no International Certificate on English proficiency or the language of previous education was not English, the applicant has to pass the examination. The result of the examination will be passed if the English knowledge comply at least with the level B2.

The study programme during the past six academic years could attract 337 students. There are 3 specializations available in the order of the students' number: Technology and Innovation Management, Hospitality Management, Management Science. The most successful academic year from enrollment point of view was in 2016/2017 with 73 students. Since then the number of accepted students has been declining and reached 46 in 2019/2020, which shows 37% decrease.

According to the description the Business and Management academic programme aims to provide scientifically based knowledge, skills and competencies in the field of business management corresponding to the level 6 of the LQF, preparing students for the Latvian and international labour market. Learning outcomes guarantee that students upon graduation will possess the basic and specialized knowledge of management science and a critical understanding of this knowledge. Students using their improved skills will be able to apply their gained knowledge, will have advanced communication skills and general management skills. They will be capable to make good business decisions, to understand the impact of their business activities and will be aware of the ethical dimensions of their business choices. During the next revision of the curriculum it is recommended to incorporate more international content related to sustainability and responsibility.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The main conclusions are the following:

The name of the academic bachelor study programme "Business Management", the degree to be acquired, the aims, objectives, and learning outcomes ('goals', 'tasks', and 'results', respectively, in SAR of the study programme, p.159-160) are interrelated. The Admission requirements are clear and suited for the study programme. The Business Management study programme according to Criterion 1 is compliant with the requirements.

The Business Management bachelor study programme plays key role in the portfolio of the study direction. The programme's goals and learning outcomes are defined clearly and properly. However, the decreasing number of new students is a real warning sign regarding the sustainability of the programme. New measures should be taken in order to reach the previous level of the newly enrolled students.

The main strenghts are the following:

- 1) English versions of the study programme are also available;
- 2) the degree is recognised not only by the local industrial companies, communities, but internationally as well;
- 3) students are active in international mobility (ERASMUS)

The main weaknesses are the following:

- 1) decreasing number of new applicants for the programme;
- 2) low level of international students except in the Hospitality track.

2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.1. The study programme complies with the National Education Standard for the Academic Higher Education defined in Cabinet of Ministers Regulation Nr.240 (Programme SAR Annex "Atbilstība valsts izglītības standartam ENG"). Practice in the study programme is mentioned in study module "Specialisations or Professional Practice", 20 Credit Points (30 ECTS), in three options "I Innovation and Technology Management", "II Hospitality Management", "III Creative Industries". At the same time, the study module is described as a study course (see Programme SAR Annex 4), not just as a practice. In case, if students implement this module as a practice, then description of implementation is provided for the whole RTA in "Regulation on Internship in RTA", approved by RTA Senate on 27.01.2015. (terms practice, internship, traineeship are used as synonyms), this document is provided in both Latvian and English languages (Field SAR Annex 12). Requirements for Bachelor thesis are provided for the whole RTA in "Guidelines for Developing and Defending Study and Graduate Research Papers at RTA" approved by the meeting of the Science Council on 18.12.2018., document in both Latvian and English languages is provided on RTA web site and is available for students. More detailed description in relation to the study programme is provided in description of the study course "Scientific Methods" (22CP/33ECTS), provided in the Programme SAR Annex 4, where Bachelor thesis is mentioned as a final work. The descriptions of the study modules and study courses are not fully translated into English language. Considering, that study programme is provided in Latvian and English languages, it is a problem for international students.

Study course results mapping (study programme's study results) are very broad thus not realistic — it is indicated that even one course can cover all the skills, for example in case of Human Resources Management. It is not possible that only one study course can cover the whole study programme's results. 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 considered. The study programme has a general scope with attractive specializations. The study programme was merged from three previously existing programmes which all served the needs of the local economy and were recognised by the local employers.

The descriptions of study courses and the traineeship, and the final thesis are not always of acceptable quality and comply with the provisions set forth in the regulatory enactments. The content of the study programme is relevant and complementary, and it complies with the aims of the study programme, ensures the achievement of the learning outcomes, and meets the needs of the relevant industry and the scientific trends. The compliance of the study programme with the State standard of the academic education can be partially confirmed.

This statement is based on the fact that after reviewing the course descriptions for the Business Management programme, the overall Expert decision is that there are no Study Course descriptions for all of the Study Courses in the programme. For example, many in the list do not have information about Students' independent work, about tests to be passed, how results will be evaluated, about final exam and there are even no course literature listed. Also, they are missing crucial information according to ESG standard demands.

The study programme is a result of consolidation of three Bachelor's level study programmes, it helped to decrease number of the study programmes in the field, but at the same time preserve opportunity for specialisation within the new consolidated version of the study programme.

2.2. It is hard to give an assessment about evaluation methods as they are not mentioned in various Study Course descriptions. At the same time based on the information obtained during the evaluation process there were no complaints from student side that something was not clear to them during study process. There was clear evidence of satisfaction about RTA's care about students and their needs during the study process. The Expert Team found high quality of English language proficiency among students and graduates in RTA.

Some examples of the study course descriptions which lack information within the study programme: Management; Entrepreneurship & innovation; Marketing; Accounting & finance;

Economics & Law; Social & Communicative Skills; Scientific Methods; Innovation and Technology Management; Hospitality Management; Creative Industries. There are no usable English versions for any of the above-mentioned Study courses, there are course plans without content description (only annotation), no information about used learning methods in course descriptions.

2.3. There are surveys, but there are no direct connections to improvements as all received feedback is positive and therefore no improvements introduced. As these surveys are done and communication between students, graduates, and employers are good, there are no doubts that worse results - if any - from surveys would be used for improvements.

2.4. Students are really active in incoming and outgoing mobility and satisfied with this experience. There are written procedures "NOLIKUMS PAR STUDIJU KURSU AKADĒMISKO ATZĪŠANU RĒZEKNES TEHNOLOĢIJU AKADĒMIJĀ (RTA)" that support recognition of the passed study courses outside RTA.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The main conclusions are the following:

External stakeholders appreciate RTA's work, have good feedback in surveys and most recommend RTA as an educational institution to their friends and acquaintances. Students are actively taking advantage of mobility opportunities, academic staff are also actively taking advantage of opportunities to participate in guest lecturing abroad and improve skills in the industry. Great efforts have been made to make this study programme attractive to everyone, but its study course descriptions do not always meet the requirements and study course results mapping with study programme's study results don't show actual situation. The study course descriptions could be better prepared.

The "Business Management" bachelor study programme trains skilled professionals by providing a solid background in the social science and holistic knowledge in management science. This enables graduates to strengthen and consolidate their academic and professional skills in further studies in Master level, have a job in industrial companies and community services or work in international and country scale projects teams. Visiting professors from partner universities are involved as teachers and advisors in the programme. Students have an opportunity to participate in Erasmus mobility for studies and traineeship.

The main strengths are the following:

- 1) general scope of the program with attractive specializations;
- 2) specializations are supporting the regional development;
- 3) specialization are highly valued by the local employers;
- 4) students are active in international mobility;
- 5) academic staff are involved in various activities to improve their knowledge and experience in the field both locally and internationally;
- 6) high evaluation from student, graduate and employers side.

The main weakness is the following:

- 1) part of Study course descriptions lacks important information according ESG standards.

3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

The infrastructure of the RTA was described in the assessment of the study field and the description applies for the study programme "Business Management" as well. The study provision, scientific support, informative provision, material and technical provision, and financial provision comply with the specific features and the conditions for the implementation of the study programme. Prerequisites for the achievement of the learning outcomes (such as critical thinking, problem solving, make decisions, evaluate impact etc.) are created and indicate the possibility to ensure a

high-quality study process also in the future.

The financial structure is also done at the level of the study field and it is very similar for each study programme. Nevertheless, RTA calculates the necessary number of students and income from student tuition fees to determine break even point. Study programme "Business Management" has been recently reorganised by summarising 3 previous bachelor study programmes, making it financially optimised and stable.

The basic prerequisites for the achievement of the learning outcomes and high-quality study process are met. However, there were mentioned books in Study Course descriptions that are not available in Library according Library's database:

Jose Emilio Navas Lopez, Luis Angel Guerras Martin (2018). Fundamentals of Strategic Management. 2-nd ed. Thomson Reuters Civitas, ISBN:978-84-9197-751-3..

Trott, P. (2010) Innovation Management and New Product Development, 4th ed, Pearson.

These were checked randomly from different Course descriptions and in each check there were obligatory literature that were not available in the database so it's not clear how students can access it.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The main conclusions are the following:

The study conditions in terms of infrastructure for the study programme "Business Management" are very good for students and teaching staff.

The main strengths are the following:

- 1) quality of RTA infrastructure for students and teachers;
- 2) optimisation of study programme based on joining 3 separate bachelor study programmes.

