

# Expert group joint opinion

Evaluation Procedure: Assessment of Study Field

Higher Education Institution: University of Daugavpils

Study field: Arts

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

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University of Daugavpils is hereinafter referred to as DU, is a university with high importance for the development and stabilization of the Latgale region and is an important factor of diversity within the HEI scene in Latvia. These goals are clearly defined in strategic documents and are found to be realistic and implemented in daily life of DU. A third aspect, sustainability, seems to be present rather in general declaration than day to day practice.

A solid connection of the DU and its study programs in ART can be seen in documentation (SER 1.1. Basic information, Daugavpils University mission and vision) as well as in practice, judging from interviews with the management, academic staff, students, graduates, and employers from the field during the AIKA experts' visit on site 8./9.8.2023. Not all evaluated study programs have an agreement with other HEIs concerning the continuation of studies in case of a cancellation of the respective study program at DU, as well as not all of the existing contracts take into account changes within the partners' institutions.

The material equipment of DU is sufficient, the study rooms are modern and well equipped, the library is accessible sufficiently and offers a variety of study titles.

DU has established Quality Assurance documents, however lacks to provide a visible mechanism for power balance in asymmetric relationships (for example, in the form of an ombudsperson or similar). Whereas the reception of students' complaints is established, no mechanism of feedback about what actions have been taken is established. Daugavpils University is in a geographic situation, which makes it rather vulnerable to the impact of the geopolitical war situation. Some international relationships that have been important in the past had to be cancelled and the university has not yet established a clear new internationalization policy for the future. As a consequence, international exchanges in the study field ART are rather restricted to some partners in Poland and Lithuania, and the use of international connections has not been practiced by all study programs of the study field ART. A similar inequality applies to the definition of research directions: research goals are set e.g., in the Bachelor and Master study program Music, but not in the study program Arts Management.

Previous recommendations for stabilizing student numbers haven't yet been fully implemented. Systematic activities are already suggested in the internal Study Development Plan of DU for the study field ART, but the self-set goals and intentions haven't yet been materialized. Similarly, no action plan for the acquisition of future attractive teachers is established for any of the Study programs in the Study field ART.

The university has established a bonus system for research publications, but in spite of the fact, that all evaluated study programs are professional and should therefore enhance the connection to the creative industry by employing artistically or management-wise active academic teachers, there is not bonus for artistic or management/production activities of teachers.

Summarizing the findings for the Study programs, the experts state the following:

### PBSP Arts Management

in general, it is recommended to orient the study program much more towards study courses that enhance and build the essential management skills. This orientation is especially important regarding the fact that the future professional integration demands mainly young talents with entrepreneurial skills that correspond to the professional qualification of a Company Owner. It is recommended to further develop the curriculum in respect to new trends and modern contents in international and national Arts Management programs of other HEIs. Research directions should be established, and the realization of international and national exchange activities could attribute to further development of the quality of the SP. It is important to examine whether the internship

possibilities offer enough variety and have a tendency to be progressive according to the subsequent study years.

#### PBSP Design

The study program underwent actualization to adapt it to new situations, and this process should be continued: regular training in more recent technologies should be offered to academic staff and students, relations with the industry could be intensified and links to international partners updated, widened and used more consistently. A motivation package to attract national and international authorities of the field could be a further method to make the study program even more attractive.

#### PBSP Art

The description of the study program offers a good argumentation for its social and conceptual existence, also mentioning the need to realize sustainability at least in the form of keeping talents in the region and to use the educational investments which have been already provided for them. Nevertheless, in the reality of the study program, the significant drop-out rate of students should lead to a self-reflection about the reasons and should motivate the university to take action to solve the problem. The existing agreement ensuring the continuation of the study program in case of its cancellation at DU should be examined and re-negotiated with the relevant partner institution. It would be useful to consider intensifying international guest lecturer activities and a more intense use of resources of other HEI in the country.

#### PBSP Music

As this study program is realized not only in Latvian, but also in English, there is some use of international relations, but the stable partners are still rather limited to Polish and Lithuanian institutions. Establishing a new strategy of internationalization, strengthening the use of international networks and making an even more intense use of master classes from experts outside the institution and outside Latvia would certainly be a catalyst for deepening the quality of the realization of the study program.

Some subprograms attract students through prominent teachers, others seem to be less attractive which could be seen as challenge for the university to find mechanisms to improve the acquisition of students and perhaps also the acquisition of even more attractive teachers. During interviews at the AIKA experts' visit on site 8./9.8.2023, some study directors and some graduates articulated the wish of having a robust PR strategy for attracting international students.

#### PMSP Music

The goals, aims and learning outcomes of the Bachelor and Master study program are too similar one to the other, and the goals, aims and learning outcomes of the Master study program should be adapted to the adequate level.

If the Bachelor study program opens up even more to exchanging with other national and international partner institutions, this impulse could also be used to offer Master students' even more varied resources and enhancing the self-reflection of the university about how to refine and vary assessment methods.

A central development challenge is the attraction of students and the visibility of excellent teachers and students in Latvian and international context.

## **I - Assessment of the Study Field**

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### 1.1 Management of the Study Field

#### Analysis

##### 1.1.1.

The aims of the study field are clearly defined and attainable. The study field and the relevant study programs comply with the main directions of the strategic development of the higher education institution/ college and meet the needs and the development trends of the society and national economy. The interconnection of the study programs included in the study field is clear and logical.

General aims for the Study Field ART

Apart from general goals such as supporting academic freedom, research, development of sciences and creative processes as declared in DU strategy 2015-2020, ([https://du.lv/wpcontent/uploads/2021/12/DU\\_attistibas\\_strategija\\_25.01.2021.-converted.pdf](https://du.lv/wpcontent/uploads/2021/12/DU_attistibas_strategija_25.01.2021.-converted.pdf) (25.0)), DU declares two main aims (SER, 1. Information on the Higher Education Institution/College):

1 Supporting and enhancing "regional development"

2 Contributing "to the development of a sustainable future society" and "promoting the sustainable development of the Latgale region and the whole country" (SER, 1. Information on the Higher Education Institution/College).

The evaluated Study Programs (Professional SP Music 42212/47212 (Bachelor and Master level), Professional SP Art (Master level), Professional SP Music Management 42345 (Bachelor level) and Professional SP Design 42214 (Bachelor level)) do clearly fulfill the first aim of Supporting and enhancing regional development. This conclusion comes out of the presented documentation (SER 3.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programs) as well as through interviews with the management of DU, the Study Directors, academic staff, employers and graduates of DU within the experts' visit on site (8./9. August 2023).

Concerning the aim of sustainability, no specific activities are visible within the design of Study programs to reflect and actively enhance sustainability.

Specific aims of the Study Field ART

The Self Evaluation report of DU contains a SWOT analysis defining the following specific aims of the Study Field ART (view SER, 2.1. Management of the Study Field):

1 to support "knowledgeable, skilled and motivated young artists...(as) most important human resource of Latvia's creative profession and the basis of the country's future growth"

2 to "promote the well-being of Latvian citizens"

3 "raising the education level of the population"

4 "strengthening the national identity"

5 "wider accessibility and preservation of cultural values"

6 "promoting sustainable development"

7 "mainly strengthen Latvian and Latgale region cultural identity"

During the experts' visit, interviews with the management of DU, with students, academic staff and, very importantly, with employers from the Field, showed that the aims 1 to 5 and certainly 7 are realistic and attainable. Promoting sustainable development will be a goal to explore more in future development.

Humanities and Arts together with Natural and Social Sciences belong to the three declared main areas of strategic development according to the Self Evaluation report of DU (SER, 1. Information on the HEI, DU strategic specialization areas) and according to the DU strategy 2015-2020 ([https://du.lv/wpcontent/uploads/2021/12/DU\\_attistibas\\_strategija\\_25.01.2021.-converted.pdf](https://du.lv/wpcontent/uploads/2021/12/DU_attistibas_strategija_25.01.2021.-converted.pdf) (25.0)). The five evaluated Study programs belong to the study field ART and are therefore compliant with the strategic documentation of DU for the period 2015-2020.

The interconnection of SPs:

On the one hand, the five evaluated Study Programs are interconnected in the senses of sharing some of the common subjects, not only within the Faculty of Art and Music, but also with other faculties and departments, like the Faculty of Humanities (e.g. Department of Literature), Faculty of Social Sciences (e.g. Department of Psychology), Faculty of Economics and Faculty of Pedagogy and Psychology. (SER 16). On the other hand, the evaluated Study Programs are not interconnected in the sense of activities that would bring together the academic staff and students of all ART programs in a systematic way (no students' meetings organized, no formalization of interdisciplinary projects). Activities might exist in reality, but according to the finding at the experts' visit (8./9. August 2023) there are no systematic tools for interconnecting the different disciplines.

#### 1.1.2.

The higher education institution / college has identified and analyzed the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the study field and integrated them into development planning documents.

The HEI has made a detailed SWOT analysis accessible through the SER (2.1.2. SWOT analysis of the study field, pages 16-18). Further strategic goals and self-recommendations for improvement have been listed in a strategic document without date and author, featured in the Annexes as document 2.1.2 Study field development plan (ENG).

SER states correctly that the strength of the ART programs consists in the capacity to fulfill realistically set aims and goals (see the above evaluation of point 1.1.1. of this report) .

On the side of weaknesses and threats, the following issues are identified (SER,

#### 2.1. Management of the Study Field)

- "insufficient finances (for the maintenance and renewal of instruments)"

- "succession of lecturers in certain study courses

- difficulty to successfully provide a generation exchange

During experts' visit on site (8./9.8.2023) study directors, academic staff and students repeatedly raised the need of further internationalization and exploration of new international partnerships

For the Professional Bachelor SP ARTS, the following specific needs have been identified within the Self Evaluation of DU (2.1.2. SWOT analysis of the study field):

- "more compliance of skills with the requirements of the labor market"

- "increase efficiency and international competition"

During the experts' visit on site, these self identified challenges and needs were partly confirmed by graduates and employers (requirements of the labor market) and by students and graduates (more international competition): it appeared that the Study program is not yet that much present in employers' search and that graduates would wish more practice connected formats. As in the whole context of the Study Field ART, international interconnections were specifically wished for by graduates of the study program looking back to the study time.

#### 1.1.3.

During experts' visit on site (8./9. August 2023), DU was in process of preparing an essential restructuration of the management structure of the whole university, merging Faculties together (e.g. three until now separate Faculties of Social sciences, Humanities and Art will be merged together into one single Faculty). The Dean of Music and Art Faculty has been deposed of his function and the expert team had no occasion to speak to him.

It is too early to assess whether the structural changes lead to an improvement of management, efficiency and quality. The fact of a restructuration shows that DU is able to take action. As a result of the rector-centered organization structure of Latvian universities in general and DU in specific, changes can apparently be realized in a relatively short term. It's up to further evaluation, to what degree the process has been conceived and realized not only in the vertical

management structure, but also in the horizontal structure of academic staff and students. No mechanisms for balancing asymmetric relationships are visible. Furthermore, the management of the study field ART did not yet react to geopolitical changes impacting international relationships: no visible new strategy for gaining new international partners for the Study programs of the study field ART has been established.

#### 1.1.4.

DU established and published a set of regulations concerning

- The admission of national and international students are clearly defined in Mandatory Annexes, I - Information on the HEI, 1.2: List of the main internal laws and regulations, document no. 6. DU regulations on students at DU approved by the senate 17.12.2018 for national students and document no 13. Admission regulations for international students applying to full-time studies, approved by the senate 25.10.2021 with amendments made 9.3.2022 for international applicants.

- The recognition of the study period and professional experience in Mandatory is defined and precise in: Annexes, I - Information on the HEI, 1.2: List of the main internal laws and regulations,, document no 10 "DU Regulation on the recognition of competences acquired outside formal education and through professional experience and the learning outcomes achieved in prior learning"

- The assessment of students' achievements and learning outcomes is defined in the Mandatory Annexes, I - Information on the HEI, 1.2: List of the main internal laws and regulations, document no. 6. DU regulations on students at DU approved by the senate 17.12.2018 for national students - passages 12 and 13. The rules contain the arithmetic principles, the grades, the criteria for assessment and the assessment procedures. Principles of observing the learning outcomes are explained sufficiently as general rules for the whole university.

During experts' visit, academic staff and students confirmed that the assessment process is understood and applied in practice.

#### 1.1.5.

The relevance of assessment methods and procedures for achieving the aims of study programs and the needs of students is analyzed.

In the DU regulations on studies at DU, approved by senate 17.12.2018, (Mandatory Annexes, I - Information on the HEI, 1.2. List of the main internal laws and regulations, document no. 6, accessible through:

[https://du.lv/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/ENG-NOLIKUMS\\_PAR\\_STUDIJAM\\_DU\\_2018-1-1.pdf](https://du.lv/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/ENG-NOLIKUMS_PAR_STUDIJAM_DU_2018-1-1.pdf)), DU presents a clear description of competences and duties of lecturers assessing the result of study courses, these system of study plans, the procedure and principles of final and state examinations as well as the continual assessment of study courses are clear and transparent. The methods, principles and procedures are described for the whole DU from the viewpoint of science studies. This fact is visible mainly in the description of Assessment criteria (DU regulations on studies at DU, 13. Evaluation of learning outcomes, accessible through [https://du.lv/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/ENG-NOLIKUMS\\_PAR\\_STUDIJAM\\_DU\\_2018-1-1.pdf](https://du.lv/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/ENG-NOLIKUMS_PAR_STUDIJAM_DU_2018-1-1.pdf)) and in the description of Final and State Examination rules (DU regulations on studies at DU, 15. Final Examinations and State examinations). The rules for final and state examination do not include any specific rules for Arts (e.g. they do not mention final concerts or projects).

The responsibility for a self-reflected use of assessment methods and procedures that takes into account the goals of achieving the aims of study programs is delegated to the lecturers and heads of study courses. Mechanisms of control for the whole of the process are established through various institutes, like the Council of Studies (SER 9), the supervision is executed by the Vice rector for studies in cooperation with the faculty dean and the head of the department of Studies. Further institutions are the Study field council (SER 10) and the Faculty council supervising studies and activities and their economic impact (SER 10).

#### 1.1.6.

DU has established a Code of Ethics in Latvian (see Mandatory Annexes, I - Information on the HEI, 1.2. List of the main internal laws and regulations, document no. 4).

DU imposes clear rules for delivering theses and plagiarism control, stating that in case of a plagiarism case, a mechanism is established to solve the problem through action of the Dean of Faculty and an Expert Commission named by the Dean. (See Mandatory Annexes, I - Information on the HEI, 1.2. List of the main internal laws and regulations, document no.12 Procedures of thesis submission for plagiarism control at DU).

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

DU states two main strategic general goals: To develop the region Latgale and to support and implement sustainability. Concerning the first goal, the aim has been strongly realized and the specific aims of the Study Field Art do comply with the general aim of supporting and developing the artistic and cultural development of the region. They are as following:

to support "knowledgeable, skilled and motivated young artists...(as) most important human resource of Latvia's creative profession and the basis of the country's future growth, to promote the well-being of Latvian citizens, to raise the education level of the population, to strengthen the national identity, to enable wider accessibility and preservation of cultural values and to mainly strengthen Latvian and Latgale region cultural identity (SER pages 15-17). Concerning the aim of promoting sustainable development" (SER p. 7'), no activity is recognizable in the field of ART. Given the importance the mission statement of DU attributes to research, support and implement sustainability, effort should be taken to realize this aim also in the field of ART. DU has clearly defined regulations for studies, assessment, admission, recognition of practice and qualification. The university comes out of a clear tradition as an important supporter of the region and has established a network of institutes that monitor studies and work efficiency, such as the University Council, the Constitutional Assembly, the Academic Senate, the Academic Arbitration Court, the Council of Studies, the Council of Science, the Faculty council, the Study field council and other tools providing control and supervision. The organizational structure and leadership tradition is rector orientated and it is up to further evaluation to examine whether the power balance of the different institutional councils and functions are functional. Out of the presented documentation and the interview during the experts' visit on site it seems that the issue of how to balance asymmetric relations (e.g. teacher-student, rector-dean, head of department-teacher etc.) has not yet been raised and discussed. The university has established various ways of self-reflection, like the Study Development Plan or the SWOT analysis within the SER. The identified weaknesses, like the challenge of finding future qualified teachers in some branches, the need to actively attract students, the challenge to find new international cooperations as a consequence of strong political changes and others are not yet interconnected with strategic documents.

The resource of having various artistic disciplines within one university is not yet fully explored.

#### Strengths

- 1.Clear tradition and function as an important regional supporter of scientific and artistic development in the region.
- 2.Clear mission statement
- 3.Well established general system of assessment and study structures
- 4.Resources of many faculties and departments, that can supply the study field ART with study courses.

#### Weaknesses.

- 1.DU presented its DU Development strategy for the period 2015-2020, but not yet for the period

2020-2025. Strategic planning seems thus to be slow.

2. Not yet sufficient use of the potential of interdisciplinary ART studies.

3. Not yet established mechanisms for power balance in asymmetrical relations

4. No visible strategy for building up new generations of attractive teachers

5. Not yet clearly established strategy for attracting national and international students

## **1.2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System**

### **Analysis**

#### **1.2.1.**

DU has thoroughly described its commitment to quality through its development strategy for 2015-2020. In SER there was no mention of a subsequent strategy being publicly available, a new strategy document was very recently put in place and provided for an expert group on site. Gap in strategy may raise questions about the institution's forward-looking quality assurance plans. The existing strategy, which appears to be accessible based on referenced links, encapsulates the institution's vision, mission, and objectives, emphasizing quality in education and research. DU's adherence to the ISO 9001:2017 standard indicates the establishment of a quality management system (QMS) that aims for consistent educational services and transparent processes. Various university councils, such as the Council of Studies and Study Field Council, play roles in aligning study programs with the university's objectives and ensuring their execution.

DU staff, faculty, students and alumni which experts met during site visit on 2023.08.08-09 confirmed that declared elements of the QA system are in place. However, reluctance to comment on possible suggestions for improvement on study programs from teachers and the majority of students, suggests passivity and reliance on formal university councils, indicating lack of ownership of the study programs by part of the stakeholders. On the other hand, a meeting with students on 08.09 indicated that they usually approach and clarify their issues directly with teachers informally, official QA questionnaires are distributed, and there is the support of student council, if necessary.

Based on information provided by State Education Quality Service (IKVD) in their letter to AIKA of 2023.08.10, which was made available to experts, the amount of various complaints, some of which also concern study programs in study field "Arts", over past 3 years (since 2020) is apparently relatively high (14 various complaints). If participants of the study process decide to complain to state services, it might indicate problems with the functioning QA system within DU, as some of the complaints (for example, complaints related to evaluation) would usually be resolved by internal mechanisms. This suggests that either QA system is not necessarily functioning as described, or stakeholders of the education process are not fully aware of it.

#### **1.2.2.**

DU has established councils and committees, such as the Council of Studies, Council of Science, Faculty Council, and Study Field Council, which play roles in the development, review, and feedback mechanisms for study programs (structure described and explained in chapters 1.2, 2.1. and 2.2 in SER). These bodies are designed to ensure that study programs align with the university's objectives and are efficiently executed.

Based on abstract descriptions of above-mentioned formal bodies in SER and meetings with students, employers and graduates on 09.08.2023, there is a lack of clarity concerning timeliness and relevance of the current procedures and feedback mechanisms. Few years of absence of a more recent strategy might suggest potential gaps or outdated approaches in the university's quality assurance processes.

While SER mentions various councils and their roles (chapter 2.2 of study field description and chapters 3.2 of all study programs discussed), it does not provide explicit details on the feedback mechanisms, especially regarding feedback to students, employers, and graduates. The clarity and



accessibility of these feedback mechanisms for all stakeholders remain uncertain. Based on students, employers and graduates on 09.08.2023, it is evident that DU has close ties with the local community and feedback mechanisms are mainly informal, which contributes towards relevance of study programs. Stakeholders did not show enough understanding of their ownership of development and review of study programs, apparently relying on official university bodies and did not indicate that feedback of changes has been provided to them in a systematic way.