The main weaknesses are the following:

- 1) rather low number of students regardless of combining 3 bachelor study programmes;
- 2) fear of attracting international students due to the Covid-19 situation;
- 3) study course descriptions contain lots of obligatory literature that are not in the RTA Libraries database so it's not clear how students can access and read it.

4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

According to the Study Programme "Business Management" SAR, the structure and qualifications of the academic staff involved in the implementation of the programme has improved over the reporting period (p. 180-181). The proportion of elected academic staff has increased by 9%, comprising 79% of the academic staff in the reporting period (2013-2020), as well as the number of staff member with a doctoral degree has increased from 40% to 46%. The same increase is evident in the proportion of academic staff places: from 2 professors, 3 associate professors, 3 docents, 22 lecturers in 2013 it has grown to 7 professors, 1 associate professor, 5 docents, 8 lecturers in 2020. Additionally, there are 4 foreign teaching staff members and people with relevant professional experience (in accounting, insurance sector, individual business). The academic staff members are required to take part in scientific research activities, the result of which is made available to the students of this study programme through the use of research results to assist students with methodology of their research work.

The study programme employs 28 teaching staff members, as the Programme SAR explains (p.181), with the following qualifications: 14 with a doctoral degree, 14 with a master's degree. Five of them are employed as experts in the Latvian Council of Science: four in the field of economics and business, one - in linguistics. Due to the interdisciplinary nature of the study programme, the academic staff members are employed, accordingly, representing fields of management, business,

and economics, as well as linguistics (English, German), history, ICT, environment, social security, and law.

Considering the number of international students and the integrated language learning approach, there are courses provided in English. Therefore, the English language skills of academic staff are very important. The SAR claims that all members of the teaching staff participating in the implementation of the study programme are required to have at least B2 level of English language proficiency, 1 member of teaching staff has level C2, 14 members – level C1. Except for 3 foreign members of academic staff, all are fluent in Latvian as their native language.

In addition, all elected lecturers one per their election period take place in the mandatory professional development training “Innovations in Higher Education”.

The involvement of the academic staff in scientific research is a mandatory requirement regulated by “Regulations on scientific activities at RTA” in the form of either academic work as a researcher, work as science technical staff or work as science service staff (The SAR, p.126). A list of academic staff’s publications is provided in the Appendix 9, however the SAR also explains that there is one member of the academic staff who has not yet published any scientific research findings. It is noted that the person is involved in the framework of “8.2.1. specific support objective “To reduce the fragmentation of study programmes and strengthen the sharing of resources” of the Operational Program “Growth and Employment”” in the 2nd round of RTA project No. 8.2.1.0/18/A016 “The reduction of fragmentation of the study programmes and strengthening the sharing of the resources in the study directions “Management, Administration and Real Estate Management” and “Mechanics and Metalworking, Heat Power Industry, Heat Engineering and Mechanical Engineering”” as Latvian resident with an internationally acquired Master’s degree.

The list of academic publications certifying the academic staff involvement in scientific research is provided in the study programme SAR Appendix 9.

The information obtained in result of the academic staff’s scientific research activity is employed in the study process through the points mentioned in the Criterion 1, and in involving students to take part in RTA scientific grant programmes (The SAR, p.184).

To add on to that, the Research Institute for Business and Social Processes involves 19 people (68%) of academic staff involved in this study programme in pedagogical and scientific positions as researchers and lead researchers. The results of scientific research carried out by the academic staff are presented both on a national and international level, scientific publications are available on such databases as EBSCO, SCOPUS, Thomson Reuters ISI Web of Knowledge (The SAR, p.126).

The programme SAR (p.184) points out that the collaboration models are described in the sections 3.4.4. and 4.4.4., which are common for the whole study direction. Among the models collaboration is evident in the following points: 1) collaboration between the elected academic staff and the members of visiting academic staff (which proved useful for identifying need for and providing support for guest lecturers); 2) relevant issues concerning interdisciplinary matters are discussed in the study direction meetings; 3) joint publications are written by lecturers sharing the same courses in the programme or with guest lecturers; 4) study programme contains courses with multiple lecturers, the topics and the outcomes of the course are mutually coordinated; 5) facing the challenges placed by the Covid-19 pandemic, teaching staff and supporting staff have collaborated to react to the emergency situation and ensure sufficient use of Microsoft Teams platform.

During the on-site visit it was confirmed that the members of academic staff mostly met and engaged in discussions on interdisciplinary matters with academic staff members from other study programme courses on rather formal meetings with the whole study direction. It was also discovered that the workload of the academic staff is disbalanced, either not allowing enough energy and time resources to be devoted to study process implementation or scientific research activities. What seems to be causing this disbalance could be the strain put on them from administrative tasks (i.e., writing up and carrying out additional projects to attract external funding), which could be delegated

to additional workforce attracted for this purpose.

The biographic and bibliographic data of included teaching staff shows that they possess appropriate knowledge and competences to be included into study process within the study programme Business Management. RTA academic staff planning is mostly regulated by the RTA Activity and Development Strategy for 2016-2023 and Academic Staff Development Guidelines for 2016-2020, with addition to several other documents (application form, page 124). Students and graduates admit that the teaching staff has up-to-date knowledge.

The involvement of teaching staff has been presented in the description of study field "Management, Administration and Management of Real Property". 68% of teaching staff is involved in Research Institute for Business and Social Processes. We emphasize again that the workload of teaching staff due to activities in study process, scientific work, project work and administrative work is not balanced well. Dependence of the salary on success with obtaining and implementing project might also present threat in teaching staff long term motivation.

Each study programme has its director who is in charge of ensuring quality of study process and study content as well as coordinating the collaboration of teaching staff within the study programme. The collaboration takes place also on the level of the study field "Management, Administration and Management of Real Property" as the teaching staff is mostly involved in more than one study programme within this study field. The discussion of topics takes place in a formal manner (meetings on the level of study field and study programme) and informal between teaching staff.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The main conclusions are the following:

The academic staff involved in the study programme "Business Management" (43345) are in compliance with the requirements posed by the regulatory enactments, their relevant qualifications and proportion of them in the implementation of the study programme are satisfactory, as is their engagement with scientific activities and use of the results and experience gained in them to improve and develop the contents of the study programme and student's possible involvement in scientific activity of their own.

The structure and quality of teaching staff within the study programme "Business Management " is good. The teaching staff is also involved in scientific work, several members being acknowledged members of Latvian science community. Study programme includes several (4) international lecturers. The collaboration between teaching staff is ensured in a formal and informal way.

The main strengths are the following:

- 1) quality and structure of teaching staff;
- 2) teaching staff with good scientific references;
- 3) involvement of international guest lecturers;
- 4) collaboration mechanisms between study programme management, teaching staff and guest lecturers ensured;
- 5.) the requirements on the academic staff qualification and proportion according to the regulatory enactments are met ;
- 6) highly skilled academic staff members both academically and professionally in the field of the study programme, representing the interdisciplinarity of the programme;
- 7) the proportion of academic staff members with doctoral degree has increased over the reporting period.

The main weaknesses are the following:

- 1) unbalanced workload of the teaching staff;
- 2) high dependence of salaries on research projects;
- 3) considering the number of courses taught in English, the level of the desired English language

proficiency could also be suggested on the side of the currently required B2;

4) the collaboration between academic staff members implementing different courses needs more attention, to enable higher contribution to improvements of the study courses aside from the participation in the formal study direction meetings.

5. Assessment of the Compliance of the Study Programme "Business Management"

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: Justification provided in Annex 7, enclosed with the SAR of the programme.

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: Justification provided in Annex 8, enclosed with the SAR of the programme.

According to the agreement in Annex 8, in this case Ventspils Augstskola is obliged to provide opportunities to continue studies in the program "Management Science", to be awarded the degree of Bachelor of Social Sciences in "Management Science" (3 years, 120 CP, studies in English) and in the professional bachelor study program "Business Management" (4 years, 160 CP, studies in Latvian).

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: Justification provided in Annex 9, enclosed with the SAR of the programme.

The document certifies that "RTA guarantees compensation to RTA students, by transferring the tuition fee paid by the student for the non-acquired credit points (for which it is not possible to issue an Academic Certificate if the credit points have not been obtained due to RTA actions) to the bank account indicated by the student, if the RTA actions (actions or omissions) of the academic bachelor study program "Business Management" due to which the study program license is not accredited or revoked and the student does not want to continue studies in another study programme.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Justification provided in Annex 5, added to the study direction Self-Assessment - Other mandatory attachments in the Description of Study programme. A certification signed by the rector added in Annex 15.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: The justification is provided in the Annexes titled "apliecinajums svesvalodas prasmes.docx" (ENG) and "apliec. val.pdf"(LV), added to the study programme "Business Management " SAR - Other mandatory attachments in the Description of Study programme.

- 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: Not relevant.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Justification provided in the Annexes titled "AL 55.pants ENG.docx" (ENG) and "AL 55.pants.pdf"(LV) in the Study programme "Business Management" SAR.

- 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 study agreement attached to the Other mandatory annexes complies with the mandatory provisions.

- 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: Partially compliant

Justification: The descriptions of the study courses are prepared in Latvian and English languages, but still there are some nonconformities. Study course descriptions do not contain all necessary requirements of regulatory enactments. For example:

- 1) Major nonconformity in general — Study Course descriptions don't indicate the amount of lectures, seminars (or other possible forms of studies), so it's impossible to identify and calculate the amount of the seminars in hours students have to participate to evaluate learning outcomes. There are just "contact hours" mentioned that don't explain how the study process is organized. Without this identification Evaluation of learning outcomes is not possible according to given formulas and data;
- 2) The study course "Records Management" is missing outlines of the study course necessary for the achievement of learning outcomes — mentioned course content "Personal documents" and "Keeping Accurate Records" that will together take 10 contact hours. Course content is not understandable. Either everything is not written in the Study Course description, either there are too many hours planned. Citation: "Aim of the (Marketing Research Methods) course: to learn marketing research methods". There should be a real aim not just "learning to learn";
- 3) The study course "Marketing Research Methods" doesn't have sufficient information about course content. For example, "Data analysis" for 6 contact hours is not outlining the content of the study course necessary for the achievement of learning outcomes. This Study course description is almost blank with almost no usable information;
- 4) The study course "Managerial Accounting" doesn't have sufficient information about course content. For example, "Investment decisions" for 4 contact hours is not outlining the content of the study course necessary for the achievement of learning outcomes. This Study course description is almost blank with almost no usable information;
- 5) The study course "Negotiation and Conflict Solving" doesn't have sufficient information about course content. For example, "Conflict Solving Strategies and Tactics" (almost the same name as the whole course) for 6 contact hours is not outlining the content of the study course necessary for the achievement of learning outcomes. This Study course description is almost blank with almost no usable information;
- 6) The study course "Hotel Management" doesn't have sufficient information about course content. For example, "Hotel departments, their management." for 6 contact hours is not outlining the content of the study course necessary for the achievement of learning outcomes. This Study course description is almost blank with almost no usable information;
- 7) Course "Research Methodology I/II" contains lectures about PSPP/SPSS software and there is obligatory literature about it to read. At the same time this software is installed only on a few computers for teaching staff, and it is not available for students. In Learning outcomes is declared that in the end student: "Is able to use statistical software (PSPP/SPSS) to enter and analyze quantitative data; Is able to prepare a report with a summary of analyses conducted in PSPP/SPSS." Conclusion: this study course description is not valid as it is not possible to fulfill it. — This is quite critical as there are no access for students to PSPP/SPSS software. Course description states as learning outcome: "Is able to use statistical software (PSPP/SPSS) to enter and analyze quantitative data; Is able to prepare a report with a summary of analyses conducted in PSPP/SPSS." and states that there are lab / workshop practice for all students. Obligatory literature is "Keith McCormick, Jesus Salcedo, Jon Peck, Andrew Wheeler, Jason Verlen. SPSS STATISTICS FOR DATA ANALYSIS AND VISUALIZATION. 2017. ISBN: 978-1-119-00355-7" but why to read it if there are no software available? There supposed to be 12 hours as contact hours and 40 hours of individual work with this software.

At this moment there are major problems with 15% of course descriptions, not mentioning fact that there are impossible to calculate given formulas in course descriptions for learning outcomes to successfully pass the courses so if there are conflict situation about if a student has fulfilled minimum to pass the course or not, he/she can't prove his/her rights not to do something more. ESG 2015 standard in 1.3 point says: "Considering the importance of assessment for the students' progression and their future careers, quality assurance processes for assessment for take into account the following: the criteria for and method of assessment as well as criteria for marking are published in advance." If it is not possible to calculate criteria, there is no information available in advance.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Justification: Not relevant.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Documents named "AIP.docx" and "AIP atzinums.docx" attached to the study programme mandatory annexed certify that on 07.11.2019. the programme was given a positive opinion by the Council for Higher Education, allowing the implementation of the programme.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Documents named "Atbilstība valsts izglīt standartam ENG.docx" and "Atbilstība valsts izglīt standartam.docx" attached to the study programme mandatory annexed certify that the study programme complies with all criteria in the State Education Standard.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Justification: Not relevant.

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: A list of academic staff's publications is provided in the Appendix 9, however the SAR also explains that there is one member of the academic staff who has not yet published any scientific research findings. The person, however, is actively engaged in SAM (specific support aim) project 8.2.1.

15 P5 - Overall rating

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Justification: Study course descriptions are not prepared fully correctly.

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: It's not clear where students can get obligatory literature that is not available in the library for some of study courses and there are shortage of available software licences and possibility to choose from for studies.

- 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: As indicated in analysis of programmes teaching staff, the study programme employs 28 teaching staff members, as the Programme SAR explains (p.181), with the following qualifications: 14 with a doctoral degree, 14 with a master's degree. All staff members have language proficiency that complies with requirements set out in regulations.

- 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: Not relevant

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The main conclusions are the following:

The Business Management bachelor study programme plays key role in the portfolio of the study direction. The programme's goals and learning outcomes are defined clearly and properly. However, the decreasing number of new students is a real warning sign regarding the sustainability of the programme. New measures should be taken in order to reach the previous level of the newly enrolled students. Great efforts have been made to make this study programme attractive to everyone, but its study course descriptions do not always meet the requirements and study course results mapping with study programme's study results don't show actual situation. The infrastructure of the RTA was described in the assessment of the study field and the description applies for the study programme "Business Management" as well. The Business Management bachelor study programme is compliant with the requirements.

The main strenghts of the Business Management bachelor study programme are the following:

- 1) General scope of the program with attractive specializations
- 2) Specializations are supporting the regional development
- 3) Specialization are highly valued by the local employers
- 4) English versions of the study programme are also available
- 5) Students are active in international mobility
- 6) Academic staff are involved in various activities to improve their knowledge and experience in the field both locally and internationally.
- 7) High evaluation from student, graduate and employers side.
- 8) Quality of RTA infrastructure for students and teachers
- 9) Optimisation of study programme based on joining 3 seperate bachelor study programmes
- 10). Quality and structure of teaching staff
- 11) Teaching staff with good scientific references
- 12) Involvement of international guest lecturers
13. Collaboration mechanisms between study programme management, teaching staff and guest lecturers ensured

The main weaknesses of the Business Management bachelor study programme are the following:

- 1) Decreasing number of new applicants for the programme
- 2) Low level of international students except in the Hospitality track
- 3) Part of Study course descriptions lack important information according ESG standards
- 4) Rather low number of students regardless of combining 3 bachelor study programmes
- 5) Fear of not attracting international students due to the Covid-19 situation

- 6) Unbalanced workload of teaching staff
- 7) High dependence of academic staff salaries on research projects

Evaluation of the study programme "Business Management"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Business Management"

Short-term recommendations

| |
|--|
| Improve quality of course descriptions. Course description should contain all the relevant information required by students. Add all important information according to ESG standards. |
| Try to keep contact with international students on-line during the Covid time. |
| Increase the number of newly enrolled students. |
| Increase the number of newly enrolled international students. |
| Motivate academic staff to teach in the programme in English. |

Long-term recommendations

| |
|--|
| Increase number of local and international students in the programme by advertising the programme locally and internationally as well. |
| Supplement the library's collection so that students would have access to all required literature. |
| Try to balance the workload of the teaching staff to keep them motivated. |
| Rethink the salary structure by lowering the research income proportion within the salary. That measurement will improve the willingness to teach in the English programmes. |

II. "Management Science" ASSESSMENT

II. "Management Science" ASSESSMENT

1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

1.1. The name of the study programme is Management Science and the code of the programme in accordance with the Latvian Education Classification is 45345. It is an academic master study programme with the goal to provide students with a set of knowledge, skills and competencies in management science, to prepare specialists in management, whose knowledge and skills allow to manage companies or organizations, to provide an orientation to doctoral studies.

The study programme is available in six different versions in Latvian and also in English: 1. Full time studies in Latvian, 2 years, 0 months, 2. Full time studies in English, 2 years, 3. Full time studies in Latvian, 1 years, 4. Full time studies in English, 1 years, 5. Full time studies in Latvian, 1 years, 6 months, 6. Full time studies in English, 1 years, 6 months.