While DU has established formal bodies to oversee the development and review of study programs, the actual process of curriculum development and periodic review is not explicitly outlined in the SER. This raises questions about how these programs are kept up-to-date. The absence of a formalized, transparent feedback loop for program review could potentially limit the institution's ability to adapt to external changes in the professional arts field. As was observed during meetings with stakeholders on 09.08.2023, the largely informal nature and non-systematic feedback processes may not be sufficient for comprehensive program development and review.

#### 1.2.3.

DU has established councils and committees (SER chapter 1.2), which are responsible for the academic and administrative decision-making processes. These bodies suggest a framework for addressing academic concerns, including student complaints and suggestions.

SER does not explicitly detail an overarching mechanism for the reception of student complaints and suggestions. It is unclear how DU ensures the effectiveness of such a process, how improvements are implemented based on feedback, and how students are informed about the opportunity to voice their concerns or provide suggestions. There is no explicit mention of how feedback is relayed back to students once they've submitted their complaints or suggestions.

Based on meetings with staff and students on 08.-09.08.2023, it is evident that a formal questionnaire system as well as an active student council body is in place. Some concerns are also addressed through informal means. However, it was impossible to fully determine the transparency, accessibility, and efficiency of the process for students. Evidence of complaints concerning evaluation to State Education Quality Service (IKVD), as indicated in IKVD letter to AIKA of 10.08.2023, confirms the need for better involvement of students.

#### 1.2.4.

DU structured organizational framework, which is evident from chapter 1. of SER and study program analysis, statistical student data provided encompasses data collection and feedback mechanisms. From the provided content, it's evident that DU is cognizant of its statistical data, including the number of students, graduates, and the range of study programs offered. This awareness aligns with the university's development strategy, mission, and vision, suggesting a coherent approach to data-driven decision-making and strategic planning.

This suggests that although SER does provide insights into the university's organizational structure and has awareness of statistical data, the efficiency and regularity of this data collection remain ambiguous, which leaves room for questions about the effectiveness of this process.

#### 1.2.5.

Information published on DU website, as well as its study information study system is in place and up to date, and provides relevant information for students and applicants about study programs, and appears to correspond to the information available in official registers like VIIS and E-platform. This is a positive indication of the university's commitment to transparency and accessibility of information. Information is provided in Latvian and English.

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

#### Conclusions :

DU has demonstrated a commitment to quality assurance through its development strategy for 2015-2020. The institution's adherence to the ISO 9001:2017 standard and the establishment of various councils and committees reflect its dedication to maintaining high educational standards and transparent processes. However, the absence of a subsequent strategy from 2020 until 2023 raises questions concerning the university's forward-looking quality assurance plans.

The university's feedback mechanisms, while seemingly in place, lack clarity in terms of their timeliness, relevance, and accessibility to all stakeholders. The informal nature of some feedback channels, while fostering close ties with the local community, might not be as effective in addressing all concerns systematically.

DU's data collection mechanism, aligned with its development strategy, mission, and vision, suggests a data-driven approach to decision-making. The efficiency and regularity of this process are not explicitly detailed, leading to potential ambiguities.

The information on DU's website and its study information system is commendable for its accuracy and alignment with official registers, reflecting the institution's commitment to transparency.

#### Strengths:

1. Close ties with local community
2. Student representation

#### Weaknesses:

1. Ambiguity in feedback mechanisms
2. Reliance on informal feedback channels
3. Unclear communication channels for feedback relay

### Assessment of the requirement [1]

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

#### **Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

While DU has demonstrated commitment to quality assurance and has mechanisms in place for the continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study field, there are areas of concern that prevent a full compliance rating. Specifically, the gap of a subsequent strategy post-2020 (which included disrupting events like pandemics and war in Ukraine) until mid-2023, ambiguity in feedback mechanisms, and concerns regarding stakeholder engagement and feedback as well as evidence of complaints to IKVD contribute to potential weaknesses in the assurance of continuous development and improvement. Given that two of the individual points (1.1;1.6) is evaluated as "Partially compliant," the overall requirement R1 is also deemed "Partially compliant".

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

#### **Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

DU has demonstrated its commitment to quality assurance through its development strategy for 2015-2020 and adherence to the ISO 9001:2017 standard. This indicates the establishment of a quality policy. Furthermore, the presence of various councils and committees suggests procedures in place to ensure the quality of higher education. Although formally compliant with requirements for established policy and procedures for assuring the quality of higher education,

the gap of a subsequent strategy post-2020, ambiguity in feedback mechanisms, and evidence of relatively high number of complaints to IKVD raise questions about the effectiveness and forward-looking nature of the institution's quality assurance procedures.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

DU has established councils and committees, which are involved in the development, review, and feedback mechanisms for study programs. These structures ensure that study programs align with the university's objectives and undergo regular review and supervision.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

Information provided in SER suggests an existing framework for student evaluation, which is developed and accessible. DU has established criteria, conditions, and procedures for the evaluation of students' results, it aligns with the intended learning outcomes of the study programs.

- 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

DU has established internal regulatory mechanisms, including regulations on academic positions and procedures for evaluating the scientific activity of its academic staff. DU conducts annual evaluations of its teaching staff, assessing research, teaching, and organizational contributions. Additionally, the involvement of staff in various artistic and developmental projects, coupled with opportunities for continuous education and international cooperation, indicates the necessary basis for maintaining and enhancing staff qualifications and work quality.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

DU has demonstrated mechanisms for collecting and analyzing information on various performance indicators. The university's approach, as evidenced by its adherence to the ISO 9001:2017 standard and the presence of various councils and committees, suggests a commitment to data-driven decision-making. Based on SER and some evidence from meetings on site, mechanisms and systems for collection and analysis on study achievements of the students, employment of the graduates, satisfaction of the students, efficiency of the work of the academic staff, study funds available, and the key performance indicators appear to be in place.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

DU has demonstrated a commitment to quality assurance, indicating a foundation for continuous improvement and efficient performance of the study field. However, there are areas of concern:

1. The gap of a subsequent strategy post-2020 raises questions about the institution's forward-looking plans for quality assurance; it is unclear how the newly accepted strategy will be communicated to stakeholders and put in place.
2. While DU has established feedback mechanisms, there's ambiguity regarding their clarity, accessibility, and how they are utilized for continuous improvement.
3. It remains unclear how stakeholders are actively encouraged and committed to providing relevant feedback. Meetings with various stakeholders (students, employers, staff etc.) demonstrated certain passivity and resistance to change as well as reservation to provide feedback for continuous improvement of the study field.
4. Complaints to state quality services might indicate problems with the effectiveness of the local QA system.

Such shortcomings leave the adaptability of the study field with potential gaps and contribute towards weakness in the assurance of continuous development and improvement.

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

#### **Analysis**

##### **1.3.1.**

The study field "Arts" is funded from the state budget financing for studies (subsidy) and tuition fees. The cost calculation for one student in the programs of the study field was made at the Department of Finance and Accounting of DU, including the salary fund and the employer's SSIA, the costs of business trips, materials, energy resources and inventory costs, the costs of purchasing books, equipment and investments, as well as the costs for social security of students. (SER, 2.3.1.) For the development of science in the DU study field "Arts", funds for the development of the science base are allocated from the Ministry of Education and Science. The study field obtains the funds intended for the development of science on the basis of the scientific achievements and indicators of the lecturers for the previous year, which are evaluated by the DU Department of Science. The assessment of the efficiency of the scientific work of the academic staff of DU is carried out in accordance with the "Procedure for evaluating the effectiveness of the scientific work of the academic staff of the University of Daugavpils" (available from the internal network of DU). (SER, 2.3.1.)

##### **1.3.2.**

DU is an educational and scientific institution with a vision to become a Baltic-wide center of excellence in strategic specialization areas with the status of a scientific university and to provide an ecosystem for knowledge and technology transfer (DU Development strategy for 2022-2028). In order to work on the gradual reach of the vision in mind, the DU has established a strong and well-considered provision of the study field of Arts, ensuring the best available resources for teaching staff and students including, but not limited to musical instruments and equipment (for preparation, combination, integration, visualization and distribution of creative, study and research materials), information networks (internet, intranet, Moodle), databases with free access (library network, book resource databases, DU research center databases, scientific publications, including Web of Science and Scopus), archives with various research materials, services (administrative, financial, IT and network support services, access to official statistical data), computer applications and software (Standard Office, 42 SPSS, GIS, data visualization online tools and software, online media), which enable artistic creation, research and provide a flexible and student-oriented environment. (SER, 2.3.3.)

The library provides students with access to high-quality information relevant to the field of study,

offering the information resources in its collection for study and research purposes. It is also possible to order resources and materials from other libraries. (SER, 2.3.3.)

DU library is open 9 hours a day, 45 hours a week. The reading room is open on weekdays from 9:00 to 20:30 and on Saturdays from 10:00 to 17:00. The bibliography and information sector is open on working days from 9:00 to 17:00. Books/sheet music can also be handed in outside of the library's working hours, using the book/sheet music handing machines at the university buildings at Vienības iela 13 and at Parādes iela 1.

The total area of the library premises is 1000 m<sup>2</sup>, students have 2 reading rooms with free access to the collection, 2 subscriptions, Bibliography and information sector, 20 computers, 2 copy machines, 3 multifunctional devices, 2 printers, Internet, including wireless Internet access.

The library offers the following services: home delivery of books and sheet music; use of literature, databases, e-catalogues and other resources in reading rooms; electronic ordering and reservation of books to take home, extension of the term of use; computer and internet use; remote usage of EBSCO, ScienceDirect and Scopus databases; remote use of final theses developed by DU; consultations in searching for information in e-catalogues and databases; interlibrary loan and subscription services; student training for working with e-catalogues and databases; copying, printing and scanning services. (SER, 2.3.3.)

The collection of the library is 267,655 copies, including 233,868 books and 20,322 periodicals (368 titles). Of these, the library offers 13,465 sheet music collections and 25,594 books related to music literature, history, theory, methodology, pedagogy and psychology. The library contains the most essential reference materials for musicians. (SER, 2.3.3.)

For the development of studies and bachelor's theses, as well as for the creation of teaching aids, the faculty's computers, equipped with the relevant software, are offered (Cubasis, Sibelius, Sound Forge, Sonor, Adobe photoshop, Corel Draw 2019, AutoCad, 3ds Max, Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Flash etc.).

A unified system and procedures have been established for the improvement and purchase of material, methodological, informative, etc. provision.

DU academic staff (assistants, lecturers, assistant professors, associate professors, professors, research assistants, researchers and leading researchers) within the available DU budget financing have the right to receive remuneration for the citation characterizing Hirsch index in SCOPUS and/or Web of Science (hereinafter referred to as WoS) databases. The amount of compensation is calculated according to the "Procedure in which the academic staff of Daugavpils University receives remuneration for the Hirsch index".

Funding for the improvement of the educational material and technical base (additional improvement of auditoriums and laboratories, purchase of educational literature and modern research equipment, purchase of visual aids and software, etc.) is mainly provided from various projects (e.g. ERDF, ESF). (SER, 2.3.1.)

### 1.3.3.

Funds for the development in the DU study field "Arts" are allocated from the Ministry of Education and Science. The study field obtains the funds intended for the development of science on the basis of the scientific achievements and indicators of the lecturers for the previous year, which are evaluated by the DU Department of Science. (SER, 2.3.)

The implementation of the programs of the "Arts" direction is ensured by the following infrastructure:

- \* musical instruments and equipment (for preparation, combination, integration, visualization and distribution of creative, study and research materials),
- \* information networks (internet, intranet, Moodle),
- \* databases with free access (library network, book resource databases, DU research centre databases, scientific publications, including Web of Science and Scopus),

\*archives with various research materials, services (administrative, financial, IT and network support services, access to official statistical data),

\*computer applications and software (Standard Office, 42 SPSS, GIS, data visualization online tools and software, online media),

which enable artistic creation, research and provide a flexible and student-oriented environment.

Replenishment of the library collection and subscription of databases take place at the request of the lecturers of the faculties. Applications for the purchase of books are regularly (every academic year) reviewed and approved by the DU Budget Commission, thus implementing a mechanism for purchasing the latest publications for the DU library. The library does not digitize the collection, but the final theses of the DU students are uploaded to the library's information system. The library regularly informs the faculties about the latest literature, database trials and subscription options. (SER, 2.3.3.)

The library provides students with access to high-quality information relevant to the field of study, offering the information resources in its collection for study and research purposes. It is also possible to order resources and materials from other libraries. (SER, 2.3.3.)

The collection of the library is 267,655 copies, including 233,868 books and 20,322 periodicals (368 titles). Of these, the library offers 13,465 sheet music collections and 25,594 books related to music literature, history, theory, methodology, pedagogy and psychology. The library contains the most essential reference materials for musicians. (SER, 2.3.3.)

#### 1.3.4.

The electronic study (e-study) environment is offered based on the fact that the majority of students who wish to study are residents of the Latgale region and travel to the place of study from Preiļi, Balvi, Karsava and other towns and villages of Latgale. Thus, the study process is partially based on several principles of the e-study environment, including the individualization and accessibility of education, which is provided as students' independent work, emphasizing also the availability of electronic sources in English (study course descriptions, study and methodical sources). Forms and methods of learning organization suitable for the e-study environment are used. One of the principles of the e-study environment is the thematic structuring and adaptation of the learning content within the specific educational program according to the specifics of the e-study environment in close connection with the content of study course programs, study plans, including the planned tests. DU has a developed e-study environment (Moodle), and as a result of providing direct communication (e-mail, consultations), methodological and scientific information is available in each study course (SER, 3.3.1.).

DU lecturers systematically use the e-study environment Moodle (<https://estudijas.du.lv/>) and place various study materials in it: video recordings of lectures, seminars and practical lessons, which are a support for students' independent work. Activating the e-study environment is a very useful and valuable innovation and an important step that contributes to the maintenance of a critical mass of students and ensures the preparation of specialists from and for the region of Eastern Latvia. For each course students have access to the following information: study course description, criteria of assessment, materials for student independent work, etc.

However, a higher Moodle platform literacy by the teaching staff is encouraged (through participation in various professional development courses as offered by the DU) in order to use the platform to its full potential.

At the experts' visit on site (8./9.8.2023), it was evident, that not all pedagogues make use of the potential of Moodle resources and some use the system in a very basic way.

#### 1.3.5.

Election to an academic position takes place in accordance with the requirements of "Regulations on elections to academic positions at Daugavpils University"

(<https://du.lv/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Daugavpils-University-Constitution.pdf>) . According to the regulations, academic positions at DU are professor, associate professor, leading researcher, docent/assistant professor, lecturer, researcher, assistant, research assistant. The number of positions of assistants, lecturers, docents is determined by the Rector according to the amount of the study work to be performed, upon the proposal of the Faculty Council. The number of positions of researchers, leading researchers and scientific assistants is determined by the Rector according to the need and funding possibilities, upon the proposal of the Institute/Scientific Council. The number of associate professor positions in the relevant science or art subfields is determined by the rector according to the need and funding opportunities after approval by the DU Senate. Information about vacancies for academic positions and competition announcements are published on the DU website and/or in the official publication of the Republic of Latvia "Latvijas Vēstnesis", thus giving an opportunity to any interested person to apply for a job at DU (SER, 2.3.4.).

DU can elect both citizens of the Republic of Latvia and foreign citizens whose academic education and professional qualifications meet the requirements of the science or art branch, study and research work at DU, and who are proficient in the national language and possess professional English.

Study programs have implemented some, but continue to have wide development opportunities, taking into account the constant changes in the labor market and the most important development trends in the world of art/music, as well as the development of new specializations. At the moment, there are various cooperation projects and agreements with various Latvian and foreign cultural, educational and scientific research institutions, municipalities and private institutions, for creating new and competitive artistic collectives of various orientations, attracting of young and talented lecturers from Latvian and foreign universities of music, attracting of professional artists – representatives of EU countries – to conduct master classes, increasing the artistic creativity, scientific and methodical potential of lecturers and introducing new teaching methods and forms of work organization suitable for full-fledged professional studies, gradual and targeted raising of the study program's prestige not only at a regional, but also national level. (SER, 2.1.2.)

During the on-site visit and meeting with the management of HEI – Acting Vice Rector for the Studies Dr.biol., prof. Inese Kokina – it was made evident that even though it is a challenge to attract qualified teaching staff, there is also an upside that the DU as an employer can offer. Among other things, it is a flexibility (convenient times for lectures, proximity, etc.), additional bonuses in research (e.g. internal grants for developing research process, individual grants for participation in conferences, additional grants for publications, etc.) and others. These aspects were also emphasized and valued by the teaching staff themselves during the on-site visit.

There are opportunities provided by EU education programs, which should be continued (Socrates/Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci, Jaunatne) for improving the education of teaching staff and students and exchanging experience. These preconditions are essential in order to ensure the growth and competitiveness of the DU study field Arts in the global market in the long term. (SER, 2.1.2.)

### 1.3.6.

In cooperation with the Professional Development Center (PIC), staff has the opportunity to participate in continuing education courses, improving, deepening and perfecting their existing knowledge.

DU academic staff (assistants, lecturers, assistant professors, associate professors, professors, research assistants, researchers and leading researchers) within the available DU budget financing have the right to receive remuneration for the citation characterizing Hirsch index in SCOPUS and/or Web of Science (hereinafter referred to as WoS) databases. The amount of compensation is calculated according to the "Procedure in which the academic staff of Daugavpils University receives remuneration for the Hirsch index". DU academic staff have the opportunity to participate in the

annual Daugavpils University research project competition and receive funding for the implementation of scientific research (SER, 2.3.1.).

However, more could be done for the further development of the teaching staff, especially in terms of the English language literacy. This aspect is not insignificant in order to promote the attraction of international students (and therefore - resources) and to foster a more professional environment.

#### 1.3.7.

At the end of each study year, academic staff workloads for the next study year are planned in the respective structural units. Taking into account the results of the evaluation of the relevant study courses of the students of the program and the self-analysis of the academic activity performed by the lecturers, the suitability of the teaching staff for the development and teaching of the specific study courses is evaluated. Approval of academic workloads takes place in accordance with the "Procedures for recording the workload of academic staff at the DU". (SER, 3.4.5.)

During the on-site visit at the DU on August 8 and 9, 2023, those representatives of the teaching staff the experts met spoke highly and were mostly positive about the balance of the academic, research and administrative (when applicable) workload. The teaching staff felt valued and motivated, displaying strong loyalty to the DU, to the region and their students, felt they could provide the individual attention towards their students, yet mentioned some disadvantages, like being connected to work 24/7 (which is often a downside of smaller, close-knit communities) which, on the other hand, can affect their long term health and wellbeing.

However, according to the evaluation of the improvements made by KPMG Baltics SIA in 2022, currently, DU does not conduct employee satisfaction surveys, but it is necessary to identify the needs of the staff needs, paying particular attention to identifying the interests of the staff and measuring their perceptions (Development strategies of Daugavpils University 2022-2028, p.145)

#### 1.3.8.

In order to ensure the attraction of students, some of the programs are offered in both Latvian and English, meaning that the students from foreign countries who want to obtain a competitive higher level bachelor's degree in music in Latvia can be included. The study programs are designed in such a way that the qualifications of the graduates correspond to the modern and perspective view of Latvian education, scientific research, music and art understanding. Therefore, a team of professional, highly qualified teaching staff is formed in the Faculty of Music and Arts, involving foreign professors, who, in close cooperation, work on improving the quality of study content, artistic issues and scientific research, regularly evaluating the quality of the program, organizing various activities and projects. (SER, 2.3.7.) As mentioned already above, according to Acting Vice Rector for the Studies Dr.biol., prof. Inese Kokina, even though it is a challenge to attract qualified teaching staff, there is also an upside that the DU as an employer can offer. Among other things, it is a flexibility (personalized attention and approach, convenient times for lectures, proximity, etc.). The flexibility is one of the appealing aspects for the students (e.g. part-time students, working students, distance learning students, etc.)

During the on-site visit at the DU, the students of "Art Management", "Art", and "Design" mentioned that some courses continue to be available online even after the COVID-19 virus pandemic thanks to the respective professors. Students combining studies with work life and/or living further away from the DU see this as an additional benefit which provides more freedom and flexibility, but, on the other hand, limits the networking and the benefits of live interaction.

The DU Student Service Center (SSC) operates at DU and its main task is to inform DU students about current issues, as well as to provide consultations and services.

Students can use various DU rooms and facilities: the computer room, auditorium for consultations, meetings, library rooms for literature analysis, preparation of independent and research papers, sound library, as well as specially equipped rooms for holding conferences, study and extracurricular



activities. Lecturers and students can receive medical support at the DU Health Office, where first aid in case of various illnesses is provided by a physician's assistant (paramedic).

The Psychological Support Center (PSC) operates at DU, which provides psychological support to DU students and employees in solving various daily problems in personal, work related, or educational matters. (SER, 2.3.8.) There is a room in the Student Council with an area to relax. The Student Council has their social media channels and addresses are next to the entrance of the room.

According to the information available on the website of the DU (<https://du.lv/en/about-us/environmental-accessibility/>) the institution has identified and invested greatly in the necessary support for students with special needs. For example, the following environmental accessibility elements are available in the main study building at Vienibas Street 13, in Daugavpils- adapted bathrooms on each floor of the building, elevator buttons with Braille and provided audio information about the reached floor, an outdoor lift for people with reduced mobility to get to the entrance of the building. Also, there is information in Braille on the class number plates all throughout the building and the entrance door of the building is equipped with an opening mechanism and an opening button. Also, in the library there is a computer for reading books with a text magnifier program and height-adjustable table.

Nursery rooms have been created for new parents who are studying – for changing and feeding their babies, and a playroom – for keeping the children of students busy during their parents' classes.

In 2016, in the nomination "Education for all", DU received the Apeirons award, which was awarded by this organization after active monitoring of environmental availability throughout Latvia.

This award and all of the above intentions that have resulted in practical steps clearly signifies that at the DU the efforts have been made and continue to be made to support the students and their diverse needs.(SER, 2.3.8.)

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

Conclusions :

The DU has established a sufficient technical infrastructure and resources to support a qualitative learning process, including premises, equipment, some remote learning possibilities, environmental accessibility, support to students who are young parents, etc.

Meanwhile, the DU could benefit from some improvement in the system of how these resources are managed.

In infrastructure development, efforts should be continued to obtain funds from ESF structural funds for the purchase of more new high-quality musical instruments, modernization of art auditorium equipment, etc. as the field of Arts is developing rapidly and so are the necessary resources and infrastructure associated with it.

This, of course, depends on the available financial resources and the possibilities of attracting them. By modernizing and making investments in the programs of the direction of study "Arts", DU will be able to compete with other higher education institutions in Latvia, Europe and the world, creating, indeed, a modern, attractive environment for studies and research.

Strengths:

1. Facilities, equipment, and other infrastructural resources (such as music instruments, practice rooms, etc.) are modern and well equipped.
2. The teaching staff is constantly developing their professional competences.
3. The necessary support for students is easily identifiable and is being addressed.
4. Support network is very flexible and effective.
5. New trends and teaching methods provided by several foreign lecturers that also take part in the implementation of the "Arts" program.

## Weaknesses:

1. Despite having teaching and practice rooms, there's a shortage, especially during exam periods. Some art rooms are only accessible under teacher supervision, restricting individual work. A simple electronic reservation system would allow these facilities to serve even more effectively.
2. Idle application of the Moodle system.
3. The characteristics of a close-knit community tend to allow functioning without a system. The attractiveness of certain programs is heavily reliant on specific influential individuals. If these individuals were to leave, the program could suffer a decline in appeal and potential student interest.

## 1.4. Scientific Research and Artistic Creation

### Analysis

#### 1.4.1.

The following future directions of scientific research have been defined (SER, section 2.4.1., p. 57)): issues of music history and theory, performance art, traditional and jazz music, theory of solo singing, history and development of the music genre, choral singing and the development of traditions in Latgale; retrospective and contemporary art; history and theory of Latvian architecture; development of folk applied art in Latvia; traditions of decorating textiles in the multicultural environment of Latgale. Visibly research directions don't include art management and design. Also, directions in music and art are oriented to research of historical topics, there is nothing related to contemporary trends, impact of technologies etc. Additionally, taking into account the regional importance of HEI, research directions should also include specifics of the Latgale region. Now, there is only one direction related to decorating textiles.

When it comes to artistic creation the situation varies among study programs. The emphasis lays on artistic activities on a regional level which coincides with the goals of the HEI as the regional development center. There is a clear evidence of regular artistic activity in bachelor and master's study programs 'Music' as well as master's study program 'Arts' (annex 2.4.4. "Research and artistic creative activity\_EN").

#### 1.4.2.

There is a clear connection between artistic creation and study processes in SP "Music", "Arts" and "Design". Both teaching staff and students are involved in many artistic activities, especially in the study program "Music". For example, joint annual Christmas concerts, popular music concerts, year-end concerts as well as performing programs mainly at different venues in the Latgale region. According to SAR, in total, 156 concerts were conducted between 2017 and 2022. Also, teaching staff of the study program "Arts" has also been artistically active both in group exhibitions and solo exhibitions. Again, artistic activity mainly has taken place in the Latgale region. Positively, during Covid pandemic some of the teaching staff maintained their artistic work active by organizing online exhibitions. Teaching staff has taken part in a total of 50 exhibitions from 2017 till 2022 (annex 2.4.4. "Research and artistic creative activity\_EN").

Though in SER it is said that the creative and research activity of the academic staff is closely related to the study process, promoting students' understanding of the connection between industry innovations and the needs of the real working environment there is little evidence that proves that. There are no research directions that would include trends in creative industries - digitalization, interdisciplinarity, new technologies etc.

The worst situation among programs is with the SP "Arts Management". First of all, clear research directions have not been set for this program and also there is no evidence of any scientific or applied research and artistic activity. So, there is also no evidence of the connection with the study

process.

#### 1.4.3.

Regarding international artistic work there is evidence of activity. For example, a joint project of artistic creativity with Karol Lipinski Academy of Music in Wroclaw (recording of the CD "Cassiopeia" in 2019) and participation in international competitions in Naujene (Lithuania) and St. Petersburg (Russia). However, the amount of international collaboration is rather low and it lacks consistency. Also, geographically mainly collaboration has been established with HEI in Lithuania and Poland. During the expert's visit both students and teaching staff acknowledged that it would be beneficial to gain broader perspectives from artists in other countries.

Between 2017 and 2022 lecturers of the study field have presented their reports in conferences in Lithuania, Georgia, Estonia, Poland, Finland, Ukraine, Belarus, etc. (Appendix No. 11). Again, mainly teaching staff from the SP "Music" is represented in this list covering such topics as historical musicology, systematic musicology, ethnomusicology.

There is evidence of some incoming international activity, mainly in the form of masterclasses and concerts. From 2017 till 2022 six foreign lecturers visited DU for the SP "Music", two visited the SP "Arts" and "Design". The number of the cases is extremely low and not corresponding with common practices in the HEI in the European Union.

#### 1.4.4.

Regarding scientific and applied research the situation can be looked at from two sides. When it comes to the lecturers representing other departments at DU, for example, Faculty of Humanities or Department of Social Psychology, there is evidence of quite strong scientific and/or applied research practices. Also, some of the guest lecturers have quite strong activity, even related to current trends of artificial intelligence in the design industry. However, when it comes to the elected teaching staff associated with specializations of the study programs the situation is much worse. Only a few of the members of the teaching staff have evidence of any activity. In total only 22 publications were prepared from 2017 to 2022 and only some of them are included in international databases (Scopus, Erich Plus, EBSCO, ProQuest etc.). According to appendix nr. 2.4.4. 20 of these publications were developed by lecturers of the SP "Music", only two of the SP "Arts" and none from the study programs "Art Management" and "Design". There is evidence of participation in scientific conferences with reports, however, according to appendix 2.4.4. it is visible that there are few members of the teaching staff who are scientifically active. For example, out of 63 cases of participation in conferences with reports 25 are done by one lecturer.

Positively, Daugavpils University annually publishes a collection of scientific articles in the collection "Music Science Today: the Permanent and the Changeable" which is indexed on EBSCO. According to SER (p. 64), four of the members of the teaching staff involved in the programs of the study field are experts of the National Scientific Council (LZP).

During the visit both SF director and teaching staff acknowledged that there is a motivation system developed that covers expenses of participation in scientific conferences, fees for publications in indexed journals. If the publication is accepted in an indexed journal, lecturers receive monetary bonuses. During the experts' visit on site (8./9.8.2023) teaching staff acknowledged that they are well aware of the opportunities, however they understand that their activity is very low. Partially it was explained with their artistic work taking the main part of their time but also limited knowledge of English was mentioned.

Additionally, there is no system developed to foster artistic activity. None of the teaching staff could give any example of a situation where they would have received monetary bonuses for, for example, international artistic activity.

Also, some members of the teaching staff acknowledged that their artistic work has nothing to do with the HEI. They would do it anyway and it has not been fostered in any way by DU.

#### 1.4.5.

There is clear evidence of the involvement of the students in artistic creation, especially in the SP "Music" (both bachelor and master's SP) and "Arts". According to SER students actively participate in concerts outside DU - in regional music schools, high school and culture centers. Also, there have been cases of joint concerts with students of foreign HEI, for example, students of Lithuanian Academy of Music. Students from the SP "Arts" are offered to take part in group exhibitions in the Latgale region (SER, section 2.4.5., p. 68), however as none of the students were present during expert's visit on site (8./9.8.2023) it can't be verified whether students have actually taken part in any. There is also no specific information provided about that in SER.

Students of the SP "Design" are actively involved in decorating premises of the DU for Christmas and other holiday celebrations. Of course, it is positive that they are given these opportunities, however these activities lack ambition, there is no evidence of presence of current trends and the number, especially, of international activities is very low.

Regarding scientific and applied research students are mainly practicing that as part of the development of bachelor's and master's thesis. In cooperation with DU academic staff, students also have an opportunity to participate in the annual DU research project competition and to receive funding for the implementation of scientific research. Though there is no evidence that it has happened.

Students are encouraged to participate in annual student research project competitions.

#### 1.4.6.

According to SER, the premises of the HEI are equipped with innovative technologies (p. 70). The premises, in general, are well equipped and maintained, however, there is no evidence of innovative solutions. Even more, during the site visit students from the study programs "Art" and "Design" mentioned the lack of design programs on computers. Graduates also mentioned the fact that there are tablets purchased for students which are actually not used during the study process which raises doubts about the abilities of the teaching staff to integrate technologies in their lectures. Also, students from bachelor and master SP "Music" mentioned that there is no booking system for classrooms which makes time planning difficult.

Positively, HEI has purchased new music instruments recently, for example, concert pianos. Although there was no evidence of usage of interactive methods available on Moodle, the e-learning environment is developed enough to provide students with wide range of resources.

Positively, various organizational innovations have been introduced, for example, digital systems DUIS, Namejs and HoP that improves the efficiency of the administrative processes at HEI.

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

The set research directions are not evenly distributed among programs. There are quite many research directions set for SP "Music". At the same time there is none set for SP "Arts Management" and SP "Design". There is a track of research and artistic activity among the teaching staff. Also, students are involved in artistic creation and they are given opportunities on a regional level. However, there is a lack of a systemic approach as the good results mostly come from a few members of the teaching staff who are either artistically or scientifically active. Some members of the teaching staff mentioned financial bonuses that are given for publications on indexed journals. However, there is no evidence of established policy in a written form. Also, the results among the SP are not even. Clearly, SP "Music" both on bachelor and master's level has a higher evidence of artistic activity. SP "Design" has some regional evidence, SP "Arts Management" has a very low activity and is clearly underdeveloped both in terms of scientific research and artistic activity.

Strengths:

- 1.A clear connection between artistic creation and study processes in SP “Music”, “Arts” and “Design”.
- 2.Regular international activity for bachelor and master's SP “Music”.
- 3.Bonus system established to motivate teaching staff to prepare scientific publications.
- 4.Students of the bachelor and master SP “Music” are actively involved in artistic creation.

Weaknesses:

- 1.No research directions set for SP “Art Management”
- 2.Lack of research directions related to current trends in creative industries and technologies related to the fields of music, art and design.
- 3.Low number of international cooperation projects, especially in SP “Arts Management” and “Design”.
- 4.Low number of scientific publications.
- 5.No bonus system developed to motivate artistic activity of the teaching staff.
- 6.Low student activity in research projects outside development of their bachelor's or master's thesis.

## Assessment of the requirement [2]

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

The results are not evenly distributed among SP with some being somewhat successful, for example, bachelor and master's SP “Music” while others are clearly underperforming, for example SP “Arts Management”. There is a lack of a systematic approach and no evidence of established policy in a written form for financial bonuses for excellent artistic activities (the university has got only rules for financial bonuses for scientific activities) . Not all the study programs have clear research directions.

## 1.5. Cooperation and Internationalisation

### Analysis

#### 1.5.1.

The cooperation partners are selected in view of the specific features of the study field and the relevant study programs. DU has established agreements with 15 Latvian cultural institutions (music schools, secondary schools, Cultural Centers, Municipalities and theaters) in order to enable a framework for internships of students (view Mandatory Annexes II Description of the Study Field, 2.5: Cooperation and Internationalisation, 2.5:1. Cooperation agreements.docx). The partners are chosen from the Study Field and are relevant for ensuring proper outcomes of aims of Study Plans. A comparison with a similar HEI institution, the Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music , shows that it might be advisable to continue creating an even denser network with employers, pedagogical and cultural institutions in the country. (This said, one still has to take into account that a Music and Art Faculty is of course not really comparable with a Music Academy). This conclusion of external evaluation corresponds with the recommendations included in the strategic internal document presented by DU as 2.1.2. Study field development plan (without date and author, Mandatory Annexes II. Description of the Study Field, 2.5. Cooperation and Internationalisation.). The Study field development plan suggests specific and attainable actions for improving the Study programs of the study field, mainly featuring the following actions to take:

“more active involvement of DU academic staff in conducting master classes, lectures, exhibitions,

plein airs, concerts in music and art colleges and general education schools, by promoting the functioning of music and art colleges and their closer cooperation with DU Faculty of Music and Art”  
“updating the qualification of academic staff of the Faculty of Music and Art” by “attracting young, high quality\ graduates of internationally recognized universities”.  
“attracting visiting lecturers”

“Cooperation with organizers of various festivals, exhibitions, contest etc. should be activated.”

DU cooperates with its' closest Study Field partner institution, the Jāzeps Vitols Latvian Academy of Music in Riga, mainly in joining expertise in annual conferences as mentioned in the SER (p. 71), but the internal documents (SER, Study field development plan) as well as repeated statements of study directors, academic staff, graduates and students during the AIKA experts' visit on site (8./9. August 2023) indicate that existing activities like presentations of DU in schools, mapping of possible future academic staff, intense invitations system of guest lecturers and an even more intense establishment of partnerships with stakeholders in the labor market are still goals to work on.

#### 1.5.2.

DU presents a certain amount of international ERASMUS+ agreements for the period 2017-2023, mainly with universities and HEI in Poland (Wroclaw, Jelenia Góra) and a number of Universities and HEI in Lithuania (e.g. Lithuanian Pedagogical University, Kytaitas Magnus University etc.) (view Mandatory Annexes II Description of the Study Field, 2.5: Cooperation and Internationalisation, 2.5:1. Cooperation agreements.docx). This factual state corresponds with the view of academic staff, Study Directors and students interviewed during the experts visit on site 8./9.8.2023, where interviewed students and staff stressed the existence of international cooperation with Lithuanian and Polish institutions.

Academic staff members mentioned, they would welcome new partnerships in Western countries to offer the possibility to experience a different cultural and artistic context.

The chosen partner institution relates with the content of the Study Field with an emphasis on scientific (mainly social and pedagogical) and artistic creative activity. In respect to the importance of DU as a stakeholder of science, art and education in Eastern Latvia, it might be considered to increase the network of cooperation with international HEI and to create a clear strategy for new partnerships in reaction to the loss or modification of former partnerships that suffer from the actual war situation. The Self Evaluation report (SER) of DU indicates a lack of international recognition especially for the Study programs of Art management and Design (SER 73).

The rector of DU and the vice rector for studies of DU presented their vision of future changes in internationalization within Natural sciences (notably Biology), but no strategy is visible for what geopolitically relevant partnerships could be started in the Study field of Art.

#### 1.5.3.

In the Study Field ART, the actual practice of attracting students and staff from abroad is designed on the architecture of the actual main partners in Poland and Lithuania.(SER, 2.5: Cooperation and Internationalisation, 2.5.2 Cooperation with different institutions from abroad, 2.5.3 Student mobility, 2.5.3: Mobility of teaching staff)). This fact has been confirmed during interviews with academic staff and students at the AIKA experts' visit on site.

Former partnerships with institutions from Belarus and Russia had to be stopped due to the ongoing war situation (interview with the rector of DU at the AIKA experts' visit on site).

Outgoing and incoming mobilities from the main exchange destinations Lithuania and Poland, and from the minority of other international contacts (Turkey for incoming students, Iceland, Czech republic, Denmark, Kenya for singular staff mobility and pedagogical exchange activities) are based on personal contacts of academic staff or DU management members. There is no system of

promoting study possibilities beyond Europe or in chosen destinations within Europe. (Interviews with the rector, vice rector, study directors and academic staff at the AIKA experts' visit on site).

Looking at statistics from the period 2017-2023 in the documents 2.5.3: Student mobility and 2.5.3 Mobility of teaching staff (Mandatory Annexes II. Description of the Study Field, 2.5. Cooperation and Internationalisation), more students go out than come in (20 outgoing students, 6 incoming students (4 Turkish, 2 Lithuanian). The disproportion can be partly explained by the COVID crisis in 2020/21, where no incoming foreign students registered).

At the level of academic staff exchanges the balance is opposite: 9 incoming guest teachers are balanced by 24 outgoing activities of DU academic staff, of which 10 were realized in the field of Art, Art Management, Design and Music and 14 in the field of Music Pedagogy. Outcoming and incoming mobilities mostly concern exchanges with Polish and Lithuanian institutions, in singular cases also mobilities in Czech Republic, Iceland, Denmark, and Kenya.

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

Conclusions:

DU has established support for internship cooperation possibilities by cooperating with 15 Latvian musical and cultural institutions. There is still space for improving the quantity and the range of cooperation with Latvian institutions (view internal 2.1.2. Study field development plan), as well as the intensity with the most relevant partners in Latvia (e.g. Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music in Riga).

In the field of international cooperation and internationalization, the challenge for DU consists in finding new partnerships in reaction to the changes in the geopolitical context. Whereas strategies are being formulated for European and Non-European possible new partnerships in the field of Natural Sciences, the Study Field ART does not show any strategic will to reflect the new needs and basically works on the basis of personal contacts or existing partnership possibility mainly with Lithuania and Poland.

Strengths:

1. A relevant number of well chosen Latvian partners in order to enhance internship places is organized.
2. The use of personal professional international contacts by the management of DU and the academic staff in order to ensure international exchange activities.
3. Academic staff and the management of DU are motivated to work on professional networking and internationalization.
4. Contacts with national stakeholders are alive and are used.

Weaknesses:

1. A lack of a consistent strategy for new partnerships in reaction to geopolitical changes.
2. A lack of a consistent acquisition and promotion policy for establishing new national and international contacts and partnerships.
3. Relatively low number of incoming international artistic experts.
4. Within the ERASMUS+ mobility, more outgoing Latvian than incoming foreign students.

### **Assessment of the requirement [3]**

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

The delivered documents of DU as well as the interviews with the DU management confirm that

a certain number of national and international partners does exist, but the intensity of national cooperation on the basis of annual conferences and a small number of master classes could be optimized. The range of international partnerships (at this state rather limited to Lithuanian and Polish partners) could be widened and a systemic strategy of building up new partnerships reacting to the loss of former partnerships as a consequence of the actual geopolitical situation should be built.

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

### **Analysis**

The previous assessment of this study field happened in 2013, and since then a professional study program “Music” has been licenced (in 2021). Analysis is based on SER chapter 2.6. and annex 2.6.1.

Recommendations given to professional bachelor study program “Design” (in 2013):

1. Experts previously recommended adding more professional literature in world art, world culture and Scandinavian art (in English, German, Russian languages). Since 2016 Daugavpils University Library has supplemented the Faculty of Music and Arts annually with new books and scientific articles related to design and in december 2022, all study courses were revised and updated with professional literature in Latvian, English and Russian languages. This recommendation has been implemented.