Students should earn respectively 80 CP which is equivalent to 120 ECTS (2 years), 60 CP which is equivalent to 90 ECTS (1.5 years) or 40CP which is equivalent to 60 ECTS (1 year). The admission

requirements are the following: in case of 2 year programme: Academic or professional bachelor's degree or second level professional higher education, in case of 1 and 1.5 year programmes: Second level professional higher education in social and behavioural sciences, commercial sciences and administration of at least four years in the amount of 160 CP or 240 ECTS. The degree and qualification awarded after the successful completion of the study programme is called "Master's Degree of Social Sciences in Management and Administration".

The study programme during the past six academic years could attract only 61 students. The most successful academic years from enrollment point of view were in 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 with 13 students in both cases. Since then the number of accepted students has been declining and reached 11 in 2019/2020. The average size of the new intakes is 10 students which is very low. It is a positive sign that from 2016/2017 foreign students started to apply for the programme, and the programme could enroll 18 international students. The programme is international at least in three ways: 1.) Visiting professors from partner universities are involved as teachers and advisors in the study programme. 2.) Students have an opportunity to participate in Erasmus mobility for studies and traineeship. 3.) The study programme is available also in English.

The forms the programme is implemented in are 2 year full-time programme (80 CP), 1 year full-time study programme, and 1 year 6 months full-time programme, all modes of the programme are taught in English and in Latvian version of the programme.

The variety in programme lengths and CP to be acquired is justified by RTA due to the feedback they received from students on the implementations of the study programme. According to the Self-Assessment Report (p.79), as one of the reasons RTA mentions is that students are not eager to study if the programme is the full 2 year option for everyone, especially due to the low number of budget places available for local students. Although, in Self-Assessment Report (p.74-79) describes that, if the student has already received a previous bachelor's degree in the relevant field (social and behavioural sciences, commercial sciences and administration) and have English language proficiency at level B2, they are eligible to apply to the full time two-year programme in either Latvian or English, but if the previous bachelor's degree has been obtained in other field, they must pass RTA's tests in microeconomics, macroeconomics, marketing and management; the description in the next report's section (p.81-82) deems eligible in all study forms only those students, who have obtained the second level professional higher education in the relevant or other study field for at least four years (not considering students who have studied in the same field for 3 or 4 years academic bachelor programme, neither including the minimal English language proficiency level).

While the intention to respond to the feedback of students and optimize the time and resources for each version of the study programme version are understandable, the admission requirements do not seem clear.

According to the description the Management Science Academic Master programme aims to fulfil at least three different aims: 1. to develop students' ability to use knowledge in solving specific theoretical and practical issues; 2. to establish an orientation for doctoral studies; 3. to prepare competitive managers for the labour market at the regional, national and international levels. This broad scope of the study programme leads to 14 learning outcomes which mainly focus on in-depth knowledge in research, latest tendencies in the management science, scientific approach to problem solving, innovative solutions to management problems, but could not be connected to the previously listed tracks (1-3). It is also hard to find learning outcomes which directly will support the graduates' management career in an international context. Responsibility and sustainability are also missing from the list of the required skills and competencies.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The main conclusions are the following:

The "Management Science" master study programme promotes the competences needed in management and in developing business operations of small and medium-sized companies, especially their international business activities. New strategic thinking, new business concepts, excellent networking and leadership skills are in high demand in the global business environment. The study programme also promotes international networking and close cooperation with Rezekne Special Economic Zone. Advanced professional studies include e.g. strategic marketing management as well as change management. The aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and admission requirements are interrelated.

Visiting professors from partner universities are involved as teachers and advisors in the study programme. Students have an opportunity to participate in Erasmus mobility for studies and traineeship. The study programme is available also in English.

The Academic master study programme "Management Science" is a very small programme. From the economy of scale point of view, it is hard to believe that the programme can be financially sustainable in long run. The six different versions advertised make the programme logistics even more complicated. Despite the great variety of the study options the past 6 years were not enough to strengthen the size of the programme.

The main strengths are the following:

- 1) flexible versions of the programme (2 year, 1.5 year, 1 year);
- 2) attractive programme among foreign students.

The main weaknesses are the following:

- 1) very low number of students;
- 2) risk of financial sustainability;
- 3) extremely small classes.

2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.1. The study programme complies with the National Education Standard for the Academic Higher Education defined in Cabinet of Ministers Regulation Nr.240 (Programme SAR Annex "VMatbilstiba.ENG"). Practice in the study programme is mentioned only in the 2 -years version of the programme as "Professional Traineeship" 10 CP/15ECTS (see Programme SAR Annex "Studiju kursu modulu apraksti ENG"), and is aimed on research work in business and management. Description of implementation of practice is provided for the whole RTA in "Regulation on Internship in RTA", approved by RTA Senate on 27.01.2015. (terms practice, internship, traineeship are used as synonyms), this document is provided in both Latvian and English languages (Field SAR Annex 12). More details are provided in description of the study course "Professional Traineeship". Requirements for Master thesis are provided for the whole RTA in "Guidelines for Developing and Defending Study and Graduate Research Papers at RTA" approved by the meeting of the Science Council on 18.12.2018., document in both Latvian and English languages is provided on RTA web site and is available for students.

Study course descriptions could be better prepared. Many don't have information about Students' independent work, about tests to be passed, how results will be evaluated, about final exam and there are even no course literature listed. Overall decision is that there are no Study Course descriptions for all of the Study Courses in the programme. There are missing crucial information according to ESG standard demands. Overall content of Study Courses seems to be updated and actual.

2.2. It's hard to give an assessment about evaluation methods as they are not mentioned in various

Study Course descriptions. At the same time there were no complains during meetings from student side that something were not clear to them during study process. There were clear evidence of satisfaction about RTA's care about students and their needs during the study process. The Expert Team found high quality of English proficiency among students in RTA.

2.3. There are surveys, but there is no direct connection to improvements as all received feedback is positive and therefore no improvements introduced. As these surveys are done and communication between students, graduates, and employers are good, there are no doubts that worse results - if any - from surveys would be used for improvements.

2.4. Students are really active in incoming and outgoing mobility and satisfied with this experience. There are written procedure "NOLIKUMS PAR STUDIJU KURSU AKADĒMISKO ATZĪŠANU RĒZEKNES TEHNOLOĢIJU AKADĒMIJĀ (RTA)" that support recognition of the passed study courses outside RTA.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

Ther main conclusions are the following:

External stakeholders appreciate RTA's work, have good feedback in surveys and most of them recommend RTA as an educational institution to their friends and acquaintances. Students are actively taking advantage of mobility opportunities, academic staff are also actively taking advantage of opportunities to participate in guest lecturing abroad and improve their skills in the industry. Great efforts have been made to make this study programme attractive to everyone, but its study course descriptions do not always meet the requirements.

The main strengths are the following:

- 1) students are active in international mobility;
- 2) academic staff are involved in various activities to improve their knowledge and experience in the field both locally and internationally;
- 3) high evaluation from student, graduate and employers side.

The main weaknesse is the following:

- 1) part of study course descriptions lacks important information according ESG standards.

3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

3.1.The infrastructure of the RTA was described in the assessment of the study field and the description applies for the study programme "Management Science" as well. The study provision, scientific support, informative provision, material and technical provision, and financial provision comply with the specific features and the conditions for the implementation of the study programme. Prerequisites for the achievement of the learning outcomes are created and indicate the possibility to ensure a high-quality study process also in the future.

3.2. The financial structure is also done at the level of the study field and it is very similar for each study programme. Nevertheless, RTA calculates the necessary number of students and income from student tuition fees to determine break even point. Study programme "Management Science" has rather low number of students. In the study year there were 7 students financed from state budget and 4 (including 1 international) students financed with tuition fees. It is also seen that the number of international students has severly dropped in the last 2 years.

There were mentioned books in Study Course descriptions that are not available in Library according Library's database:

Bigham, E. (2013). Introduction to PSPP: A Step by Step guide.

David, Fred R. Strategic management: concepts and cases / Fred R. David.—13th ed. Pierson,

20111. 694 p.

These were checked randomly from different Course descriptions and in each check there were obligatory literature that were not available in the database so it's not clear how students can access it.

There are SPSS statistics software licences available for academic staff only.

The basic prerequisites for the achievement of the learning outcomes and high-quality study process are met.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The main conclusions are the following:

The study conditions in terms of infrastructure for the study programme "Management Science" are very good for students and teaching staff. Unfortunately decreasing number of students, especially foreign students presents a threat to financial stability of the study program.

The main strength is the following:

1) quality of RTA infrastructure for students and teachers.