2. Study program needed to be more clearly oriented towards the result in the labor market. DU claims that students are able to plan and organize their study process in order to perform certain tasks that are related to study results, but since no students or study program director from Design were present during the visit, experts were not able to confirm this. Additionally DU explains that the employment description contained in the profession standard meets the requirements of a specialist of the 5th qualification level. This recommendation has been taken into consideration and completed.

3. Another recommendation: “There should be practical training for other study programs in the higher education institution, it stimulates learning results.”. DU explains that “Design” study programm results differ from the goals of other similar study programs in other higher education institutions and students have opportunities to continue studying in another program or university provided by the bilateral agreement. It seems that this recommendation has not been entirely taken into account, as DU fails to explain their activities to somehow take care of this issue.

4. It was recommended to organize more courses, modules, practical training in foreign languages and also abroad. DU writes that students and lecturers actively participate in international exchange such as Erasmus+, however after reviewing outgoing and incoming staff rates for the overseeing period, no staff from relevant to Design has used this opportunity and no foreign guest lecturers have participated in any activity. DU also explains that the teaching staff is particularly active in learning English, however during the visit, an interpreter was used in quite a couple of meetings and staff acknowledged that they are not ready to discuss in English, which gives doubt on the results of the ESF project efficiency. This recommendation has not been implemented.

5. It was recommended for staff and students to be more active and participate more in creative projects and have financial support. It seems that this recommendation has been acknowledged since 2017 different projects were organized, for example student exhibition and creative works “HANDMADE”, Riga international design exhibitions etc. This recommendation has been implemented, but program and DU management must keep motivating staff and students to keep participating in such instances.

Recommendations given to professional bachelor study program “Art management” (in 2013):

1. To improve literature of world art, world culture, Scandinavian art, Baltic art with resources in



English, Latvian and Russian languages. Each academic year library replenishes books relevant to the Art management and provides access to many different databases. This recommendation could be considered as fully implemented.

2. It was recommended to organize more courses, modules, practical training in foreign languages and also abroad. DU explains that from 2014 a new unified study plan was implemented and there are no more possibilities to study in modules, instead a single block of study courses for all students was created. The content of study modules were preserved in study courses and the determining factor of liquidation of modules was the fact that they narrowed the possibilities of graduates to meet the demands of the labor market. According to annex 2.5.3. the academic staff has participated twice (in Arts) in outgoing mobilities and there is not enough encouragement for staff to participate in international exchanges. In 2019, lecturers together with students participated in seminar "Career opportunities in the art and culture sector" and every year on December 1st creative events such as Christmas fair and Night of Scientists are organized. It seems that this recommendation has been taken into account but partially implemented. DU should concentrate on pursuing more action in this matter.

Regarding attracting foreign students and lecturers - lecturers were working on developing language skills and for students Practical English was introduced in the study program as a study course worth 4CP to further motivate students to partake in Erasmus possibilities. And throughout the period, 5 internships and only 1 study mobility happened, which could potentially mean that students are not encouraged enough to use study mobilities, but rather voluntary internships.

Recommendations given to professional master study program "Art" (in 2013):

1. It was recommended to be more clear and have more accessible standards, regulations and requirements for evaluating student achievement. DU has specific information in each study course on how student's skills are assessed. Study course descriptions are available in the Moodle environment. Study courses often have several intermediate tests to evaluate student progress and to contribute to a more complete realization of the tasks of the study course. It is unfortunate that DU didn't provide any students from the Arts study program in visit, because it is difficult to assess if everything is clear to students. However, this recommendation seems to be fully implemented.

2. The recommendation about using more literature about world art, world culture, Scandinavian and Baltic art has been taken into consideration. During 2016-2018 the latest literature in art/culture was purchased with scientific development funds allocated for Institute of Art Sciences of DU, however there is a concern that there could potentially be newer literature. This recommendation has been implemented.

3. The recommendation about being more oriented towards the labor market has been acknowledged and fully implemented.

4. The recommendation regarding new types of modules, exchanges and workshops, and training for academic staff should be stimulated is also taken into consideration as part B (compulsory elective courses) consist of seven modules which are broad and sufficiently ensure the education in arts at master level. Additionally guest lecturers from Latvian Academy of Arts, University of Latvia and Latvian Designers' Union ensure cooperation with different partners and facilitate study quality. Study program could use more workshops to facilitate a closer approach to the industry. This recommendation has been implemented.

5. There was a recommendation to prepare more courses, modules and practical training in foreign languages and abroad. While some guest lecturers from Šiauliai University have conducted master classes/workshops and a study course "Professional practice" in English language, these efforts are not enough for a 10 year period. This recommendation has not been implemented.

6. In the previous evaluation, experts recommended for lecturers and students to be more active and participate in creative projects and have financial support. DU describes these opinions available via Erasmus projects, as well as two project competitions for staff and for student scientific research. However, during this 10 year period it appears that only one lecturer from MSP "Arts"

obtained funding for a research project. This recommendation has been partially implemented.

Recommendations given to professional master study program “Music” (in 2013):

1. It was recommended to expand usage of foreign materials. In the time period from 2017 to 2022 several foreign books have been purchased and are used in study courses (included in study course descriptions as obligatory or additional literature). This recommendation has been fully implemented.

2. It was recommended to attract more students. DU has only admitted as many students as many state funded budget places were available. Additionally, not all budget places were filled, therefore throughout the years the amount of budget places decreased. No students for years 2016.,2017.,2018. and 2019. were admitted, which could also mean poor marketing of the study program and it could be invisible for potential students. This recommendation has not been implemented.

3. It was recommended for students and staff to participate more in creative projects and acquire financial support. Due to limited finances foreign cooperation and exchange was limited, however, in the period 2017-2022 lecturers have participated in 42 international conferences and participated in Erasmus mobilities 11 times. This recommendation has been fully taken into account for Music study programs, but unfortunately lacks for Arts and Design part of the study field.

Professional bachelor study program “Music” was licensed in 2021. Recommendations given to professional bachelor study program “Music”:

1. Study courses that last longer than one semester should be reviewed; the literature mentioned in study course description should be divided by semester according to skill. All study course descriptions were revised, e.g. Audio Education, Language of Music, General Music History, Academic Singing, Accordion Playing etc. This recommendation has been fully implemented.

2. To transfer recommended repertoire under a separate category (in study course descriptions). This recommendation has been fully implemented, as all of the study courses have been revised within the project (8.2.1.0/18/A/019) boundaries and recommended repertoire is now listed separately and structured by semester.

3. To revise the amount of mandatory literature in each course to prevent overloading of students. Within the previously mentioned project framework a work group prepared study program approbation plan including actions for revising the amount of mandatory literature. This recommendation has been taken into consideration and fully implemented.

4. To concretize the offer of contemporary, contemporary situation-oriented theories and methods. As of February 2022, DU have introduced a new study course “Fundamentals of scientific work” as well as supplemented the content of “Fundamentals of Musicology” study course, and provided a detailed list of research methods offered. This recommendation has been fully taken into consideration and fully implemented.

5. To create an agreement with other HEI on students’ opportunities to continue their studies at another university in Latvia. DU explains in 2.6.1. Annex that students can continue their studies at DU study program “Teacher” under Music teacher module, however no agreement has been submitted to evaluation. This recommendation is taken into consideration, however it is not formally implemented.

Overall for the reported period around 6 recommendations for study programs have not been fully implemented including one recommendation for recently licenced bachelor study program music and five recommendations that can be applicable to the rest of study programs.

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

Conclucions:

The recommendations have been partially implemented; all of the recommendations that are not fully implemented at current evaluation should be implemented within the next accreditation period

(next 2-4 years). It seems that Daugavpils University started seriously taking into consideration these recommendations around the year 2017, because there are not many activities recorded previously that would contribute to recommendation implementation. The contribution of the Daugavpils University to the analysis of recommendations and their application to the specifics of the study field and the corresponding study programs is mostly evident. In some cases, the opportunities such as Erasmus exchange are possible, but they are not being used, therefore the planned objectives/goals set by DU are not reached and there is no clear plan of other actions DU would take to achieve the previously given recommendations. It should be noted that while the Music side and music department of this study field have taken most of the recommendations in consideration, the Arts side of the study field has had insufficient attitude towards development and maybe a lack of person leading the changes.

#### Strengths:

1. Within the framework of the project (8.2.1.0/18/A/019) study programs, such as prof. bachelor "Music", could be improved and different study courses could be revised and corrected.
2. Strong attitude towards improvement in "Music" study programs (both bachelor and master).

#### Weaknesses:

1. Different interpretation of previously given recommendations - e.g. to increase practical training in foreign languages (and abroad) DU writes that "many" staff members have taken English courses to afterwards work with foreign students or participate in Erasmus mobilities, however upon revising statistics it is visible that during the period of 10 years there was only one incoming student (e.g. in program Design); and one (or for some programs none) outgoing staff mobilities.
2. Not many recommendations were implemented during a 10 year period.

### Assessment of the requirement [4]

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

#### **Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

While recommendations like literature acquisition are fulfilled, recommendations that are vital for the development of this study field, such as, stable student amount for certain programs, recommendations in tandem with internationalization are poorly implemented, especially in art side of the study field. Bachelor music program fails to provide a formal agreement about students' opportunities to study elsewhere in case the program gets terminated.

### 1.7. Recommendations for the Study Field

#### Short-term recommendations

- |  |
|--|
| 1. Create a system of formats and projects, where the interdisciplinary potential of DU Art study programs can be used (interdisciplinary projects Music-Art-Art management, design, students' meetings for all those Study programs etc). |
| 2. Increase the number of incoming international expert with a more varied range of involved national destinations (not only Lithuania and Poland)   |
| 3. Assign a specific person in charge of implementing recommendations and do periodical reviews of tasks taken to ensure recommendation implementation.  |

4. DU needs to prioritize the further detailing and communication of a new strategy, ensuring that it is in line and communicated effectively to all stakeholders, emphasizing its relevance and importance in guiding the institution's future direction.
5. DU needs to encourage more active stakeholder engagement by encouraging students, staff, alumni and employers to provide feedback through existing (or come up with relevant new) forms and channels, and ensure that stakeholders understand the crucial value of their input and how it contributes to the continuous improvement of the study field.
6. Clearly define research directions and review them continuously to make sure they are always up to date

## Long-term recommendations

1. Start establishing mechanisms for power balance in asymmetrical relations (ombudsperson, or other mechanism, where issues like misuse and discrimination can be handled as alternative to the formal structures of DU hierarchy).
2. Create a visible strategy on how to gain future attractive teachers.
3. Establish a systematic plan for attracting national and, even more importantly, international students.
4. Create a consistent strategy for new international partnership in reaction to geopolitical changes.
5. While commitment to quality assurance with existing QA mechanisms in place is commendable, DU should consider periodic reviews of its quality assurance systems and principles to ensure they remain relevant and effective in the ever changing and challenging educational landscape.
6. Provide additional actions in order to complete the recommendations from the previous evaluation period.
7. Increase the number of international cooperation projects within a newly defined internationalization policy that respects the current geopolitical context.
8. Develop a written bonus policy for indexed scientific publications and -equally important - for national/ international artistic activity.
9. Develop a plan to promote student's involvement in research, for example, by organizing interdisciplinary teams consisting of students from different study fields.

## II - "Art Management" ASSESSMENT

### II - "Art Management" ASSESSMENT

#### 2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

##### Analysis

##### 2.1.1.

The PBSP Art Management is compliant with the Study Field ART in respect to the content of the curriculum, the degree issued and the employment possibilities for graduates after studies, but is not compliant with the study field ART in respect to the professional qualification attributed, as the

professional qualification of a Company owner (PS-115) does not belong to the study field ART. During the AIKA experts' visit on site, it has been explained by the Study program Director, that the university would have wished to assign a professional qualification as Project Manager in Arts, but this professional standard does not (yet) exist. Therefore, DU decided to choose a compromise between a degree and content of study program compliant with the study field ART, and a professional standard taken from a different field. The decision of DU to choose the standard for professional qualification of a Company owner (PS-115) was approved on September 18, 2019.

Unfortunately, a professional standard "project manager" which would fit better for this study program, is prepared for Latvian Qualification Framework level 7 - equivalent for master study program graduates, therefore DU had to settle for Company owner standard which should provide similar competencies to the previously applied standard.

It would be advisable, if DU articulated the need of adapting standards for professional qualification for Bachelor level at the relevant political authorities, so that they could be developed into a direction, where reality and formality of the study program are congruent.

At its current state, this option is not realistic. Therefore only two solutions to align the PBSP Arts Management are possible:

1 to change from a professional to an academic study program. In this case, the orientation of the content of studies and the implementation of studies of the current study program would perfectly fit into the study field.

2 To stay with the existent construction of the degree of a professional Bachelor Study program Arts Management fitting to the study field of ART and the professional qualification of a Company owner. But in this case, the content of studies should be adapted to the requirements of the professional standard of a Company owner. This means, that the orientation would be significantly more focused on business linked study courses and internships.

#### 2.1.2.

The duration and scope of the study program implementation (including different study program implementation options), as well as the implementation language, are reasonable and justified.

The degree attributed to the finishing student is a professional bachelor's degree in arts - Bc. Art (fitting to the study field ART) with the professional qualification of a Company Owner (not fitting to the study field ART). While assessing the study program, the lack of study courses in the management field causes doubts on the final acquired competencies of students.

Admission to the study program for full-time studies takes place by competition, based on the centralized exam (CE) in Latvian language and literature and the first foreign language, and additional points will be awarded for a grade in the certificate: cultural history or culturology.

The goal of the Study program is defined as "Preparing competent and competitive company managers who are able to organize and manage projects of various scales in the cultural and social field." (SER 3.1.2. Analysis and assessment of the study program compliance with the study field, p. 83). This formulation constructs a bridge between the professional standard of a company manager and the degree of a Bachelor of Art Management in the field of ART, but the labor reality of graduates differs from the goals set in the program description: According to the analysis of graduates' employment DU presents in SER 3.1.3., most of the graduates are employed in the cultural sector, but not in the role of a company owner: "Graduates of the program work as project managers, public relations specialists and managers of cultural events, organizers of cultural tourism, managers of cultural centers, teacher/substitute teacher within the program Possible Mission, teaching assistants, lecturers, make-up artists, bank customer solutions consultants, cashiers, cooks and those responsible for advertising, folk cultural center administrators, theater hall administrators, theater producers." (SER 3.1.3., p. 88). This discrepancy between the necessity to compromise between the reality of the labor market and the content of studies on one side and the

legal framework in Latvia on the other side, that does not offer a professional standard of Project Manager on Bachelor level, has been acknowledged by the present Study Director at the AIKA experts' visit on site (8./9.8.2023).

Within the Tasks and Assignments of the study program, DU states, that “the theoretical foundations of the theoretical foundations of the field sciences, comply with the profession's standard” and that the study program fulfills the task of “educating specialists of the sixth level of professional qualification in the field of art, giving students the opportunity to acquire the qualification of company manager”, but these tasks are not fully aligned with the conception of the curriculum, that is oriented more to educating cultural specialists than business company owners.

Other tasks like “providing an opportunity to create new or improve existing work skills and prepare students for creative, research and management work in the industry; activating the participation of students in the creation of cultural life, awareness of traditions and further development; activating students' scientific research activity by integrating theoretical principles and knowledge gained in practice” (SER 3.1.2. Analysis and assessment of the study program compliance with the study field, p. 85).

Concerning learning outcomes, the same discrepancy between the reality of the study program constructed to educate students who have skills and knowledge in ART to apply them in organizing and producing Art events, and the necessity to fulfill the purely Management and Business oriented professional standard of a Company owner is visible.

Whereas the results and learning outcomes as defined in SER 3.1.2: states, that the graduate achieves knowledge adequate to the “to the knowledge levels mentioned in the professional standard” (SER 3.1.2., p. 85), doubts have been raised during the experts' visit on site, whether business and management side of the professional standard of a company owner is not neglected in the structure of the Study program, where soft skills are in the center of studies, whereas “hard” skills like study course on legal framework are in the optional part of studies.

Other learning outcomes are compliant with the content of studies and the study field, like the graduate is “able to use the learned theoretical basics and skills of art to perform professional, artistic, 2. innovative or research activities, formulate and analytically describe information, problems and solutions in the field of art science, explain them and reasonably discuss them with both specialists and non-specialists.” (SER 3.1.2:, p. 85)

The duration of 4 years is adequate to the goals, tasks and the level of expected learning outcomes. The language of studies (Latvian) is compliant with the defined goals and the reality of employment situation of graduates.

#### 2.1.3.

The PBSP Art Management was designed according to international and national regulations, such as the - Sixth level of European Qualifications Framework (EQF) (Cabinet of Ministers (Ministru kabinets) Regulations No. 322 "Regulations on Latvian education classification").

The Study program underwent a certain evolution from a mainly Arts focused study program to a study program that is slightly more orientated to the management and business character of the future profession of a company manager. Nevertheless, during the experts' visit, concern was expressed by experts studying the curriculum, as well as from a number of students and graduates, that more emphasis should be given to study courses and to the development of a more varied internship concept, that would enable graduating students to smoothly integrate into the practice live of Arts managements with all it's economic, organizational, productional and management challenges.

Connection with employers and their feedback to the training of the study program could even be more intense and systemized.

#### 2.1.4.

DU presents logical and founded arguments for the introduction of the Arts Management studies' program, that would support the integration of young talented managers in Culture in the Latgale region. Contextual analysis for the need of such a program is presented (SER 87) and the study program is compliant with the National Development plan (National Development Plan for 2021-2027, [https://www.pkc.gov.lv/sites/default/files/inline-files/NAP2027\\_\\_ENG.pdf](https://www.pkc.gov.lv/sites/default/files/inline-files/NAP2027__ENG.pdf) [reviewed on 31.03.2023] )and the Cultural Policy Guidelines for 2022-2027 within the project Culture State.(Cultural Policy Guidelines 2022-2027 "Culture State" for the year 2021-2027 <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/330444-kulturpolitikas-pamatnostadnes-2021-2027-gadam-kulturvalsts> [reviewed on 31.03.2023 in Latvian) (View SER 89). The numbers of students are increasing from 29 in 2017 to 40 in 2023, which is a sign that the Study program answers to the interest and needs of students..

Reasons for dropout are analyzed and are explained as being individual not fulfilling demands of study courses. There is no self-reflection of Study Directors whether any part of responsibility lies on the side of the teaching staff or the curriculum composition. The employment situation is not quantified, but examples of employers are given. It might be advisable to add statistics - especially because of the hybrid situation of the study program being a study program in the study field Art, but with a qualification of company owner that is clearly oriented towards general management in business.

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

Art Management studies increasingly attract students, which can be seen as a sign of the necessity of the study program and as a sign, that DU fulfills it's mission of holding young talents in the region. The curriculum, task and learning outcomes descriptions are oriented towards the picture of a graduate who is educated in Arts and Art science with some minor amount of education in proper management and business skills. In order to comply with the mission of DU to foster cultural environment and to hold young talents willing to organize the cultural life in the region,, the study program focuses de facto towards educating project managers, but because of a lack of legislative standards for professional qualification as a project manager, the study program has to compromise and aims de jure for an education of company managers. This is not a fault of DU, it's a fault of the regulations framework.

Nevertheless, it's recommendable to admit this discrepancy and to search for solutions, either moving into a academic study program of Art Management, which clearly complies with the study field ART or adapting the curriculum in a way that complies not only to the degree of a Bachelor of Art Management in the study field ART, but also to the professional qualification of a Company owner coming from a different study field.

#### **Strengths**

1. The PBSP Arts management increasingly attracts students.
2. The study program is compliant with the general mission of DU strengthening the cultural and creative potential of the region.

#### **Weaknesses**

- 1 The national regulations for professional standards force the university to aim for the qualification of a company manager, whereas the reality of the study program as well as the needs of the labor market call for an innovation of those standards enabling the university to offer the professional qualification of a project manager.

The discrepancy of a degree in Art Management in the study field of ART and the professional qualification of a Company owner, which is a management and business oriented profession, is

perceived by the university, but no action is taken to solve the clash between degree and professional qualification.

2 The PBSP Art Management came from a past that stressed artistic education and art science education. It has already been altered partly to a more business oriented direction, but practical artistic skills like dance etc. are still too much prioritized in comparison with subjects, which prepare students for legal and commercial aspects of Art management.

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

### **Analysis**

#### **2.2.1.**

The study program for Art Management states to be structured with declared aims to offer a comprehensive professional bachelor study program that aligns with industry needs, labor market demands, and current trends (SER chapter 3.2). The curriculum is designed to be both theoretical and practical, covering a broad range of subjects from economics and law to specialized courses in art management. The inclusion of a significant number of practical arts and dance classes in an Art Management program does raise some questions about the curriculum's focus and contributes towards questionable structuring of the study plan. While a foundational understanding of the arts can offer some context and perhaps even foster a deeper appreciation for what is being managed, the extent to which these practical arts courses are emphasized seems somewhat disproportionate for a program aimed at management within the arts sector.

Courses like "Fundamentals of acting," "Dance fundamentals," "Two-dimensional composition" (study plan annex 3.2.1), and others are indeed valuable for someone involved in the creative/performative side of the arts, but their utility for someone whose primary role would be managerial is less clear. Especially the quantity of practical dance subjects (such as "Dance fundamentals", "Dance genres", "Classical dance", "Latvian folk dance"), spread over all 6 semesters, reinforces questions concerning relevance and balance. One would expect to see more courses that are directly related to management skills, such as project management, financial planning etc.

The additional information about the program's compliance with the profession standard for a "Company Manager" adds another layer of complexity to the evaluation. The profession standard outlines a broad range of managerial responsibilities that extend beyond the realm of the arts. These include not just planning and organizing work in line with a company's strategy, but also overseeing various functional areas like marketing, production, personnel management, finance, and more.

Although based on the compliance document provided it seems that the programme is generally compliant to the professional standard "Company Manager", given this broad scope of responsibilities, the emphasis on practical arts and dance as well as specialized knowledge within various contexts in the curriculum appears even more conflicting. While an understanding of the arts is undoubtedly beneficial for someone managing in that sector, the profession standard suggests that a company manager's role is far more expansive. The standard implies a need for a well-rounded skill set that includes financial acumen, personnel management, and a deep understanding of marketing and leadership, among other things, and the substantial amount of credit points provided for practical arts subjects raise questions if students receive enough management related knowledge and skills.

During the interview with students at the experts' visit on site (8./9.8.2023), it was also evident that based on their opinion, they would see themselves benefiting more from learning about practical aspects of the contexts, like terminology, technical and technological aspects of implementation, - essentially analyzing creative processes in various contexts, not necessarily just practically participating in them. The program seems to be comprehensive from the description of learning



outcomes, the real test of its effectiveness would be its adaptability to the rapidly changing contemporary world. The inclusion of courses like "Digital Advertising" and "Practical English (special terminology)" indicates intention to stay up to date, however continuous evaluation is essential for long-term relevance, which can be achieved through stronger involvement of stakeholders and their feedback, as well as possible internationalization processes. The program's focus on local cultural context is valuable, however it has to be balanced with a global perspective, especially in a field as universally applicable as art management.

Generally, study program would benefit from a more thought out structure, with courses building upon each other and leading students towards becoming well versed specialists in arts management, fully capable of running a company, as declared in alignment with professional standards.

The program is compliant with state education standards.

#### 2.2.3.

The study implementation methods described in SER do appear to align with the principles of student-centered learning and teaching. The program apparently employs a variety of teaching methods, including lectures, seminars, consultations, and practical work. The focus on discussion methods, independent work, and group activities is indicative of an educational approach that values student engagement and active participation.

The use of technology, such as the Moodle system, enhances the student-centered approach by providing a learning management platform, even if apparently the use of Moodle is not necessarily consistent in each course.

The program also emphasizes formative and summative assessments, allowing for ongoing feedback and improvement. The criteria for these assessments are made clear to students in advance, aiming for transparency and fairness in the evaluation process.

However, it's worth noting that the curriculum seems to have a strong focus on mandatory subjects. Introducing more electives would be beneficial for the programme.

#### 2.2.4.

Based on course descriptions (annex 3.2.1) and practice regulations (annex 3.2.4), the internship component of the DU study program "Art Management" is evidently designed with a focus on practical skill development and real-world application, which is commendable. However, there are several aspects that warrant a more critical examination.

The program seems to rely heavily on student choice for internship placements. While this offers students the freedom to explore areas of personal interest and specialized in managing certain artistic contexts, it could potentially lead to a mismatch between the skills acquired during the internship and those required in the professional world. The university's role in guiding these choices to ensure alignment with career goals and market needs could be more clearly defined. Internship would benefit from further alignment with the program's broader learning outcomes, inclusion of qualitative assessment measures, and clarification on the flexibility of internship duration. Additionally, the internship process seemingly student feedback and guidance mechanism for continuous improvement.

The program does mention a wide range of tripartite contracts between the university, students, and art and culture institutions. However, it's unclear how and based on which principles these contracts are organized, updated, monitored.

#### 2.2.5 not applicable.

#### 2.2.6.

Based on information provided (SER 3.2.6) and evidence (copies of theses) during the experts' visit on site (8./9.8.2023.), the topics of the students' final theses are relevant to the field of Art Management. They encompass a broad spectrum of subjects, from organizing traditional cultural events to business-related activities, thereby reflecting the multifaceted nature of art and culture management. These topics are aligned with the study program's objectives and seemingly related to the students' internships or workplaces.

While the topics are relevant and diverse, one potential improvement could be more focus on innovative or groundbreaking topics. Relevance to the field is important, some thesis focusing on pushing boundaries would be valuable for the program and academic work in general.

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

#### Conclusions:

The Art Management study program at Daugavpils University has a broad curriculum that aims to align with industry needs, labor market demands, and current trends. It incorporates both theoretical and practical elements, including a significant internship component. The program is generally compliant with state education standards, but has a certain weakness in coping with the requirements of the professional standard for a "Company Manager." There are areas that need to be improved for a more effective educational experience and greater focus on management related skills and competencies.

While the program aims to align with industry needs and balance theoretical and practical elements, it falls short in several key areas that are crucial for full compliance: Misbalanced emphasis on practical arts courses raises questions about the program's focus, especially when considering the managerial roles that graduates are expected to fill. This could lead to gaps in essential management skills, which are critical for career success in the arts sector. Study plan would benefit from better structuring.

Program's internship component, although significant, lacks structured guidance and mentoring. This could result in a mismatch between the skills acquired during the internship and those required in the professional world, affecting the smooth transition of graduates into the labor force.

Limited range of elective courses and the inconsistent use of stakeholder input to improve the curriculum also point to areas where the program could improve to meet the full range of compliance.

#### Strengths:

1. The curriculum attracts students because of its mixture of practical, scientific and practice elements.
2. Diverse teaching methods are used.
3. Attention towards the diverse arts contexts.

#### Weaknesses:

1. Lack of structure in the available courses.
2. Limited study courses to choose from in order to achieve the best study results.
3. Lack of guided internships and/or mentoring to prepare for future employment and ensure a smooth transition of the graduates into the labor force.
4. Emphasis on practical arts courses or discipline specific knowledge, which may not be as relevant for a managerial role in the arts sector (e.g. dancing, drawing etc.).

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

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

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

### **Analysis**

#### **2.3.1.**

Resources available to students, incl. study premises, material and technical base, tools and equipment (for preparing, combining, integrating, visualizing and distributing study and research materials), information networks (Internet, intranet, Moodle), databases (library network, databases of DU research centers, free access to databases (database of book resources), materials (research materials, scientific publications, including Web of Science and Scopus publications, archives), services (administrative, financial, IT and network support services, access to official statistical data), computer applications and software (Standart Office, SPSS, GIS, data visualization online tools and software, online means of communication) allows students to learn all study courses provided in the program, as well as to conduct research at various stages, provides a flexible and student-oriented environment. (SER, 3.3.1.)

DU library provides students with access to high-quality information relevant to the field of study, offering the information resources in its collection for study and research purposes. The opening hours and services of the DU library make the informative resources available.

DU library is open 9 hours a day, 45 hours a week. The reading room is open on weekdays from 9:00 to 20:30 and on Saturdays from 10:00 to 17:00. The bibliography and information sector is open on working days from 9:00 to 17:00. Books/sheet music can also be handed in outside of the library's working hours.

The total area of the library premises is 1000 m<sup>2</sup>, students have 2 reading rooms with free access to the collection, 2 subscriptions, Bibliography and information sector, 20 computers, 2 copy machines, 3 multifunctional devices, 2 printers, Internet, including wireless Internet access.

The library offers the following services: home delivery of books and sheet music; use of literature, databases, e-catalogues and other resources in reading rooms; electronic ordering and reservation of books to take home, extension of the term of use; computer and internet use; remote usage of EBSCO, ScienceDirect and Scopus databases; remote use of final theses developed by DU; consultations in searching for information in e-catalogues and databases; interlibrary loan and subscription services; student training for working with e-catalogues and databases; copying, printing and scanning services. (SER, 2.3.3.) Additional financing for the study program maintenance and continuous renewal would be beneficial addition.

Even though the Self-evaluation Report for the study field "Arts" for the DU states that the necessary technical equipment is used in the implementation of the program (computers with licensed software, projectors, interactive whiteboards, etc.) and the specific resources of the study program without which the realization of the program cannot be ensured, are currently not needed (SER, 3.3.1.), this was not fully exhibited and confirmed during the experts' team side during the visit on site (8./9.8. 2023).

#### **2.3.3.**

The operation of the study program is financed from the state budget, study fee funds paid by individuals or legal entities, as well as other own revenues of DU. (SER, 3.3.1.)

According to a thoroughly done Calculation of costs (including the salary fund and employer's mandatory state social insurance contributions (VSAOI), business trips, materials, energy resources and inventory costs, as well as costs for student social security) in the PBSP Art Management

(42211) the costs per 1 student in 1 study year is EUR 5077,72. The majority (over 60%) is used for the salary fund of the staff and faculty per each student, whereas only about 10% or less are used for equipment and investment costs per student. (3.3.3.PBSP Art management\_cost calculation\_EN and SER, 3.3.3.) The re-evaluation of the distribution of resources could aid to emphasize the importance of global information networks in this field of study. The proportion between the per persona cost of the study program and the students numbers is reasonable.

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

#### **Conclusions:**

The resources and provision of the study program partially comply with the conditions for the implementation of the study program and the achievement of the study results. The environment provided is flexible and student-oriented. Resources available to students, including study rooms, material and technical base, tools and equipment, databases, research materials, services, computer applications and software allow students to learn all study courses provided in the program, but the ground for further development is not versatile enough to challenge the students to inquire. Also, the information networks should be expanded to avoid localism.

#### **Strengths:**

1. Close-knit network and support that stimulates interaction and practice.

#### **Weaknesses:**

1. Potential threat of localism and lack of competitiveness.
2. Insufficient financing of the study programs (maintenance, renewal, etc.)

### **Assessment of the requirement [6]**

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

#### **Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

The resources and provision of the study program comply with the conditions for the implementation of the study program and the achievement of the study results. However, the resources are fragmented and basic. The resources should be regularly reviewed and improved, as well as aligned with the current trends in the practical labor market.

## **2.4. Teaching Staff**

### **Analysis**

#### **2.4.1.**

DU's SP "Art Management" is implemented by 31 lecturers including 17 from other departments. For most of the teaching staff DU is their primary place of employment. All lecturers of the program have either master's or doctoral degree and/or professional experience of at least five years, so formally they comply with the requirements of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (SER, section 3.4.1., p. 101). On the other hand, some specialization study courses are taught by members of the teaching staff who don't have any practical experience in the field and they are also not engaged in any artistic activity or scientific research. This raises doubts whether they can fulfill the goals of the program and achieve the learning outcomes, for example, to prepare students for creative, research and management work in the industry.

#### 2.4.2.

The main criteria in the selection of study program lecturers are relevant education, academic or scientific degree, research and creative activity (publications in the relevant sector, conducted research, participation in projects), as well as communication skills.

Positively, the proportion of the teaching staff with doctorate degrees has increased from 2017 to 2022, from 48,8 % to 67,7 % respectively. Also, the number of professors, associate professors and lecturers has increased - by 6,23 %, 14,3 %, 5 % respectively. (SER, section 3.4.1., p. 102-103)

DU has highlighted the hiring of event producer Juris Millers in the study year 2020/2021 who started to teach the study course "Directing of art events (festivities)" (SER, section 3.4.1., p.101). Unfortunately, other staff members responsible for specialization courses have limited or no practical experience in the field of arts management. In order to increase the quality of the study process it is essential that other working professionals from the industry would be hired.

#### 2.4.4.

Most of the teaching staff members have fulfilled the requirements in accordance with the Law on Higher Education Institutions, mainly achieving this with at least 5 years of practical experience. There is also some evidence of research, for example, Zeltite Barsevska has a good track record. Unfortunately, there is no research conducted related to specifics of art management. For some members, the information provided in their CVs is limited and doesn't include enough proof, for example, Inta Ostrovska who is teaching some of the main study courses of the SP - Art Management, Practical aspects of Art management and and Communication Management. There is no information on her CV that would show any practical experience in arts management and she is also not included in the Annex nr. 2.4.4. "Research and artistic creative activity\_ENG". Another example - Rudite Rinkeviča, who is teaching study courses "Economics", "Art and culture organization operation", "Practical elaboration of projects" and "Project elaboration and management" - her CV is not included annex nr. 2.3.7. "CV\_ENG" and she is also not included in the annex nr. 2.4.4. "Research and artistic creative activity\_ENG".

It should be mentioned that according to Annex nr. 2.1.2. "Study field development plan" there is no information on strategic research directions in SP "Arts Management". Thus, there is no clarity whether scientific research activity enables to achieve the aims of the study program. There is also no evidence that DU in any way manages the process or has provided training on academic article writing.

#### 2.4.5.

There is no clear mechanism established to foster mutual cooperation of the teaching staff. According to SER (section 3.4.5., p.104) teaching staff collaborates on a regular basis including joint research, discussion of study results, etc. There is no information on joint research activity in annex 2.4.4. "Research and artistic creative activity\_EN", so it can not be verified if these practices exist in place. Members that were present during the expert's visit acknowledged that they are involved more with other departments and they have not participated in any meeting specifically organized for this study program. They see future department consolidation as a positive change as that will foster closer collaboration between teaching staff members.

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

Conclusions:

Though the number of members of the teaching staff with doctoral degree is high, there is a concern about the qualifications of study courses of the specialization, for example, Art Management, Communication management, etc. There is no evidence in CVs that would show either related experience or research. Additionally, some crucial specialization study courses are taught by the

same lecturers which also raises doubts about the quality and ability of the DU to attract highly qualified professionals to this SP. There is also no evidence of mutual cooperation between members of the teaching staff.

#### Strengths

1. High proportion of teaching staff with doctoral degree.

#### Weaknesses:

1. No strategic research directions established for this study program.
2. No visible research activity related to arts management.
3. Some teaching staff members are covering study courses that are not related to their professional experience, research or education.
4. No visible collaboration between members of the teaching staff.

### Assessment of the requirement [7]

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

#### **Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

Mostly, members of the teaching staff comply with regulatory requirements, though information about some is missing and some are teaching study courses that are not directly linked to their qualifications.

## 2.5. Assessment of the Compliance

### Requirements

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

#### **Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

PBSP "Art management" volume is 240ECTS (160CP) of which 30ECTS are theoretical courses of humanities and social sciences and courses that develop basic social, communicative and organizational skills, 54ECTS are basic courses of the branch and information technology courses, 90ECTS for professional specialization courses, including state exams and defence of bachelor thesis and 9ECTS are devoted to free elective courses. Study program has an internship in the amount of 26 CP and Bachelor thesis has the amount of 12CP. Number of contact hours (minimum 40%) complies with Cabinet Regulations no.305. After justification from DU, it is now understandable that the legal criteria is met - the programme has 3 study projects under study courses (Term paper I,II,II or Studiju darbs I,II,III (in Latvian)), however experts recommend to expand these courses to 2CP to meet the needs of labor market better. The programme includes obligatory study courses about environmental protection ("Environmental protection" 1CP) and civil protection ("Civil protection" 1CP). Acquirable degree is in compliance with classification in regulatory enactments. Options for postgraduate education have been fulfilled.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

Study program is based on the profession standard (PS-115) - Company manager, which was approved on September 18, 2019.

Company manager is a profession equivalent to the fifth level of professional qualification (5. PKL), which corresponds to the sixth level of the Latvian qualifications framework (6. LKI). Study program partially complies with requirements set in professional standard, due to insufficient amount of management study courses.

The mapping of corresponding study courses to achieve the desired competencies in annex 3.2.1. provide a good overview of the situation in the programme and is logical.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

Study course descriptions and study materials are prepared in Latvian language, and they satisfy requirements set in Law on Higher Education Institutions.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

The diploma issued complies with the state legislature and "Procedures by which documents certifying higher Education recognised by the State shall be issued" (Cabinet of Ministers No. 202). Sample of diploma contains correctly formatted diploma and diploma supplement with information mentioned in rules no. 202.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

not applicable.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

The academic staff has sufficient Latvian language knowledge for implementing study courses and for professional and office duties. This is confirmed by a signed Rector's acknowledgement. This acknowledgement is applicable for all staff involved in study field "Arts" implementation.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

Study agreements include all necessary parts set in legislation (Cabinet of Ministers no. 70). Samples of study agreement include general information about the higher education institution, student, study program (accreditation term, amount of CP, etc.); and the order of financing. Duties and rights are described for both sides. It is advised to include information about guarantees of compensation losses (criteria No. 11 and 12), so that this information is easier for the students to acknowledge already from the beginning.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Non-compliant

DU has no agreements with any universities for Arts management study program. If this study program gets terminated, DU will not be able to provide opportunities for students to continue their education in another study program or partner university.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

University has a rector's signed attestation that confirms it will compensate losses to students if the study program is not accredited or loses its license and the student does not wish to continue studies in another study program.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

**Assessment of the requirement [8]**



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

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

DU Arts management have partial compliance with professional standard and they lack formal agreement with other universities for students to continue their studies in case if this study program gets terminated.

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

The PBSP Arts management answers to a demand of young talented managing labor forces in the region. The employment situation of graduates seems to be favorable.

Coming from the philological idea of an Arts centered study plan, the curriculum would need some modernisation in order to align the Study program to international studies of Arts and Music management studies in Europe and worldwide. The lack of management study courses can mean that students are not prepared enough for the practical aspects of the program. the PBSP Arts management did not establish any research directions, which is a major issue to be fixed. Cooperations with excellent management experts from other national and prestigious international institutions would enhance the quality of the study program. Additionally, DU fails to provide formal agreement with other universities where students could keep studying in case this program gets terminated.

**Strengths:**

1.The PBSP Arts management complies well with the national and regional need of educating future Arts managers and with the aim to hold talents in this field within the Latgale region and within Latvia. 2.Because of its offer of practical artistic study courses like e.g. dance., it is a popular program amongst young people.

**Weaknesses:**

1.Whereas the reality of the Study program aims for educating project managers, the national regulations for professional standards force the university to aim for the qualification of a company manager. DU is aware of this clash, but hasn't yet undertaken action to solve it  
2.The concept of the curriculum of Arts managements should be oriented more towards "hard" skill study courses, resp. study courses offering economical, production and legal education should gain more importance within the curriculum.

**Evaluation of the study programme "Art Management"**

Evaluation of the study programme:

Average

**2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Art Management"**

**Short-term recommendations**

1. Research curricula of other institutions offering Arts/Music management and production Study programs on a national and international level.
2. Provide agreement with other universities about study continuing options in case this study programme gets terminated.