The main weaknesses are the following:

- 1) rather low number of students with only 4 and 5 students that had to pay tuition fee;
- 2) rapidly decreasing number of international students who pay tuition fee;
- 3) fear of attracting international students due to the Covid-19 situation;
- 4) study course descriptions contain lots of obligatory literature that are not in the RTA Libraries database so it's not clear how students can access and read it;
- 5) access to SPSS statistics software may be important for students to work with their final papers or scientific publications.

4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

4.1. According to the Study Programme "Management Science" SAR (p. 95), the structure of the academic staff involved in the implementation of the programme has experienced slight changes over the reporting period until 2019/2020. The proportion of academic staff members has shifted from 2 professors 3 associate professors, 2 docents, 2 lecturers and 2 members with professional experience and 1 foreign guest lecturer, number of professors has increased to 4, meanwhile the number of associate professors has decreased to 1. Overall, the study programme in 2019/2020 employed 16 elected lecturers, 2 lecturers, 1 guest lecturer. The development plan envisions further increase of the academic staff members until 2024 in the following proportion: 3 elected professors, 3 elected associate professors, 4 elected docents of the study direction.

4.2. The teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programme is stable also in comparison with the previous evaluation of the study programme. Although the number of full professor has slightly grown, this study programme includes several members of teaching staff below the title assistant professor, which is rather unusual. Nevertheless, the majority of teaching staff members is engaged into scientific work.

4.3. The academic staff members employed in the implementation of the study programme carry research and professional experience in the fields relevant for the study programme of Management Science: finance, human resources, marketing, risk, quality management, project, communication, environmental resource management, leadership in lectures delivered by 7 persons, ; research methodology, big data processing in lectures delivered by 3 persons; lectures on legislative aspects

by 1 person; lectures on leadership and innovation management by 1 person as well.

Meanwhile, according to list of academic staff members involved in all programmes of the study direction enclosed in Annex 5, the implementation of the study programme “Management Science” employs 13 academic staff members with doctoral degrees and 6 members with master degrees.

Members of the academic staff, according to SAR (p. 98), are provided with opportunity to attend professional development programme “Higher Education Didactics” or “Innovations in Higher Education” organized by RTA.

4.4. As stated in the SAR (p. 97), most of the academic staff members (15 out of 18) involved in the study programme “Management Science” are engaged in research activities in the field. Over the reporting period, the highest number of publications were produced by A.Zvaigzne, L.Litavniece, I.Mietule, S.Murinska, and I.Abidāne. All scientific publications produced by the academic staff members are available in the RTA scientific journal platform journals.rta.lv. In the SAR RTA also acknowledges that the challenge RTA faces is to increase the impact factor. The publications contribute to the literature used in the study process, providing encouragement to students for choosing a field for their research. Which, in turn, provides a for developing skills of academic staff as scientific advisors for students in their research activities.

Both the SAR and information obtained in the on-site visit confirm that some students are involved in the research activities of the Institute. According to the SAR (p.97), over the time period 2016-2019, 13 master study programme students were involved in the Institute as research assistants.

4.5. According to the SAR (p. 98) the mutual collaboration model employed among academic staff members involved in this study programme includes: 1) cooperation between the study programme director and lecturers by coordinating study programme results and course results, the assessment of study results, self-evaluation and quality control methods to be implemented throughout the study process; 2) cooperation between the two lecturers delivering a joint study programme to agree on the learning outcomes, content of the course, methodology and evaluation methods; 3) collaboration between academic staff members in research activities, when developing joint publications; 4) collaboration between academic staff members continuing their professional development, increasing their pedagogical qualification by attending RTA professional development programmes; 5) participation in formal collegial meetings (general study direction meeting, Academic Direction Council meeting) to discuss relevant issues concerning interdisciplinary matters. During the on-site visit it was confirmed that the members of academic staff mostly met and engaged in discussions on interdisciplinary matters with academic staff members from other study programme courses on rather formal meetings with the while study direction.

It was also discovered that the workload of the academic staff is disbalanced, either not allowing enough energy and time resources to be devoted to study process implementation or scientific research activities. What seems to be causing this disbalance could be the strain put on them from administrative tasks (i.e., writing up and carrying out additional projects to attract external funding), which could be delegated to additional workforce attracted for this purpose.

The biographic and bibliographic data of included teaching staff shows that they possess appropriate knowledge and competences to be included into study process within study programme Entrepreneurship. RTA academic staff planning is mostly regulated by the RTA Activity and Development Strategy for 2016-2023 and Academic Staff Development Guidelines for 2016-2020, with addition to several other documents (application form, page 124). Students and graduates admit that the teaching staff has up-to-date knowledge.

This study programme includes only 16 teaching staff members elected at RTA and 4 guest lecturers from other institutions.

The involvement of teaching staff has been presented in the description of study field. Teaching staff is involved in Research Institute for Business and Social Processes. 10 representatives of the academic staff are experts of the Latvian Council of Science (application form, page 95). We

emphasize again that the workload of teaching staff due to activities in study process, scientific work, project work and administrative work is not balanced well. Dependence of the salary on success with obtaining and implementing project might also present threat in teaching staff long term motivation.

Each study programme has its director who is in charge of ensuring quality of study process and study content as well as coordinating the collaboration of teaching staff within the study programme. The collaboration takes place also on the level of the study field as the teaching staff is mostly involved in more than one study programme within this study field. The discussion of topics takes place in a formal manner (meetings on the level of study field and study programme) and informal between teaching staff.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The main conclusions are the following:

The academic staff involved in the study programme "Management Science" (45345) are in compliance with the requirements posed by the regulatory enactments, their relevant qualifications and proportion of them in the implementation of the study programme are satisfactory, as is their engagement with scientific activities. As they have acknowledged, the impact factor of academic staff's scientific activities on study process could benefit from more emphasized action. However, it is indeed positive that the use of the results and experience gained in these research activities improve and develop the literature provided in the study programme and motivate student's possible involvement in scientific activity of their own.

The quality of teaching staff within the study programme "Management Science" is good. One would expect more member of teaching staff with title assistant professor or above at the master study programme level. Students and graduates are satisfied with the teaching staff knowledge and study process in general. The collaboration between teaching staff is ensured in a formal and informal way.

The main strengths are the following:

- 1) the requirements on the academic staff qualification and proportion according to the regulatory enactments are met;
- 2) highly skilled academic staff members both academically and professionally in the field of the study programme, representing the interdisciplinarity of the programme;
- 3) the proportion of academic staff members with the status of "professor" has increased over the reporting period;
- 4) good quality and structure of teaching staff;
- 5) up-to date knowledge of teaching staff;
- 6) collaboration mechanisms between study programme management, teaching staff and guest lecturers ensured.

The main weaknesses are the following:

- 1) considering the number of courses taught in English, the level of the desired English language proficiency could also be suggested on the side of the currently required B2;
- 2) the collaboration between academic staff members implementing different courses needs more attention, to enable higher contribution to improvements of the study courses aside from the participation in the formal study direction meetings;
- 3) share of teaching staff members below title assistant professor;
- 4) unbalanced workload of teaching staff;
- 5) high dependence of salaries on projects.

5. Assessment of the Compliance of the Study Programme "Management Science"

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: Justification provided in Annex titled "Diploma paraugs ENG.docx", "Diploma paraugs LV.docx", enclosed with the Self-Assessment Report of the programme.

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: Justification provided in Annex 8, enclosed with the Self-Assessment Report of the programme.

According to the agreement in Annex 8, in case the RTA professional bachelor's study program "Entrepreneurship" (duration 4 years, 160 CP) and academic master's study program "Management Science" (duration 1-2 years, 60- 80 CP), ViA undertakes to provide opportunities to continue studies in the professional bachelor study program "Business Management", to be awarded the degree "Professional bachelor degree in business management", qualification "Company and Institution Manager" (duration 4 years, 160 CP) and professional master's study program "Business environment management" (duration 1.5 - 2 years, 60 - 80 CP).

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: Justification provided in Annex titled "Zaud komp.ENG.docx", "zaud.komp.pdf", enclosed with the Self-Assessment Report of the programme.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Justification provided in Annex 5, added to the study direction Self-Assessment - Other mandatory attachments in the Description of Study programme. A certification signed by the rector added in Annex 15.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: The justification is provided in the Annexes titled "Svesvalodas ENG.docx" (ENG) and "val. apl.pdf"(LV), added to the study programme "Management Science " Self-Assessment Report - Other mandatory attachments in the Description of Study programme.

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: Not relevant.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Justification provided in the Annexes titled "AL 55.pants ENG.docx" (ENG) and "AL 55.pants.pdf"(LV) in the Study programme " Management Science" Self-Assessment Report.

- 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 study agreement attached to the Other mandatory annexes named "studiju līgums ENG.docx" and "studiju līgums.docx" complies with the mandatory provisions.

- 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: Partially compliant

Justification: Study course descriptions may not contain all necessary requirements of regulatory enactments. 1) Study Course descriptions don't indicate the amount of lectures, seminars (or other possible forms of studies), so it's impossible to identify and calculate the amount of the seminars in hours students have to participate to evaluate learning outcomes. There are just "contact hours" mentioned that don't explain how the study process is organized. Without this identification Evaluation of learning outcomes is not possible according to given formulas and data.

2) Course "Research Methods For Social Sciences" contains lectures about PSPP/SPSS software and there is obligatory literature about it to read. At the same time this software is installed only on a few computers for teaching staff and it's not available for students. In Learning outcomes is declared that in the end student: "Is able to use statistical software (PSPP/SPSS) to enter and analyze quantitative data; Is able to prepare a report with a summary of analyses conducted in PSPP/SPSS." Conclusion: this study course description is not valid as it's not possible to fulfill it.

3) Course "Risk Management" doesn't have sufficient information about course content. 5 topics for 5 contact hours without a clue what is the content of each topic, what methods will be included, possible actions etc. missing.

4) Course "Cooperation In the EU Context" literature is only about laws and only 1 book as additional literature in English. At the same time course content is not entirely about laws in the EU. Or, in other words, literature is only about EU laws, course description partly law, partly about the EU in general while the name of the course and its abstract is about cooperation (not directly about laws).

5) Course "Investment Policy" doesn't have sufficient information about course content. For example, "Operation of investment funds: understanding, evaluation" for 14 contact hours is too wide and should be more detailed. Other topics are similar — just title as explanation what will happen for more than 10 contact hours in each case. This Study course description is almost blank with almost no usable information.

6) Course "Introduction to Journalism" description is not fully translated in English.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Justification: Not relevant.

- 11 11. Academic study programmes provided for less than 250 full-time students may be implemented and less than five professors and associated professors of the higher education institution may be involved in the implementation of the mandatory and limited elective part of these study programmes provided that the relevant opinion of the Council for Higher Education has been received in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.
- Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant
- Justification:** In Programme SAR Annex 12, there is a document providing information that RTA was granted permission by Higher Education Council to implement academic higher education programmes in Bachelor's and Master's level with number of students less than 250. This document is dated on 01.06.2004. There is no translation of this document into English language.
- 12 12. The study programme complies with the State Academic Education Standard or the Professional Higher Education Standard.
- Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant
- Justification:** Documents named "VMatbilstiba.ENG.docx" and "VM.atbilstiba.docx" attached to the study programme mandatory annexed certify that the study programme complies with all criteria in the State Education Standard.
- 13 13. The joint study programmes comply with the requirements prescribed in Section 551, Paragraphs one, two, and seven of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (if applicable).
- Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant
- Justification:** Not relevant.
- 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:** Justification provided in the Annex 8, attached to the Study Direction Self-Assessment Report, part II, section 4.
- 15 P5 - Overall rating
- Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant
- Justification:** Description of study courses should be improved.

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:** It's not clear where students can get obligatory literature that is not available in the library for some of study courses and there are shortage of available software licences and possibility to choose from for studies and scientific work.
- 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:** Qualification of the academic staff members involved into implementation of the study programme comply with the legal requirement

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: The study programme is planned based on the latest findings in the field of science and studies

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The main conclusions are the following:

The "Management Science" master study programme promotes the competences needed in management and in developing business operations of small and medium-sized companies, especially their international business activities. The study programme also promotes international networking and close cooperation with Rezekne Special Economic Zone. Advanced professional studies include e.g. strategic marketing management as well as change management. The study programme is available also in English. The Academic master study programme "Management Science" is a very small programme. From the economy of scale point of view, it is hard to believe that the programme can be financially sustainable in long run. Despite the great variety of the study options the past 6 years were not enough to strengthen the size of the programme.

The academic staff involved in the study programme "Management Science" (45345) are in compliance with the requirements posed by the regulatory enactments, their relevant qualifications and proportion of them in the implementation of the study programme are satisfactory, as is their engagement with scientific activities.

The main strengths of the "Management Science" master study programme are the following:

- 1) Flexible versions of the programme (2 year, 1.5 year, 1 year)
- 2) It could be an attractive programme among foreign students
- 3) Students are active in international mobility
- 4) Academic staff are involved in various activities to improve their knowledge and experience in the field both locally and internationally.
- 5) High evaluation from student, graduate and employers side.
- 6) Quality of RTA infrastructure for students and teachers
- 7) The requirements on the academic staff qualification and proportion according to the regulatory enactments are met.
- 8) Highly skilled academic staff members both academically and professionally in the field of the study programme, representing the interdisciplinarity of the programme
- 9) The proportion of academic staff members with the status of "professor" has increased over the reporting period.

The main weaknesses of the "Management Science" master study programme are the following:

- 1) Very low number of students
- 2) Risk of financial sustainability
- 3) Extremely small classes
- 4) Part of Study course descriptions lack important information according to ESG standards.
- 5) Rather low number of students with only 4 and 5 students that had to pay tuition fee
- 6) Rapidly decreasing number of international students who pay tuition fee
- 7) Fear of not attracting international students due to the Covid-19 situation
- 8) Considering the number of courses taught in English, the level of the desired English language proficiency could also be suggested on the side of the currently required B2
- 9). The collaboration between academic staff members implementing different courses needs more attention, to enable higher contribution to improvements of the study courses aside from the participation in the formal study direction meetings.

Evaluation of the study programme "Management Science"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Management Science"

Short-term recommendations

Improve quality of study course descriptions to meet ESG standards.

Make a plan how to reach the financial sustainability of the programme in short and long term as well.

Motivate academic staff members with good command of English to teach in the programme.

Ensure library resources with the latest literature and study materials, also in English language and in sufficient number.

Long-term recommendations

Use opportunity to promote RTA study programme to students of international partner universities directly and using the social media.

Increase number of students - international - in the programme, by signing more agreement with international partner institutions who can send their bachelor graduates to study in this Master programme.

II. "Economics and Business" ASSESSMENT

II. "Economics and Business" ASSESSMENT

1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

The name of the Doctoral programme is Economics and Business and the code of the study programme in accordance with the Latvian Education Classification is 51345. It is an academic Doctoral study programme with the goal to implement doctoral academic studies in business and economics, to prepare highly qualified experts (specialists) who are able to create new knowledge in the field, and to obtain a doctoral degree (PhD) meeting the international standards (https://www.rta.lv/study_programmes?sp_id=93).

Following the direct translation of the name of the programme from Latvian language into English, "uzņēmējdarbība" is supposed to be translated as "entrepreneurship". There is no official translation of the term on National level, the terms "business" and "entrepreneurship" very often are used as synonyms, but in English language these terms are explained differently (entrepreneurship is closer to innovation, creation of something new; business - closer to management and organisation of operating activities). To be consequent in translation (the name of the professional Bachelor's study programme is translated as "Entrepreneurship"), RTA should decide, which term to keep and use direct translation in the name of the Doctoral programme - entrepreneurship or business, and correct Latvian or English version.

The joint doctoral study programme "Economics and Business" was licensed on 05.02.2020 (license No. 04048-96). The implementation of the programme has started in September 2020. At least 18

students were planned in the programme over a three-year period. It is planned that during this time at least 5 students will have started studies at ViA, 5 students - at RTA, 8 students - at VeA. RTA and partner universities took measures to popularize the study programme. The aims, objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme are fully interrelated. The Experts Team met two out of the three PhD students who are enrolled in RTA and the study field. The Admission requirement is a Master's degree in social sciences. The programme is available in Latvian and in English. It is a Full time programme which lasts 3 years. Students should accumulate 120 CP (180 ECTS). Upon graduation students will get the following qualification: Doctoral degree Doctor of Science (Ph.D.) in Economics and Business.

Admission requirements for studies in English contain a document certifying language proficiency issued by an international testing institution within the past five years, which certifies the foreigner's proficiency in English at least at the level B2. It is not required to attach the document, if the foreigner has acquired the previous education in English. If there is no International Certificate on English proficiency or the language of previous education was not English, the applicant has to pass the examination. The result of the examination will be passed if the English knowledge comply at least with the level B2.

According to the description the Economic and Business Doctoral programme aims to develop analytical research skills by integrating theoretical knowledge with applied research and to prepare for analytical, research and management work by increasing the quality and capacity of research at different levels (local, national, international). The description lists 5 learning outcomes which all support the targeted goals. The skills' improvement is focusing on the latest research methodologies, including data visualization methods, abilities to use the latest technology, big data analysis and forecasting for creation of future scenarios, implementing original studies, some of which are at the level of internationally cited publications. Competences cover the principles of ethical and socially responsible behavior and general social skills and emotional intelligence.