3. Conduct a thorough review of the current curriculum to identify courses that may be less relevant for a managerial role in the arts sector. Replace or modify these with courses that focus on essential management skills.
4. Implement a structured guidance and mentoring program for internships to ensure alignment with career goals and market needs.
5. Develop research directions of the SP that would include current trends of art management.
6. Analyze members of the teaching staff who cover specialization study courses whether they have necessary qualification.
7. Clarify study program compliance with Cabinet of Ministers regulation 305. chapter 25 (clarify 3 study projects)
8. To increase the amount of credit points in study courses which include development of study projects (term paper I, II, III)

### Long-term recommendations

1. Create an opportunity to learn the feedback from the employers on the acquired skills of the students already earlier in the course of studies. e.g. after practical training, internships or similar.
2. Consider whether study subjects with economic, production and legal focus should not gain more weight within the Study plans.
3. Make sure that internship offers enough variety for students and that the design of internship tasks raises the level every year of study.
4. Take action and find solutions for the fact, that the professional qualification of a Company owner is not really compliant with the study field ART, either by inspiring politics to change the framework and to allow Project manager as professional qualification on Bachelor level, or in adjusting the SP as academic, or in adjusting study curricula more in line with requirements set in professional standards, providing more management and business courses.
5. Introduce a continuous evaluation mechanism that involves stakeholders, including students, alumni and employers, to ensure the program stays up-to-date with industry trends and labor market demands.
6. Widen regular international partnership for curriculum development and student exchange programs to bring a global perspective to the study program.
7. Re-evaluate the use of educational technology platforms like Moodle for consistency across courses, ensuring that they are effectively utilized to enhance the student-centered approach.
8. Consider the inclusion of more innovative or groundbreaking topics in the final theses to push boundaries.
9. Develop a plan to increase research activity related to art management by providing seminars about writing academic papers to the teaching staff of this SP and also a clear bonus system for publications.
10. Attract visiting lecturers from other HEI in Latvia and abroad to provide students with actively working professionals and researchers in the field of arts management.

11. Develop a plan for improvement of collaboration between members of the teaching staff that would include regular meetings, joint projects, etc.

## **II - "Music" ASSESSMENT**

### **II - "Music" ASSESSMENT**

#### **2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme**

##### **Analysis**

###### **2.1.1.**

The PBSP Music is compliant with the Study Field ART. The need of keeping musical talents in the region of Latgale and in Latvia was confirmed at the employers' meeting within the experts' visit on site (8./9.8. 2023) at DU. The PBSP Music was created according to the requirements of operational program Growth and Employment and its specific support target No. 8.2.1. Reducing the fragmentation of study programs and strengthening the sharing of resources, the development of the PBSP Music (SER 3.1.2. Analysis and assessment of the study program compliance with the study field.). The study program was developed in a working group that would bring together national and international experts, mainly from DU, the Lithuanian Music and Theatre Academy, Vytautas Kaunas University and Šiauliai University (SER 3.1.2. Analysis and assessment of the study program compliance with the study field).

The study program is compliant with the following national and international regulations and rules:

1. The Act on Higher Education Institutions [Augstskolu likums] of the Republic of Latvia; Cabinet of Ministers [Ministru kabinets] Regulations No. 27 (09.01.2018).
2. The operational programme Growth and Employment and its specific support target No. 8.2.1. Reducing the fragmentation of study programs and strengthening the sharing of resources and the implementation rules of the first and second round of selection of the project submissions;
3. The internal DU Growth strategy for 2015 – 2020;

DU furthermore states, that the SP is compliant with “the Cabinet of Ministers [Ministru kabinets] Regulations No. 512 (14.08.2014). that is: Regulations on the national professional education standard” in the Self Evaluation report, but this regulation is no more active and has been replaced by a new standard of the Cabinet of Ministers Regulations NO. 305. The new standard should be reflected upon and integrated to the documentation and realization of the PBSP Music.

###### **2.1.2.**

The duration and scope of the study program implementation (including different study program implementation options), as well as the implementation language, are reasonable and justified. The PBSP Music title, code 42212 and degree of a Professional Bachelor in Music are compliant with the curriculum, the admission process (with its specific artistic and its general knowledge part) and to the knowledge, skills and competencies documented in the description of the study program (SER p.200 and 201). The professional qualifications attributed are Vocalist or Instrument Musician.

The admission requirements asking for a proof of Secondary education, an Entrance exam in the specialty and a colloquium comply with international standards and are aligned with the expected aims, tasks and learning outcomes. The duration of a four year Bachelor Study Program gives sufficient space to achieve the aims of the study program. The Latvian language Study Program version is founded and ensured without any doubt. For the English Study Program version, a B2 level of English language knowledge is demanded for students. During the experts' visit on site (8./9. August 2023), not all of the interviewed academic staff members and study director were fluent enough in English and a translator has been used. According to the Self Evaluation Report of DU, the

English language version of the Study Program has not yet been realized. (SER 3.1.4. Statistical data).

#### 2.1.3.

The current PBSP Music started 2021 and runs without correction (SER 3.1.1. Description and analysis of changes in the parameters of the study program)

#### 2.1.4.

The PBSP Music complies with the aim of DU to develop and ensure the cultural life of the Latgale region and to contribute to the diversity of artistic life in Latvia, therefore the Study program complies with socio-political aims of DU (SER 1.1. Basic information on the higher education institution). Employers as well as graduates confirmed during the experts' visit on site (8./9.8. 2023) that the employment situation is good and that music graduates are needed in Latvia and the Latgale region. This conclusion comes out of the result of the previous PBSP Music. The Self Evaluation report does not deliver any statistical data about the employment situation of graduates of the study program, because the first graduates will come out of university by 2025 (SER p. 204). The number of students correlates to the State funded study places (12). The number of students in the various instrumental and vocal disciplines mirror the fact that strong artistic personalities within the academic staff motivate students to choose DU for music studies. Therefore sub programs like singing, piano, partly accordion and some of the wind instruments attract students, other sub programs struggle with student numbers. It is recommended to DU to make an analyze to this fact and to consider, whether to take action upon it or whether to make it part of the strategy to have disproportions.

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

#### Conclusions:

The new PBSP Music complies with the socio-political aims of DU and to national and international standards of comparable Music study curricula. It is constructed by a national and partly international expert group who took care to fulfill the necessary legal regional, national and international framework, but did still use the former professional standard No. 512 from "the Cabinet of Ministers [Ministru kabinets] Regulations (14.08.2014) and did not reflect the fact that this regulation is no more active and has been replaced by a new standard of the Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No. 305. The innovation of this professional standard should be integrated to all documents of DU concerning PBSP Music and PMSP Music and should be integrated to the realization of the study program as well.

The aims of the study program connect to the enhancement of cultural potential in the region, in Latvia and in international contexts and are attainable, but the international aspect is realized only partly due to a missing new strategy of internationalization that would provide a functional concept how to overcome difficulties in international relationships that emerge from the new geopolitical situation.

The number of students in the various musical instruments and disciplines are unequal. In general, sub programs with strong artistic personalities within the academic staff attract students. DU has not yet provided any analysis of this situation nor developed any strategy to react on it. With not having any string students, it is difficult to establish classical music formations like an orchestra or chamber music groups.

The PBSP Music is conceived for realization in Latvian and in English, but not all the academic staff is

fluent in English and no action is visible that would enhance English spoken study courses or the fluency of management and academic staff in English.

#### Strengths

1. The aims, the curriculum content and structure are interrelated, the duration of the SP is sufficient.
2. Strong artistic personalities within the academic staff attract students.

#### Weaknesses

- 1..The modest number of students (12 state funded places, 17 full time students enrolled) does offer only limited possibilities of chamber music and orchestral projects.
2. English language studies are planned, but not yet realized - a closer look should be taken to the level of English fluency of the relevant Academic staff.

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

### **Analysis**

#### 2.2.1.

Based on the description of the study program in SER (chapter 3.2), study plan (annex 3.2.1) and description of compliance to professional qualification standard (annex 3.2.1), the PBSP Music at DU appears to have a structured standard curriculum comparable to other similar studies in the region, that aims to provide focused education in the field of music. It is designed to comply with national regulations, specifically state education standards. This adherence ensures that the program meets the minimum requirements for educational quality and content. The program's curriculum is divided into various components, including general education, music theory and history, professional specialization, and elective courses. This structure provides a basis for necessary education that is specialized on certain instruments, however also covering essential areas in music and related disciplines. The inclusion of courses like Musical Semiotics, Improvisation, and Composition indicates an effort to stay current with contemporary trends of fostering creativity and critical thinking. The program also incorporates practical elements like internships, which are crucial for preparing students for the professional world. Renewed program is in its first year of implementation, it would be beneficial to have periodic reviews envisioned to ensure that the content remains relevant. Given the rapidly evolving nature of music technology, the curriculum could be updated with current trends in technologies, including digital competencies (including but not limited to digital score writing, sound recording basics, database search skills and so on). Although the program aims to be interdisciplinary, the extent to which it successfully integrates other fields (like technology, business, or social sciences) into its curriculum is not entirely clear. This would be an area for potential improvement. The program declares a strong emphasis on student-centered learning, which is commendable. The effectiveness of this approach can only be assessed through longitudinal tracking students' progress and career outcomes. Similarly, while the program involved various stakeholders in its development, including the Student Council and employers, the real test of its relevance to the industry and labor market will come when its graduates enter the workforce. From the meetings of the stakeholders it was not clear what exact processes are used to take their ideas into account, as stakeholders in meetings with experts were reluctant to provide analysis or suggestions for the further improvement of the study program.

Based on the description of the study program in SER, study plan and description of professional qualification standard, study program apparently meets the necessary minimal requirements of professional qualification standards, however there is inconsistency in the documents. SER states, that upon completion of the study program, the student accordingly obtains a professional

bachelor's degree in music (160 CP studies) and Level 5 professional qualification according to the specialization modules: accordionist musician (2652 09), pianist musician (2652 09), flautist musician (2652 06), guitarist musician (2652 06), clarinetist musician (2652 06), saxophonist musician (2652 06), trumpeter musician (2652 06), trombonist musician (2652 06), violinist musician (2652 08), vocalist (2652 26), percussionist (2652 07). Annex "Compliance of the professional bachelor's study program "Music" to the professional standard" states that the obtained 5th level professional qualification Instrumental Musician and Solo Singer meets the standard requirements of the Instrumental Musician and Vocalist profession. Apparently, those statements are based on different versions of regulations and study program versions. Greater attention towards consistency on information provided is necessary.

#### 2.2.3.

Program SER (chapter 3.2.3) states that the study implementation methods contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes, and that student-centered learning and teaching principles are considered. The program description itself would benefit from a more detailed explanation of how student centered learning as a strategy is practically implemented. For example, are students given the autonomy to individualize certain pathways through electives? How is their feedback integrated into the assessment methods or further improvement of the program? While meeting students (and alumni of previous graduates of similar music programs of DU) it also wasn't clear if and how they are encouraged to take the initiative and ownership of the program. Methods used for study implementation and content of the curriculum must be adaptable. Music market is rapidly evolving due to technological advancements, societal changes and changes in consumer behavior. Therefore, the teaching methods and course content must be flexible enough to adapt to these changes. Program might benefit from more focus on contemporary trends in music technology, a concept "Musicians as makers in society" recently developed by AEC (European Association of Conservatoires) and other relevant trends. Offering the program in both Latvian and English naturally expands its reach and diversity but also introduces challenges. Assessment methods must be carefully designed to be equitable, and social dynamics within the bilingual setting should be managed to encourage interaction between students of different backgrounds. As we did not meet any English speaking students, it is hard to evaluate how it will work in practice.

Administrative support concerning admissions in English appears to be adequate.

#### 2.2.4.

The internship or concert practice, as outlined in the documents (SER 3.2.4 and annex 3.2.4: "Practice/internship regulation of second level professional higher education study program "Music") appears to be focused on both theoretical and practical aspects of music. It aims to develop a range of skills from technical mastery to artistic creativity, aligning well with the broader learning outcomes of the study program. The practice is divided into various components, each with its own sets of tasks and credit points. This practical activity may lack enough guidance as feedback processes are not well enough described. Documents don't explicitly address the provision of internships in a foreign language or for foreign students. Given that the program is offered in both Latvian and English, this is an oversight. Language can be a barrier, affecting not just communication but also the interpretation and understanding of musical material, moreover concert practice environments are local and seldom include communication in English. Absence of specific support mechanism for foreign language instruction could be a limitation.

#### 2.2.6.

Requirements for students' final theses (as described in SER chapter 3.2.6) appear to be designed to align with the field and the study program. Although no cohorts graduated yet, students' final theses are aimed to be relevant to the field and correspond to the study program. Description is detailing

requirements on professional and interpretation skills, even if encouraged thesis directions are not necessarily pushing the field forward, they are enough for a professional bachelor program, which is focusing on practical performance skills.

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

#### **Conclusion:**

The Professional Bachelor Music study program at DU offers a standard curriculum that adheres to national standards and incorporates practical components like internships. It is not clear from the presented documentation, whether the amount and quality of guidance to students to realize the internship projects including an afterwards feedback, is sufficient. While it declares a student-centered approach and multilingual offerings, it slightly falls short in contemporary focus and possibly support for foreign language instruction.

#### **Strengths:**

- 1.The curriculum is structured, covering essential areas in music and related disciplines.
- 2.The program is available in both Latvian and English, expanding its reach.
- 3.Motivated and dedicated subject/specialty teaching staff.

#### **Weaknesses:**

- 1.The curriculum might benefit from focusing on contemporary trends (digital competencies, musicians' role in the society etc.)
- 2.The program's interdisciplinary integration is declared, but not clearly defined.
- 3.Inconsistencies in documentation concerning professional qualification could lead to confusion.
- 4.Apparent absence of specific support mechanisms for foreign language instruction.
5. Not enough proof of sufficient guidance of students before, during and after their internship projects.

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

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

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

### **Analysis**

#### **2.3.1.**

The study program "Music" uses three buildings of DU as material and technical base for its implementation – Parādes iela 1, Parādes iela 1a and Vienības iela 13. 10 auditoriums with equipment appropriate to the specifics of each study course have been created for individual practical lessons, which are essential in musician study programs (for example, two cabinet grand pianos are available in piano classes, while conductor's desks/consoles and other necessary equipment are placed in wind instrument classes). Metronomes can also be used if necessary. Students have unlimited opportunities to act and behave independently in classes. (SER, 3.2.6.) The location Vienības iela 13 has rooms equipped according to the specifics of the study programs, an audience for lectures of various student streams, study rooms for small groups and individual practical lessons. (SER, 2.3.2.) However, as the shortage of practice rooms (especially during the exam period) was mentioned by students and faculty alike, this aspect could be improved - either by

enlarging the number of the practice rooms or by more thoughtful scheduling of the occupancy of the existing ones.

3 concert hall venues are equipped with high-class instruments and are available for artistic endeavors –recitals, concerts, concert lectures and masterclasses. Apart from 15 grand pianos, including a new Bösendorfer concert grand piano, there are 30 pianos, 33 accordions, 15 recorder flutes, 12 lutes (kokles), a set of electronic musical instruments (Roland Fantom G8, Roland G70, Korg PA50, Yamaha PSR3000 and others) and a set of wind instruments as well as percussion instruments (also a marimba Yamaha) etc. Also, there is sound amplification equipment (500W, 900W, 2000W). Audio equipment is used for recording various events and realization of study projects (concerts, concert lectures, musical afternoons). A large part of these musical instruments and sound amplification equipment have been purchased from ESF and ERDF funds. (SER, 3.2.6.) There is a well-established DU library that is open 9 hours a day, 45 hours a week. The collection of the library is 267,655 copies, including 233,868 books and 20,322 periodicals (368 titles). Of these, the library offers 13,465 sheet music collections and 25,594 books related to music literature, history, theory, methodology, pedagogy and psychology. The audio library of the Faculty of Music and Arts has 500 CDs, more than 200 audio cassettes, about 50 video films (such as European musical cities, Great Composers, Royal Group etc.), as well as vinyl records in the hundreds. The cooperation of the Faculty of Music and Arts with the Daugavpils Music High School allows students to also use the audio library base of this educational institution (535 CDs, 4000 vinyl records, 65 video films). Cooperation with the audio library of Jazeps Vitols Latvian Academy of Music ensures the acquisition of the latest music recordings. (SER, 3.3.1.)

The licensed study program PBSP "Music" has been successfully implemented for the second year already (licence No. 04041-105, licence receipt date September 29, 2021). As Latgale region's music schools and secondary schools, cultural institutions (such as theatre, orchestras, and other cultural institutions) are in great need of modern educated musicians and performing artists, who, in addition to the work of artistic creativity, are capable of organizing/managing artistic creative projects and self-management of scientific research in the field of music, some of the very proactive representatives of the teaching staff build the bridges between the institutions and their current students and future alumni, trusting that the acquired innovative knowledge would contribute to the development of the cultural environment of Latvia, especially the Latgale region.

The study process is provided with a sufficient amount of photocopying equipment, audio and video equipment, and visual presentation equipment. Thus, the sufficiently wide volume of library and audio library materials provides students and teachers the availability of various sources of music, arts and humanities. The library contains the most essential reference materials for musicians and the funds of audio and video recordings is constantly renewed and supplemented and is considered a priority. Another, so to say, provision that can't be overlooked when speaking about the program is the strong personalities among faculty that serve as influencers with a key role in attracting and maintaining students. Last but not least, if compared to other fellow programs, the study program "Music" has a certain amount of long-standing international cooperation projects with neighboring institutions in Lithuania and Poland. This aspect certainly adds to the prerequisites for the achievement of better learning outcomes and indicate the possibility to ensure a high-quality and versatile study process.

### 2.3.3.

The main source of funding for the full-time study form of the PBSP Music is the state budget and funds of natural or legal entities. Part-time studies are paid from the funds of individuals or legal entities. There is a calculation of costs per student in the professional full-time PBSP Music, (42212) with a study duration of 4 years, 160 CP.

The total costs for 1 student in 1 study year is EUR 6373,40. The cost calculation is made on the condition that at least 7 students study in the study program in a state-funded budget place. The



cost calculation for one student is carried out in the Department of Finance and Accounting of DU, including the salary fund and employer's mandatory state social insurance contributions (VSAOI), business trips, materials, energy resources and inventory costs, books, equipment purchase and investment costs, as well as costs for student social security (SER, 3.3.3.) In the 2017/2018 study year, PMSP "Music" has 9 state-finances budget places, whereas several years later - 2020/2021 study year - the PMSP "Music" has only 8 state-finances budget places. Also, since the number of budget places in the program has decreased and the region does not provide enough resources (i.e. unemployment strongly present) for the potential students to pay for their studies with their own resources, an emphasis has to be put on recruiting and attracting more international students, which is repeatedly admitted by both the management, administrative, as well as the teaching staff of the DU. (SER 2.6.1. Overview of implementation of the recommendations\_EN)

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

The study provision, informative provision, material and technical provision and financial provision is fully compliant with the conditions for the implementation of the study program and ensuring the achievement of learning outcomes. Also, the university has established contracts with some of the main regional employers, confirming a strong dedication to the development of the region.

Strengths:

1. The study program has a certain amount of long-standing international cooperation projects.
2. A certain network of cooperation with main regional employers is established, primarily through individual contacts.
3. Strong personalities among academic staff play a key role in attracting students.

Weaknesses:

1. Not an optimal planning and scheduling for provision of premises.
2. Small number of students studying in the program.

### **Assessment of the requirement [6]**

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

The study provision, informative provision (including library), material and technical provision and financial provision is fully compliant with the conditions for the implementation of the study program and ensuring the achievement of learning outcomes.

## **2.4. Teaching Staff**

### **Analysis**

#### **2.4.1.**

According the SER (section 3.4.1.), 36 members of the academic staff are involved in the implementation of the SP including 26 representing DU and others representing partner institutions in Latvia (JVLMA) and abroad, for example, Karol Lipinski Academy of Music in Wroclaw and Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theater. All members of the academic staff have either master's or doctoral degree (dr. art. – 7, Ph. D. – 4, dr. paed. – 4, dr. hist. – 1, dr. oec. – 1). Three members are experts of Latvian Science Council in the field of Music, additional five are experts in the field of

Humanities. Not all members of the academic staff have C1 level of English language. According to SER (section 3.4.1., p. 25), HEI has taken the decision that those members will implement the program only in Latvian. During expert's visit on site (8/9.8.2023.) one member of the academic staff shared experience of using a translator during his lectures and acknowledged that it was not necessary after a short while as music language with its terminology is international and there was no difficulty in communicating with the student.