Regulations Nr.1000 of the Cabinet of Ministers do not provide any information about promotion rights of any of the partner schools - RTA, ViA, VeA - within the study field. RTA and partners should consider creation of PhD Promotion Council at any of these institutions, in a meanwhile finding cooperation with another institution, where such Council is created, and rights are provided. It is important for students of the study programme and those PhD candidates, who are interested to defend their promotion works at RTA on the later stages of studies.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The main conclusions are the following:

The Economics and Business Doctoral study programme in its current form has got its license less than a year ago. It is not possible to evaluate the operation of the programme based on this very short time period. The Self-Assessment Report is a collection of plans. It lacks the precise description of the division of responsibilities of the cooperating partners. However, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and admission requirements are fully interrelated. RTA uses the term "business" in translation of the term "entrepreneurship" in the name of the programme from Latvian to English. It is important to choose one term in both languages - business or entrepreneurship. Based on Regulations Nr.1000 of Cabinet of Ministers, none of the partner schools - RTA, ViA, VeA - has promotion rights within the study field. The schools should create PhD Promotion Council and in a meanwhile find the partner, where students can defend their promotion works.

The main strengths are the following:

1) very good initiative of three regional higher education institutions to create a joint Doctoral programme and develop research in the regions of Latvia.

The main weaknesses are the following:

1) at this moment, there are no promotion rights in the study field at any of the partner schools;

2) application of the terms "business" and "entrepreneurship" is not clear in translation of the name of the programme.

2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

The joint Doctoral study programmes comply with the requirements prescribed in Section 551, Paragraphs one, two, and seven of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education. Joint Doctoral programme is organized by three higher education institutions - RTA, ViA, VeA, each of partners is in charge for organization of the specific study courses.

Study Course descriptions are different as they come from three different universities and it would be easier for students if they'd be unified in a common style (format) and content. As they are so different that may rise concerns about the approval process and wasn't it only formal. All necessary parts for reaching study results are included. 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.

There were clear evidences of satisfaction about RTA's care about students and their needs during the study process. Cooperation between several universities in this case gives more confidence that students will receive the best service and in case of problems they can be solved if not in one institution, then in the other and it's less risky about interrupting the study process in case of problems with one of the higher education institutions. As there are several Moodle platforms involved from each institution it's harder to follow the progress of the student and harder for a student to follow all his/her duties and responsibilities regarding the study process. The content of the study programme is relevant and complementary, and it complies with the aims of the study programme, ensures the achievement of the learning outcomes, and meets the needs of the relevant industry and the scientific trends.

There are surveys, but there is no direct connection to improvements as all received feedback is positive and therefore no improvements introduced. As these surveys are done and communication between students, graduates, and employers are good, there are no doubts that worse results - if any - from surveys would be used for improvements.

Students in other programmes are really active in incoming and outgoing mobility and satisfied with this experience. There are written procedure "NOLIKUMS PAR STUDIJU KURSU AKADĒMISKO ATZĪŠANU RĒZEKNES TEHNOLOĢIJU AKADĒMIJĀ (RTA)" that support the recognition of the passed study courses outside RTA. In this case studies are even organised in collaboration with other universities.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The main conclusions are the following:

External stakeholders appreciate RTA's work, have good feedback in surveys and most of them recommend RTA as an educational institution to their friends and acquaintances. Students are actively taking advantage of mobility opportunities, academic staff are also actively taking advantage of opportunities to participate in guest lecturing abroad and improve skills in the industry. Great efforts have been made to make this study programme attractive to everyone.

The main strengths are the following:

- 1) academic staff are involved in various activities to improve their knowledge and experience in the field both locally and internationally;
- 2) high evaluation from student, graduate and employers side.

The main weaknesses are the following:

- 1) using several Moodle platforms it's harder to see full status and get full awareness of students satisfaction about studies.

3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

The infrastructure of the RTA was described in the assessment of the study field and the description applies for the study programme "Economics and Business" as well. The study provision, scientific support, informative provision, material and technical provision, and financial provision comply with the specific features and the conditions for the implementation of the study programme. Prerequisites for the achievement of the learning outcomes (such as critical thinking, analysing, understanding impact) are created and indicate the possibility to ensure a high-quality study process also in the future.

This is a new study programme, licenced in the beginning of the year 2020 with the first study year in September 2020. At the moment 3 students are enrolled based on the state funding. The plan is to attract 18 students over 3 year period, 8 of them starting their study at RTA. Due to this situation it is too soon at the moment to assess the financial aspect of the study programme. Each participating partner in joint doctoral study programme can choose different funding possibilities to ensure the financial sustainability of the study programme.

The basic prerequisites for the achievement of the learning outcomes and high-quality study process are met.²

This study programme is implemented in a consortium in cooperation with Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences and Ventspils University of Applied Sciences, thus the infrastructure and services provided by these higher education institutions are available to students. Each partner has appropriate infrastructure and scientific institutions, such as Institute for Social, Economic and Humanitarian Research, different laboratories, Centre for Business, Innovation and Regional Development etc.

There are mentioned books in Study Course descriptions that are not available in Library according Library's database and it's not clear where are they available:

Burns, T., W., O'Connor, D. J., Stocklmayer, S. M. Science communication: a contemporary definition. Public Understanding of Science, 12, p.183-202.

Dr Norman K Denzin (Author, Editor), Dr Yvonna S Lincoln (Editor) (2017). The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research Hardcover.

These were checked randomly from different Course descriptions and in each check there were obligatory literature that were not available in the database so it's not clear how students can access it.

There are SPSS statistics software licences available for academic staff only.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The main conclusions are the following:

The study conditions in terms of infrastructure for the study programme "Economics and Business"

are very good for doctoral students and teaching staff.

The main strengths are the following:

- 1) quality of RTA, VeA and ViA infrastructure for doctoral students and teachers;
- 2) possibilities to co-operate with other students from other institutions.

The main weaknesses are the following:

- 1) none so far, let the study programme start its life cycle;
- 2) study course descriptions contain lots of obligatory literature that are not in the RTA Libraries database so it's not clear how students can access and read it; probably through the other two partner institutions involved in the programme;
- 3) access to SPSS statistics software may be important for students to work with their final papers or scientific publications;
- 4) the programme neither under the name of the participating institution nor as a joint Doctoral programme is not listed in the official register of the Latvian Doctoral programmes.

4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

Seven members of RTA teaching staff are involved in the doctoral study programme "Economics and Business", holding different professor titles. The selection of professors was based on several criteria, most importantly their active scientific work and international activities (application form, page 148). All members of teaching staff within this study programme are also members of Latvian Council of Sciences in the respective field. According to the Self-Assessment Report (p. 147) there have been no changes in the academic staff structure as of the licensing (License No.04048-96) of the study programme on 14.02.2020. The most important criteria in the selection of the staff were their scientific and professional competence.

The biographic and bibliographic data of included teaching staff shows that they possess appropriate knowledge and competences to be included into study process within study programme. RTA academic staff planning is mostly regulated by the RTA Activity and Development Strategy for 2016-2023 and Academic Staff Development Guidelines for 2016-2020, with addition to several other documents (application form, page 148).

All members of academic staff involved in the implementation of this programme by being course lecturers or supervisors of doctoral theses, according to the Self-Assessment Report (p. 148) are experts at the Latvian Council of Sciences in their respective field of expertise. Lectures are also delivered by guest lecturers (guest professors and guest researchers), and, as described in the Self-Assessment Report, guest academic staff members attracted with cooperation from Vidzemes Augstskola or the consortium are invited as a priority, while the expertise of the guest aligns with the specific topic. RTA provides an annual programme for academic staff professional development "Innovations in Higher Education", which includes seminar on the latest trends in higher education and science.

The application form provides data on publications in WoS and Scopus databases from 2014-19, which confirm active research activities from the study programme area (application form, page 148). The number of publications with high impact is at the moment quite low, but the fostering of scientific activities in different areas in the last years at RTA ensures the growth of similar publications. The application form provides also the list of relevant projects and international activities (pages 150-155). The number of scientific publications produced by 6 members of RTA's

academic staff are displayed in the Self-Assessment Report (p. 149) for the time period 2014-2019 in the databases Web of Science, SCOPUS, and ERIH+. The latter carrying a single publication from one member of the academic staff. The list of 10 publications published in journals in the databases is also enclosed (ibid. pp.149-150).

It was also confirmed that there are 6 members of academic staff who have taken part in research related projects over the reporting period in the roles of researcher, project manager, expert, project executor, and/or organizer of seminars and workshops.