#### 2.4.2.

According to SER (section 3.4.2., p. 228), there are several internal regulations for evaluation and development of the teaching staff, for example, "Regulations on elections in academic positions at Daugavpils University" and "The procedure for evaluating the scientific activity of the academic staff of Daugavpils University". Also, additionally to research and artistic activity expected from the teaching staff, they are teaching also involved in implementation of several projects including collaboration with foreign partner universities, for example, joint CD recording with Karol Lipinski Academy of Music in Wroclaw, participation as jury members in several international competitions and ERAF and ESF projects at DU.

During the expert's visit members of the academic staff expressed high loyalty to DU. Though there is no information included in SER about any recent changes in teaching staff, those who were present expressed their motivation to stay with the university. Additionally, it could be observed that they have a close working relationship, they collaborate and support each other.

There is also a well-developed collaboration network with foreign HEI that provides access to visiting professors, for example, from Karol Lipinski Academy of Music in Wroclaw, Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theater. Though the number of partner HEI is not very high their collaboration has been long-term and stable (SER, section 3.4.1., 224).

#### 2.4.4.

Overall, the artistic and scientific activity of the academic staff members in this SP is higher compared to other SP of this study field at DU. There have been 52 scientific publications including 20 in SCOPUS. However, it is worth mentioning that only a few members of the academic staff are scientifically active. Although there is a bonus system in place to motivate staff members to write publications, apparently it is not enough. During the expert's visit academic staff members acknowledged that they receive support from their peers but they have not participated in an activity organized by DU that would foster their skills of writing scientific papers.

Also, artistic activity has been very high. According to SER (section 3.4.1., p. 225 and Annex 2.4.4. "Research and artistic creative activity\_EN") , overall 103 concerts or artistic projects have been implemented from 2017 til 2023. Mainly, those have been local or regional concerts, however some members of the teaching staff have also performed on a national and international level, for example, Ilona Bagele (as a soloist of Latvian National Opera and Ballet and as a solo performer) and Gleb Belajev (solo concerts in Latgale region and in Poland and Lithuania). Positively, during Covid pandemic artistic activity didn't fully stop as some online concerts were organized.

#### 2.4.5.

There is no formal mechanism in place that would foster the cooperation of the teaching staff. However, in practice, especially when it comes to artistic activity, they collaborate very closely by organizing joint concerts, music recordings etc. According to SER (section 3.4.5., p. 230) several members of the teaching staff are involved in the development and implementation of each study course, which is a mechanism to avoid overlapping of the study course content and also jointly agreeing on goals and aims.

According to SER (section 3.4.5., p. 230) each year student's surveys are analyzed in order to make necessary changes in study program content. That also contributes to the avoidance of overlapping

study course content. Also, each member of the teaching staff is required to do an annual self-analysis in order to prepare for the next study year.

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

#### **Conclusions:**

Overall, qualifications of the teaching staff of the SP collide with the regulatory requirements. They are artistically active, especially in the region of Latgale with some cases also on national and international level. Some members of the teaching staff are also scientifically active, though more attention should be paid to motivating all members of the teaching staff to engage in research.

#### **Strengths**

1. Some members of the teaching staff are highly qualified including members of Latvian Science Council, artistically active professionals and some with good research track record.
2. Close cooperation between teaching staff including joint concerts and recordings.
3. Good cooperation with partner universities that provide visiting teaching staff.

#### **Weaknesses:**

1. Lack of national and/or international experience for teaching staff of the specialization courses.
2. No formal mechanism in place that would foster research activity.

### **Assessment of the requirement [7]**

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

#### **Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

The qualification and professional experience level of academic staff is overall sufficient in terms on an artistic and music related level, but not all of the teachers communicate fluently in English at a level sufficient for knowledge transfer on university level.

## **2.5. Assessment of the Compliance**

### **Requirements**

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

#### **Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

PBSP "Music" volume is 240 ECTS (160CP) of which 30ECTS are theoretical courses of humanities and social sciences and courses that develop basic social, communicative and organizational skills, 54ECTS are basic courses of the branch and information technology courses, 98ECTS for professional specialization courses, with 8 types of specialization modules. 9ECTS are devoted to free elective courses. Study program has an internship in the amount of 30 ECTS and Bachelor thesis has the amount of 18ECTS. Number of contact hours (minimum 40%) complies with the regulations. At the moment of evaluation, experts do not see how the program complies with Cabinet Regulation no. 305 paragraph no. 25 - study program must include 3 study projects (it is not made clear by study course descriptions).

The program includes obligatory study courses about environmental protection ("Environmental protection" 1CP) and civil protection ("Civil protection" 1CP).

Acquirable degree is in compliance with classification in regulatory enactments.

Options for postgraduate education have been fulfilled.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

Study program is based on the profession standards - Instrument musician (2652 05) and Vocalist (2652 26) and they are specializations equivalent with fifth level of professional qualification (5. PKL), corresponds to the sixth level of the Latvian qualifications framework (6. LKI).

Study program complies with requirements set in the professional standard, and it is achieved via different specialization and basic courses of the branch. Several study courses add to the specific students' knowledge and competencies. The mapping of corresponding study courses to achieve the desired competencies in annex 3.2.1. provide a good overview of the situation in the program and is logical. Study program is based on old profession standards that were approved around 2010.-2012. There is a potential risk that the program cannot award students with up-to-date competencies required in the field, because of outdated prof. standard.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

Study course descriptions and study materials are prepared in Latvian and English language, and they satisfy requirements set in Law on Higher Education Institutions.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

The diploma issued complies with the state legislature and "Procedures by which documents certifying higher Education recognised by the State shall be issued" (Cabinet of Ministers No. 202). Sample of diploma contains correctly formatted diploma and diploma supplement with information mentioned in rules no. 202.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

The academic staff has sufficient Latvian language knowledge for implementing study courses and for professional and office duties. This is confirmed by a signed Rector's acknowledgement. This acknowledgement is applicable for all staff involved in study field "Arts" implementation.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

The academic staff might have sufficient foreign language knowledge for implementing study courses (at least B2). This is confirmed by a signed Rector's attestation. However, the experts found that the staff are not entirely ready to teach study courses in English, as they admitted themselves to be uncomfortable with their knowledge level. It also should be noted that not all academic staff CV were formatted in a unified (e.g. EUROPASS) level, therefore for some Music department staff it was impossible to fully confirm this information as they did not describe the level of language knowledge.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

Study agreements include all necessary parts set in legislation (Cabinet of Ministers no. 70). Samples of study agreement include general information about the higher education institution, student, study program (accreditation term, amount of CP, etc.); and the order of financing. Duties and rights are described for both sides. It is advised to include information about guarantees of compensation losses (criteria No. 11 and 12), so that this information is easier for the students to acknowledge already from the beginning.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Non-compliant

DU has no agreements with any universities for Music study program. If this study program gets terminated, DU will not be able to provide opportunities for students to continue their education in another study program or partner university.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

University has a rector's signed attestation that confirms it will compensate losses to students if the study program is not accredited or loses its license and the student does not wish to continue studies in another study program.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

**Assessment of the requirement [8]**

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

DU Music bachelor study program has compliance with outdated professional standards and they lack formal agreement with other universities for students to continue their studies in case this study program gets terminated. Additionally as confirmed on visit, not all academic staff is ready to implement teaching in English, even though the program is licenced in English language as well.

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

Conclusions:

The licensed study program PBSP "Music" has been successfully implemented for the second year already (licence No. 04041-105, licence receipt date September 29, 2021). As Latgale region's music schools and secondary schools, cultural institutions (such as theatre, orchestras, and other cultural institutions) are in great need of modern educated musicians and performing artists, who, in addition to the work of artistic creativity, are capable of organizing/managing artistic creative projects and self-management of scientific research in the field of music, some of the very proactive representatives of the teaching staff build the bridges between the institutions and their current students and future alumni, trusting that the acquired innovative knowledge would contribute to the development of the cultural environment of Latvia, especially the Latgale region. Furthermore, the PBSP Music contributes to diversity in the academic offer of cultural HEI in Latvia.

The conception of the study plan, the duration of studies (4 years) and the ratio between theoretical and practical study courses is logical and complies with the learning outcomes and skills/competencies as described in the Study program parameters. Some of the sub programs attract students, but that is not the case for the whole offer of sub programs. During experts' visit on site (8./9.8.2023) academic staff members and mainly students expressed the wish to widen and intensify international cooperation also to Western European countries. At the moment of evaluation, PBSP has no student studying in English, therefore the evident lack of fluency in English of a part of the academic staff during the experts' visit on site (8./9.8.2023).

Strengths:

1. Interviews with employers and graduates during the AIKA experts visit on site (8./9. August 2023)

proved that the professional SP Music fulfills the aim of supporting the cultural life in Latgale region and in Latvia. The graduates confirmed the benefits of the Study program, the employers confirmed, that graduates are employable and welcome.

2. A number of strong artistic personalities within the academic staff attract students.

3. The cooperation with Polish and Lithuanian partners are appreciated by the staff and students.

#### Weaknesses

1. The modest number of students (12 state funded places, 17 full time students enrolled) does offer only limited possibilities of chamber music and orchestral projects.

2. English language studies are planned, but not yet realized - a closer look should be taken to the level of English fluency of the relevant Academic staff.

3. Lack of information about compliance with Regulation 305 chapter 25.

4. Not all the sub programs attract students which might be related to the fact, that not all sub programs have strong artistic personalities amongst their academic staff.

5. It is not visible, how systematic the support before, during and after internship projects of students really is. Apparently, projects are realized, but not always properly evaluated or reflected upon.

6. The Polish and Lithuanian cooperation being appreciated, academic staff and students still call for a larger scale of partners in Europe and the world, especially ERASMUS+ projects with Western European countries offering a different cultural context would be appreciated.

7. The PBSP Music is offered in Latvian and English, but not all of the academic staff members seem to be fluent in English at a degree that would enable knowledge transfer in the speciality in a quality that is expected from a HEI.

8. Cooperation and agreements with future employers are based mainly on personal contacts of academic staff and management of the study program. No systematic creation of a professional network is visible.

### Evaluation of the study programme "Music"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

### 2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Music"

#### Short-term recommendations

1. Support even more the invitation of national and international experts (master classes, ERASMUS blended intensive projects and other forms of exchange projects)

2. Provide agreement with other universities about possibilities to continue studies.

3. Develop a comprehensive digital literacy module to cover essential digital competencies (digital score writing, sound recording basics, database search skills and/or similar).

4. Conduct an internal review to resolve inconsistencies in documentation concerning professional qualifications, ensuring clarity and coherence.

5. Clarify study programme compliance with Cabinet of Ministers regulation 305. chapter 25 (clarify 3 study projects)

6. Initiate the process / have discussions of professional standard renewal and/or adjust the content of studies to the actual professional standard.

### Long-term recommendations

1. Some subprograms have adequate students' numbers, some have very low students' numbers. It is recommended to consider taking action in order to attract more students into programs with low student number, e.g. by employing strong artistic personalities for subprograms with low student numbers.
2. Establish systematically new international partnerships beyond the already existing partnerships in Poland and Lithuania, with a special emphasis to new partners in Western and Central Europe.
3. Start discussions on professional standard renewals that would be more suitable for Music study programs.
4. Continue developing English language fluency for academic staff.
5. Establish a clear mechanism to encourage stakeholders to contribute to the program's ongoing development, ensuring that student-centered learning is effectively implemented.
6. Initiate interdisciplinary dialogue and possible cooperation with departments in sciences to enrich the program's interdisciplinary focus.
7. Implement longitudinal studies to track the career outcomes of graduates, providing data that can be used for future program improvements.
8. Develop a plan that includes a clear bonus system to motivate research and artistic activity on regional, national and international levels.

## II - "Design" ASSESSMENT

### II - "Design" ASSESSMENT

#### 2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

##### Analysis

##### 2.1.1.

The PBSP Design is compliant with the Study Field ART.

The actual PBSP Design has formerly been the PBSP Computer Design. The transformation was approved by the Latvian Accreditation Authority. The actual PBSP Design respects the requirements of the national and international qualification standards for the profession of a Graphic designer. The SP was established in compliance with the following European, National and Regional regulations (view SER 173):

1 European Qualifications Framework (EQF) (Cabinet of Ministers [Ministru kabinets] Regulations No. 322 "Regulations on Latvian education classification"), which is the undergraduate/bachelor level of studies.

2. DU mentions in SER 173: State Standard No. 481 and No. 512 of the second-level professional higher education regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers [Ministru kabinets] - these standards are currently replaced by the Ministru kabinets new standards Nr. 305. An update of standards in relevant documents of DU should be realized.



3. Main guidelines of the development strategy of the Latgale region. Development program of the Latgale planning region for 2021-2027 (decision No. 5.3) (available in Latvian: [https://lpr.gov.lv/wp-content/uploads/2006/planosana/Latgales-pl%C4%81no%C5%A1anas-re%C4%A3iona-Att%C4%ABst%C4%ABbas-programma-2021.-2027.gadam\\_.pdf](https://lpr.gov.lv/wp-content/uploads/2006/planosana/Latgales-pl%C4%81no%C5%A1anas-re%C4%A3iona-Att%C4%ABst%C4%ABbas-programma-2021.-2027.gadam_.pdf) ).

Design as such is of course interrelated with ARTs as a form of applied Arts and the specific PBSP Design of DU navigates between a SP that supports students in understanding and experiencing Arts on one hand and in establishing specific technological and conceptual design skills on the other hand.

#### 2.1.2.

The title of the PBSP Design with its code 42214 and its degree of a Professional Bachelor's Degree in Art is interrelated to the qualification of Graphic designer and is compliant with the curriculum and most of the learning outcomes, except the demanded international competitiveness: In the Annex PBSP Design, "Parameters," "Goals of SP", DU defines the goals, purpose and aim of the SP as following: "to prepare highly internationally competitive specialists with comprehensive knowledge in art, who, through further professional education, could work in a qualified manner and meet the current and prospective demand of Latvian industries (art, culture, research and production)." The statement that students acquire comprehensive knowledge in art is realistic in the perspective of the curriculum offering study courses which enable them to acquire this kind of knowledge.

The goal of educating "highly internationally competitive specialists" might not yet be correlated with the actual real study situation, where the degree of internationalization regarding e.g. international master classes, memberships in international professional design networks and other forms of preparing students to an international market are practically non-existent. The study program is realized in Latvian which points more to a national than international orientation.

The tasks as defined in the Annex of the PBSP Design, Parameters, Tasks of SP: Ten tasks are mentioned, some of them speaking about general aims like supporting creativity, encouraging students' interest in the processes taking place in society, preparing students' to be able to continue eventually in a master's degree, some of them are directed towards arts education, like teaching the ability to review and evaluate the most significant works in world and Latvian art, developing perception, memory, senses of colors, some tasks are in between art and design education, like teaching practical skills, the acquaintance of knowledge and theoretical foundations of art and information technology and one is specific for design studies, that is providing knowledge and practical skills in computer design. The general tasks of creativity and social engagement and the tasks referring to a general education in art analysis and perception prevail the number of really design-specific tasks. It might be worth consideration to focus more on the specificity of graphic design studies in defining the tasks of it. A stronger focus on design - specific tasks would also help to align the tasks of the SP with the results of the SP (knowledge-skills-competencies).

The problem is already solved by DU in its Self Evaluation report, where DU delivers a different tasks definition. In the SP Design chapter 3.1.2. Analysis and assessment of the SP compliance with the study field, DU states: "The tasks of the study program are to educate specialists who are competitive in the labor market in the field of graphic design, who can work individually or in a team, planning and managing work groups, the work of other performers, or managing a company, providing comprehensive knowledge, providing a wide interdisciplinary education in accordance with the educational requirements of Latvia and European countries, creating good opportunities for creativity and research work in the field of design, to build graphic designer skills and develop competencies in accordance with the professional standard "Graphic designer" and the formulated requirements of the labor market, as well as to promote the development of design education at all levels in Latvia, improving the development and competitiveness of the national economy." (SER 3.1.2., p. 175).

This task description of SER 3.1.2. is fully interconnected with the learning outcomes/results

description of SER 3.1.2. and the learning outcomes/results description in the Annex of the PBSP Design, Parameters, Results. It would therefore be recommendable to replace the tasks definition in the Annex, Study program, Parameters Task of SP section by the tasks definition of SER 3.1.2.

This change would make the material of SER and Program description of the Annex compatible and consistent. Looking at results and learning outcomes of the PBSP Design in the Annex, Parameters, Results of the SP, DU claims, that students acquire the knowledge “specific to the art industry for the profession of graphic designer”, that they are able “to carry out professional, artistic, innovative or research activities”, structure their one learning, communicate outcomes with specialists as well as non-specialists and are “familiar with design research methodology”. DU states that students achieve the skills of realizing artistic ideas using “possibilities of computer equipment and other modern technologies”, achieve individual and group working skills, achieve the capacity of analyzing information and the independent, responsible and initiative approach and capacity of solution finding “in changing or uncertain circumstances.” Amongst competencies, DU names the ability to “analyze, synthesize and independently apply the acquired theoretical and practical knowledge in the implementation of innovative ideas, using modern information acquisition, processing and systematization technologies, in accordance with the requirements of the labor market”, drawing conclusions out of theory and implement them in practice, and finally motivation to learn further. This means that the learning outcomes of the study program are clearly connected with the specificity of graphic design. The connection between the study program content and learning outcomes and the professional standards of a graphic designer are stressed even more in the Self Evaluation Report, where DU accentuates the aim of enabling the graduate to act within the art industry as a graphic designer, who is competent to work independently, is motivated to develop the sector further and is able to work with new information and new situations (SER 3.1.1. Knowledge, Skills, Competencies). SER 3.1.3. mentions that employers are asked to give feedback on the efficiency of the study plan. At the expert's visit (8./9.8.2023) the employers and stakeholders present stated, they had not been specifically asked to give feedback, but this might not be a representative answer. In order to obtain more substantial information, it is advised to establish a regular self-evaluation system, where students, teachers, alumni and cultural stakeholders deliver their opinions, recommendations and general feedback.

The SP duration of four years enables the achievement of defined learning outcomes. The study program is realized in Latvian.

During AKA experts' summer visit at DU (8./9.8.2023), experts could only talk to one guest lecturer and two graduates of the PBSP Design. The Study program director was absent and no student of the study program was present. Therefore, it is difficult to assess the reality of the study program.

#### 2.1.3.

Correction to the study program's parameters have been made on the basis of long-term cooperation with Latvian Academy of Arts, the University of Liepaja and the University of Daugavpils (DU) and DU states, that “in preparing designers and the new trends in the art education system in the European Union” (SER 3.1., p. 175).

The transition from Computer Design to Design and the relevant changments of study plans are reflected and presented in a logical way (SER 3.1., p. 173). During the experts' visit on site (8./9.8.2023) the Study Director of the SP Art Management who replaced the absent Study Director of the SP Design stated, that changes were a necessary reaction to the shift of the labor market demanding specifically for young designers specialized in graphic design with a background in Arts.

#### 2.1.4.

The PBSP Design had a stable number of students between 2017 and 2021 (10 to 13). The number decreased to 6 in 2021/22, which might relate to the COVID situation. The employment rate was

70-100% in the period of 2017 and 2021 and decreased to 50% in 2021/22.(SER 3.1.4. Statistics and SER 3.1.3. Economic and/or social substantiation of the study program, analysis of graduates' employment). DU sees reasons for dropout in individual failure of students who were not able to respond to the requirements of study courses, but no mechanism of assistance to these students can be identified. (SER 3.1.3.). The Self Evaluation report contains also a reflection about the above mentioned decrease of students' numbers from 10-13 to 6 and expresses hope that a general increase of students' numbers will also lead to an increase of students' numbers in the PBSP Design (SER 3.1.3.), but no actions are suggested to enhance the interest of potential future students.

It might be worth consideration to establish even more intensive connections to representatives of the labor market (for being in contact with the actual technological shifts and the demands of the stakeholders towards future employees) and to other national and international HEI offering the same or similar study programs (for innovation of curricula, but also exchange of experts and staff members).