Each study programme has its director who is in charge of ensuring quality of study process and study content as well as coordinating the collaboration of teaching staff within the study programme. The collaboration takes place also on the level of the study field "Management, Administration and Management of Real Property" as the teaching staff is mostly involved in more than one study programme within this study field. The discussion of topics takes place in a formal manner (meetings on the level of study field and study programme) and informal between teaching staff. There are certain collaboration mechanisms as listed above, however, they are in place for those, who already for some reason must work together (joint study course teaching, joint research project, etc.), not among staff members within the programme aside from formal study direction meetings.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The main conclusions are the following:

Joint doctoral study programme "Economics and Business" is a new study programme that needs time to be given a proper evaluation. Selected teaching staff at RTA fulfils necessary requirements to teach and research at the level of doctoral study programme. The collaboration between teaching staff is ensured in a formal and informal way.

The academic staff members involved in the doctoral study programme "Economics and Business" (51345) are in compliance with the requirements posed by the regulatory enactments, their relevant qualifications and proportion of them in the implementation of the study programme are satisfactory, as is their engagement with scientific activities and use of the results and experience gained in them to improve and develop the contents of the study programme and student's development of their doctoral theses.

The main strengths are the following:

- 1) Quality and structure of teaching staff
- 2) The scope of research work, project work and international activities of staff members
- 3) Collaboration mechanisms between study programme management, teaching staff and guest lecturers ensured
- 4) The requirements on the academic staff qualification and proportion according to the regulatory enactments are met
- 5) Highly skilled academic staff members both academically and professionally in the field of the study programme, representing the interdisciplinarity of the programme

The main weaknesses are the following:

- 1) The number of scientific publications with high impact is low
- 2) The collaboration between academic staff members implementing different courses needs more attention, to enable higher contribution to improvements of the study courses aside from the participation in the formal study direction meetings or on occasion collaboration for publication or

project activity.

5. Assessment of the Compliance of the Study Programme "Economics and Business"

Requirements

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Justification provided in Annex 5, enclosed with the Self-Assessment Report of the programme.

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: Justification provided in Annex 6, enclosed with the Self-Assessment Report of the programme.

As the document in Annex 6 certifies, "in the event of termination of the interdepartmental doctoral study program "Economics and Entrepreneurship" (51345), jointly implemented by RTA, ViA, VUC, LUA undertakes to provide Program students with the opportunity to continue their education in LUA doctoral study program and regional economy '(51310)".

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: Justification provided in Annex 7, enclosed with the Self-Assessment Report of the programme.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Justification provided in Annex 5, added to the study direction Self-Assessment - Other mandatory attachments in the Description of Study programme. A certification signed by the rector added in Annex 15.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: The justification is provided in the Annex 8, added to the study programme "Economics and Business " Self-Assessment Report - Other mandatory attachments in the Description of Study programme.

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: Fully compliant

Justification: The justification is provided in the Annex 9, added to the study programme "Economics and Business " Self-Assessment Report - Other mandatory attachments in the Description of Study programme.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Justification provided in the Annex 10 in the Study programme "Economics and Business" Self-Assessment Report.

- 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 study agreement attached to the Other mandatory annexes (named "11 Annex.docx" and "11.pielikums.docx") complies with the mandatory provisions.

- 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: All the study programme documents are provided in both languages (Latvian and English) and comply with the requirements.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Justification: Non relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Document named "12.pielikums.pdf" attached to the study programme mandatory annexed certifies that on 22.08.2019. the programme was given a positive opinion by the Council for Higher Education, allowing the implementation of the programme.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Justification: Not relevant.The

- 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: Fully compliant

Justification: The joint study programme comply with the requirements.

- 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: The academic staff meets the requirements.

15 P5 - Overall rating

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Despite it is a new programme the Experts Team could see its potential.

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: There are shortage of available software licences (e.g. SPSS) for studies and scientific work.

- 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: Academic staff members are fully qualified.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: New program, no evidence, yet.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The main conclusions are the following:

The Economics and Business Doctoral study programme in its current form has got its license less than a year ago. It is not possible to evaluate the operation of the programme based on this very short time period. The Self-Assessment Report is a collection of plans. It lacks the precise description of the division of responsibilities of the cooperating partners. Great efforts have been made to make this study programme attractive to everyone. The study conditions in terms of infrastructure for the study programme "Economics and Business" are very good for doctoral students and teaching staff. Selected teaching staff at RTA fulfils necessary requirements to teach and research at the level of doctoral study programme. The collaboration between teaching staff is ensured in a formal and informal way.

The main strengths of the Economics and Business Doctoral study programme are the following:

- 1) There are no clear evidences yet
- 2) Academic staff are involved in various activities to improve their knowledge and experience in the field both locally and internationally
- 3) High evaluation from student, graduate and employers side
- 4) Quality of RTA, VeA and ViA infrastructure for doctoral students and teachers
- 5) Excellent information resources and libraries
- 6) Quality and structure of teaching staff
- 7) The scope of research work, project work and international activities of staff members
- 8) Collaboration mechanisms between study programme management, teaching staff and guest lecturers ensured

The main weaknesses of the Economics and Business Doctoral study programme are the following:
1) Using several Moodle platforms it's harder to see full status and get full awareness of students satisfaction about studies.

Evaluation of the study programme "Economics and Business"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Economics and Business"

Short-term recommendations

Improve provision of software needed for education purpose, for example, SPSS

Try to unify the three different Moodle systems of the participating institutions.

Create PhD Promotion Council in the study field, in a meanwhile fond partner, where students can defend their promotion works.

Choose the same principle of direct translation of the terms "entrepreneurship" and "business" from Latvian language to English in the name of the study programme, similar to other study programmes of the study field.

Long-term recommendations

Increase number of students in the programme

RTA should advertise the Doctoral programme internationally in order to attract more foreign applicants. They can start to contact first the partner institutions.

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 |
|---|----------------------------|---|
| <p>Pursuant to Section 5, Paragraph 21 of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education, the higher education institution/ college shall ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study direction whilst implementing their internal quality assurance systems:</p> | <p>Partially compliant</p> | <p>Not all necessary elements for Quality Assurance are fully documented and implemented. It is written, that Quality Policy is developed involving external stakeholders and including ESG demands. Design and approval of study programmes are not in accordance with ESG (procedures do not comply with the Law on Higher Education Institutions). For example, there is no documented procedure for nonconformities that allows to show problem solving cases for next evaluation. In RTA Quality Policy is mentioned, that this Policy is oriented on implementation of RTA mission, sustainable development, achievement of strategic goals, ensuring qualitative, laws and standards-based study process and scientific activities. But according to ESG 2015, Quality Policy should support QA system (everyone (staff and students) is responsible and involved in QA), academic integrity, freedom, and position against academic fraud, any intolerance or discrimination of students or staff; external stakeholders should be involved in QA. RTA mentions in its Quality policy application of EFQM Excellence model, but there is no evidence of its implementation.</p> |
| <p>R2 - The cooperation with different organisations from Latvia and abroad implemented within the study direction ensures the achievement of the aims of the study direction.</p> | <p>Fully compliant</p> | <p>RTA and the study field are in close cooperation with different local and international organisations, like providers of professional practice, employers, municipality, regional development institutions, entrepreneurs. RTA and the study field have broad international cooperation opportunities in scientific research, students' and staff mobility, development of joint degree programmes.</p> |

| Requirements | Requirement Evaluation | | Comment |
|--|------------------------|---------------------|---|
| R3 - Compliance of scientific research and artistic creation with the development level thereof (if applicable). | Fully compliant | | Teaching staff of RTA and the study field is very productive in scientific research. Directions of the scientific research comply with the strategic goals of the study field, RTA, and the region. Outcomes of the scientific research are integrated in the study process of the study field and its four study programmes, as also shared with broader public. Joint Doctoral study programme "Economics and Business" was launched in February 2020. RTA organizes international scientific conferences which proceedings are indexed in SCOPUS or Web of Sciences databases. |
| R4 - Elimination of the shortcomings and deficiencies identified during the previous assessment of the study direction, if it has been conducted, or the implementation of the provided recommendations. | | Partially compliant | Three recommendations from seven of the previous Experts Team are still not fully implemented: 1) increase of dissemination of RTA's scientific research, 2) increase of student and staff mobility, and 3) finding the study field's niche. |

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 | Entrepreneurship (42345) | Partially compliant | Partially compliant | Fully compliant | Not relevant | Good |
| 2 | Business Management (43345) | Partially compliant | Partially compliant | Fully compliant | Not relevant | Good |

| No. | Study programme | R5 | R6 | R7 | R8 | Evaluation of the study programme (excellent, good, average, poor) |
|------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---|
| 3 | Management Science (45345) | Partially compliant | Partially compliant | Fully compliant | Fully compliant | Good |
| 4 | Economics and Business (51345) | Fully compliant | Partially compliant | Fully compliant | Fully compliant | Good |

The Dissenting Opinions of the Experts

The Experts are unanimous on the assessment made in the report.