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

The PBSP Design underwent a previous change from Computer design to the actual Graphic design study program. DU provides a clear description of learning outcomes that are specific to the (Graphic) design Study program. The description of aims and tasks of the Study program could be more aligned with the learning outcomes: A comparison between the SP description delivered in the Annex of PBSP Design, Parameters, Tasks of the SP and SER PBSP Design part 3.1.2. shows that the Task definition differs in both documents. It seems that the definition in SER 3.1.2. is more specifically interconnected with the content and the learning outcomes of the SP. It is therefore recommended to use this version. Student numbers started to decrease: whereas they were stable in the period 2016-2021 (10-13), they significantly decreased in 2022 (6). The employment rate after studies decreased as well from 75-100% in the period of 2017/18 to 2020/21 to 50% in 2021/22.

#### **Strengths**

1. The transition from the former SP Computer design to the actual SP Design with the professional qualification of a Graphic designer has been made successfully.
3. The study program has been elaborated in cooperation with other Latvian HEI in the field.

#### **Weaknesses**

- 1.The definition of tasks in the Annex Description of PBSP Design, Parameters, Tasks of SP differs from the definition of tasks in SER 3.1.2.
- 2.DU relies on the assessment of employers for judging the efficiency of the study plan (SER 3.1.3., p. 177).
- 3.The number of students significantly decreased in 2021/22 and no strategy is visible for a proactive acquisition of new students.
- 4.The employment rate also declined from an average of 85% in the period of 2017-2021 to 50% in 2021/22, but DU didn't develop any action plan to try to improve the situation (e.g. by curriculum innovation, intensifying connections with employers etc.)

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

### **Analysis**

#### **2.2.1.**

The study program encompasses a wide range of subjects, from foundational knowledge in art and

design to more specialized courses (SER chapter 3.2, Study plan annex 3.2.1). There is a noticeable emphasis on theoretical courses. For a field like design, which is inherently practical, the balance seems to tilt more towards theory. This could raise concerns about the program's relevance in preparing students for real-world design challenges.

The program includes multiple levels of "Painting" (from Painting I to Painting V) and other traditional art courses like "Drawing" (with multiple levels) and "Plein Air" (Study plan annex 3.2.1). While a foundation in traditional art can be beneficial for understanding aesthetics, composition, and other fundamental design principles, the emphasis on these courses might be seen as excessive for a design program, especially if the aim is to prepare students for contemporary graphic design roles. Based on the study plan and course descriptions (Study plan and course description annexes 3.2.1), the program appears to have courses that build upon one another. This progression indicates that the content is interconnected, with each level building on the knowledge and skills from the previous one. The presence of multiple levels is commendable, but without a clear practical application or project-based approach, the interconnectedness might be more on paper than in practice. It was impossible to evaluate or verify this aspect in on-site expert visit, as there were no opportunities provided to meet the program director, as well as enough teachers and students of the program.

The learning outcomes provided (SER 3.2) are comprehensive, covering knowledge, skills, and competence, however seem to be more academically inclined. The program's courses, especially the theoretical ones, align with the knowledge-based outcomes, but there's a potential gap in achieving skill-based and competence outcomes due to program practical subjects including relatively high amount of above mentioned traditional courses versus design specific courses. The real-world applicability of such courses (Plein Air, multiple levels of Drawing and Painting etc.) in the context of work of graphic designers could be questioned.

The inclusion of courses like "Entrepreneurship in the Republic of Latvia," "Information computer management", and others suggests an effort to align with current industry and labor market needs. The program does touch upon some modern subjects, but it might not be forward-looking enough. There are courses like "Three-dimensional graphics," "Three-dimensional modeling," "Vector graphic," "Web technologies," and "Multimedia technologies" (Study plan annex 3.2.1). However, compared to the number of traditional art courses, there seems to be a lesser emphasis on these modern design and computer-based subjects. Given the current trajectory of the design industry, which heavily relies on digital tools and software, this could be a potential imbalance. Design is a rapidly evolving field, with new tools, technologies, and methodologies emerging regularly. Absence of more contemporary subjects (for example, user experience and user interaction design, AI in design, virtual and augmented reality in graphical design contexts etc.) or lack of courses or content on modern design tools might make the program seem a bit outdated.

While technical and artistic skills are crucial, soft skills like communication, teamwork, and problem-solving are equally important in the design industry. It might be worth considering if these are adequately addressed in the program by introducing more project based work, practice oriented methodology and similar methods.

While there are courses and their content directly tailored towards "Graphic design" and others related to graphics, including "Composition" etc., the program might benefit from a more in-depth exploration of graphic design principles, tools, and techniques. Given the importance of graphic design in today's digital age, a more comprehensive approach to this subject might be warranted.

Course descriptions mention (course descriptions annex 3.2.1) inclusion of computer tools, however from the information provided it seems that they do not cover the contemporary scope of tools used in the industry nowadays, some descriptions do not mention which tools are used at all and are very abstract. Familiarity with these tools is almost a prerequisite in many design roles today. On-site visit there was not enough evidence from meetings as well as inspection of infrastructure on 08-09.08.2023 if and which tools are employed.

Based on the study plan and course descriptions (course descriptions annex 3.2.1) provided, the

study program formally complies with national regulations - state education standard of professional bachelor program and "Graphic Designer" professional standard (3.2.1 annexes of compliance to state education standard and professional standard). It is important to emphasize that although the "Design" study program does cover a range of topics relevant to the graphic designer profession, there might be areas of potential misalignment or underemphasis.

#### 2.2.3.

Based on the documents provided, the "Design" study program (SER chapter 3.2.3) at DU seems to align with the principles of student-centered learning. The program's description emphasizes fostering independent learning, decision-making, and problem-solving. This indicates a commitment to placing students at the core of the educational experience. The outlined tasks and expected outcomes, such as promoting the development of students into free, creative individuals and encouraging their acquisition of artistic knowledge, further underscore this approach. However, while the information about the study program outlines goals and outcomes, the study plan and course descriptions (3.2.1. annexes of study plan and course descriptions) do not provide enough information and sense on the specific methods of how these are implemented in day-to-day teaching. While the "Design" program appears to value and incorporate student-centered learning principles in its curriculum and objectives, it was impossible to verify it in on-site expert visits as not enough meetings with representatives of the program were provided by DU. Overall evaluation of student-centered learning principles implemented remains implicit.

#### 2.2.4.

The presence of courses titled "Introductory practice" and "Professional qualification practice I, II" (study plan annex 3.2.1) show that internships are integrated into the study program. From course descriptions it seems that internships are designed to test students' theoretical knowledge in a practical setting, specifically within a design company. There is no clear indication of how students are matched with these companies or the diversity of opportunities available to them. Practice courses heavily rely on independent work (320 hours) with only 2 hours of seminar time. This raises questions about the level of guidance and support students receive during their internship. This approach might not cater to all students' needs, especially those who benefit from more structured guidance. The courses' objectives, though broad, don't provide a clear breakdown of the specific tasks students are expected to undertake during their internships. The assessment criteria of practice courses seem to prioritize the documentation of the experience over the quality of the practical work itself. The reading lists, though extensive, could be better integrated to align with the practical aspects of the internship. In essence, while internships seem to offer valuable practical experience, it might benefit from clearer expectations and more structured guidance. Again, it was impossible to clarify this point due to meeting just a few students, two members of teaching staff and no employers from the field of design during on-site expert visit.

Based on the document "Academic Regulations ON THE PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION PRACTICE/INTERNSHIP, Daugavpils University (DU) Music and Arts Faculty (MMF), Professional Higher Education Bachelor, Study Program (PBSP) Design (program code 42214)", the inclusion of plein-air events in the "Professional Qualification Practice" which appears to be used as synonym to internship in DU is somewhat intriguing. Traditionally, plein-air activities are deeply rooted in fine arts, emphasizing outdoor painting and drawing. While these events can sharpen observational skills, their direct relevance to the digital-centric world of graphic design is not immediately evident. Graphic design often hinges on the mastery of digital tools, typography, layout design, branding, and other areas that might not be the focus of outdoor artistic practices.

Allocation of a significant six weeks, equivalent to 6 credit points, to plein-air activities within a 26-week internship raises questions about the program's priorities. This duration could potentially be better utilized by immersing students in real-world design companies, offering them hands-on

experience with practical design tasks.

The document also highlights the allocation of university resources, including finances for the event leader's salary, towards these plein-air events. Given the ambiguous relevance of these activities to graphic design, possibly these resources could be redirected more effectively. For example, workshops on contemporary design tools, payments for internship mentors in companies or industry-specific masterclasses might offer students more directly applicable skills.

While the artistic merits of plein-air events are undeniable, their place in specifically professional qualification practice warrants reconsideration. Balancing artistic growth with practical proficiency is crucial, and the university might benefit from reevaluating the weight and objectives of these outdoor events in the broader context of graphic design education. One of possible solutions could be redefining Plein-air as an elective course and leaving more space for internships within the professional qualification practice.

#### 2.2.6.

Based on evidence provided by DU, topics of students' final theses seem to align with the study program and correspond to topics relevant to the field, however might benefit from focus on more contemporary approaches and tools in graphic design, for example, sustainable design, branding in digital age, augmented and virtual reality, interaction design etc..

From the description in SER (chapter 3.2.6) relevance of topics of final theses was unclear, based on some evidence (copies of theses) provided by DU during experts' visit on site (8./9.8. 2023)

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

The "Design" study program at DU offers a comprehensive curriculum that spans foundational art and design knowledge to more specialized courses. There's a noticeable tilt towards theoretical courses, which might not align with the practical nature of the design field. The program's emphasis on traditional art courses might seem excessive for a design-centric curriculum. While these courses can provide a solid foundation in aesthetics and composition, the program would benefit from a recalibration to ensure a more direct alignment with contemporary graphic design roles.

The progression of courses suggests a structured approach, building on previous knowledge. Practical application of this interconnectedness might be more theoretical than applied. The learning outcomes, while comprehensive, lean towards an academic inclination rather than professional bachelor degree. The program does touch upon modern subjects, but the emphasis on traditional art courses might overshadow the importance of contemporary design digital tools and techniques. Soft skills, crucial in the design industry, might need more emphasis through project-based work and practice-oriented methodologies. The program's internship component, encompassing "Introductory practice" and "Professional qualification practice I and II," aims to test students' theoretical knowledge in a design company setting. However, the emphasis on independent work with limited seminar time might not cater to all students, especially those needing structured guidance. The assessment criteria seem to prioritize documentation over practical work quality. The inclusion of plein-air events in the internship component is questionable, given its roots in more traditional fields of fine arts.

Strengths:

1. The program strives to implement a comprehensive curriculum, covering a wide range of topics from foundational art to specialized design courses, ensuring students receive a well-rounded education, courses are designed to build upon one another, indicating a systematic approach to education.
2. The study program formally complies with national regulations, ensuring it meets the necessary educational standards and professional qualification.

Weaknesses:

1. The program seems to lean more towards theoretical courses and traditional fine arts education, which might not always align with the practical nature of the design field.
2. The internship component, while valuable, might benefit from clearer expectations and more structured guidance, the inclusion of plein-air events in the professional qualification practice might not be directly relevant to the digital-centric world of graphic design.
3. There seems to be a lesser emphasis on contemporary design tools and techniques, which are crucial in today's digital age.

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

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

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

### **Analysis**

#### **2.3.1.**

The purpose and aim of the professional higher education bachelor's study program "Design" is to prepare highly and internationally competitive specialists with comprehensive knowledge in art, who, through further professional education, could work in a qualified manner and meet the current and prospective demand of Latvian industries (art, culture, research and production). In order to do so, the provision - study, informative, material, technical, and financial - should comply with certain conditions and features.

The DU library provides students with access to high-quality information relevant to the field of study, offering the information resources in its collection for study and research purposes. It is also possible to order resources and materials from other libraries. (SER, 2.3.3.)

The opening hours and services of the DU library make the informative resources available.

DU library is open 9 hours a day, 45 hours a week. The reading room is open on weekdays from 9:00 to 20:30 and on Saturdays from 10:00 to 17:00. The bibliography and information sector is open on working days from 9:00 to 17:00. Books/sheet music can also be handed in outside of the library's working hours, using the book/sheet music handing machines at the university buildings at Vienības iela 13 and at Parādes iela 1.

The total area of the library premises is 1000 m<sup>2</sup>, students have 2 reading rooms with free access to the collection, 2 subscriptions, Bibliography and information sector, 20 computers, 2 copy machines, 3 multifunctional devices, 2 printers, Internet, including wireless Internet access.

The library offers the following services: home delivery of books and sheet music; use of literature, databases, e-catalogues and other resources in reading rooms; electronic ordering and reservation of books to take home, extension of the term of use; computer and internet use; remote usage of EBSCO, ScienceDirect and Scopus databases; remote use of final theses developed by DU; consultations in searching for information in e-catalogues and databases; interlibrary loan and subscription services; student training for working with e-catalogues and databases; copying, printing and scanning services. (SER, 2.3.3.)

Replenishment of the library collection and subscription of databases take place at the request of the lecturers of the faculties. The library regularly informs the faculties about the latest literature, database trials and subscription options, so that the faculty lecturers and students can get acquainted with new offers. (SER, 2.3.3.)

For example, according to the "Review of implementation of recommendations from the previous accreditation in 2013", the expert group noted that there is a lack of professional literature; world art, world culture, Scandinavian art, Baltic art. (English, German, Russian languages included). In response to this comment, from the month of December 2022, all PBSP "Design" study courses were revised and, in accordance with the acquired knowledge and skills, have been supplemented with professional literature – in Latvian, English, Russian languages. (Appendix No.2.6.1. Overview of the implementation of recommendations)

For the development of studies and bachelor's theses, as well as for the creation of teaching aids, the faculty's computers, equipped with the relevant software, are offered (Cubasis, Sibelius, Sound Forge, Sonor, Adobe photoshop, Corel Draw 2019, AutoCad, 3ds Max, Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Flash etc.). (SER, 2.3.3.). During experts' visit on site (8./9.8.2023) graduates remarked they would have wished more recent software as well, in order to comply with the needs of the market. A stronger contact with employers might be advisable to define the development of products used in the business in order to react to new needs.

### 2.3.3.

The main source of funding for the full-time study form of the bachelor's study program "Design" is the state budget and the personal funds of natural or legal entities. Part-time studies are paid from the funds of individuals or legal entities.

The cost calculation for one student in the bachelor's study program is carried out in the Department of Finance and Accounting of DU, including the salary fund and employer's mandatory state social insurance contributions (VSAOI), business trips, materials, energy resources and inventory costs, books, equipment purchase and investment costs, as well as costs for student social security.

According to the calculation of costs per student in the professional bachelor's study program "Design" the total costs for 1 student in 1 study year are EUR 6184,34. Out of these costs, less than 10% are directed towards the purchase of equipment, investment costs, books, magazines, etc.

The number of study places at the DU financed from the state budget is determined by the Minister of Education and Science on the proposal of the Council of Higher Education. Study fees in places of study that are not financed from the state budget are covered by students personally, legal or natural persons, by concluding a relevant agreement with DU. The tuition fees are determined annually by the DU Senate and published on the website [www.du.lv/studijas/studiju-maksa-un-atlaides/](http://www.du.lv/studijas/studiju-maksa-un-atlaides/) until June 1. A student may be exempted from tuition fees in accordance with the order issued by the rector of DU "On tuition fee discounts" for the corresponding study year. (SER, 3.3.3.) SER section 2.1.2. mentions the insufficient financing of the study programs as one of the weaknesses.

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

The resources and provision of the study program comply with the conditions for the implementation of the study program and the achievement of the study results. Resources available to students, including study rooms, material and technical base, tools and equipment, information networks, databases, research materials, services, computer applications and software allow students to learn all study courses provided in the program, as well as to conduct research at various stages, providing a flexible and student-oriented environment.

In the implementation of the program, the necessary technical equipment is used (computers with licensed software, projectors, interactive whiteboards, etc.). At the experts' visit on site (8./9.8.2023) students expressed the wish to have more recent graphic design software (CORAL being slightly outdated already).

Strengths:



1. Student-oriented environments, facilities and provisions.

Weaknesses:

1. Some art rooms are only accessible under teacher supervision, restricting and limiting options for individual creative work.
2. There could be more effort in following new technological trends, e.g. in new graphic design software, immediately.

### **Assessment of the requirement [6]**

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

Speaking with employers at the experts' visit on site (8./9.8.2023) it became clear, that connections between DU and employers in the field of graphic design exist on the base of personal contacts, but are not established in a systematic way. Therefore, it is not clear, how the university gains information about the technologies and software used in the real labor market and it is not clear, whether the equipment of DU really replies to the most actual trends on the market.

## **2.4. Teaching Staff**

### **Analysis**

#### **2.4.1.**

There are 24 lecturers employed in the study program including 18 lecturers and 1 professor whose primary place of election is DU. Five lecturers are guest lecturers. According to SER members of the teaching staff employed in the program are experts of the Latvian Science Council [Latvijas Zinātnes padome] in the field of art and computer science, as well as in the field of pedagogy (section 3.4.1.), however, after analyzing annex 3.2.1. "Design\_Study\_plan" and additional information included in SER about members of the Latvian Scientific Council (for example, section 2.4.2.), none of the mentioned names appear in the aforementioned annex 3.2.1. So, this information can't be verified. 9 lecturers (26%) have a doctorate degree in the field of the guided study course, for example, Practical English, Copyright, Psychology of Art etc. (annex 3.2.1. "Design\_Study\_plan"). Overall, the qualification of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the SP complies with the requirements of the regulatory enactments (Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No. 662 and Law on Higher Education Institutions (article 39)) as they all have either master's or doctorate degree and a track of scientific research activity and/or artistic activity though mainly on regional level with only few cases on a national level.

#### **2.4.2.**

Teaching staff for theory courses are selected based on the following criteria: appropriate education, academic or scientific degree, or professional experience, research and creative activity (publications in the relevant industry, conducted research in the field of design and art, participation in projects), as well as their communication skills. Requirements for specialization courses include work experience in private or public institutions related to design or art. Experience in implementation of the specialized study courses (e.g., "Entrepreneurship in Latvia", "Accounting") is highly regarded. All teaching staff members are required to submit their curriculum vitae in Europass format. Requirements of Law of Higher Education Institutions are fulfilled. These criteria

provide that the changes in the composition of the teaching staff won't negatively affect the quality of the implementation of the SP. At the same time, as there are members of the teaching staff who cover various study courses, the question is whether it is possible to attract specialists with required education and experience. Unfortunately, during the site visit experts didn't have a chance to talk to the SP director who could clarify that.

#### 2.4.4.

General education courses are taught by faculty members from other departments at DU and all of them have a good track record of research activity.

However, when it comes to professional specialization study courses the situation raises concerns. Also, in the annex nr. 3.2.1. "Design\_Study\_Plan\_Eng" it can be observed that actually the total number of teaching staff involved in specialization courses is quite low as lecturers are covering various study courses. For example, one lecturer is teaching "Infographics", "Two-dimensional animation", "Multimedia project", "Multimedia technologies", "Computer programs for non-linear video editing", not including supervision of term papers and Bachelor papers. According to the submitted CV this lecturer has fulfilled requirements in accordance with the Law of Higher Education Institutions as she has had some artistic activity in the last six years. However, the question is whether it is enough to be able to teach study courses of such variety.

Another example: during the site visit (8/9.08.2023.) study program director of study program "Arts Management" said that students had expressed the wish to include a new study course in the program "Design" - "Art of photography". As it can be seen in the Annex nr. 3.2.1. this study course is currently taught by the rector of DU who has completed the study course "Photographic Art" under artist Jurijs Molodkovecs. However, photography is not his primary occupation and to provide students with skills in various genres of photographic art it would be advisable to attract to the academic staff a professional photographer with national and/or international recognition.

None of the teaching staff members for the specialization study courses has a high research and/or artistic activity on an international level.

#### 2.4.5.

The section 3.4.5. of the SER doesn't provide detailed information, only mentioning that the cooperation takes place without giving any examples or numeric data. It is mentioned that one of the ways how the teaching staff cooperates is by developing joint study courses. According to Annex nr. 3.2.1. "Design\_Study\_Plan\_Eng" one such example is included in the study program - the study course "Infographics" taught by two members of the teaching staff. Other study courses with more than one lecturer are term papers and bachelor paper.

Unfortunately, experts were not able to meet any of the elected teaching staff members of the study program "Design". There was only one guest lecturer present who demonstrated enthusiasm about her involvement with the program, however at the same time she acknowledged that her creative work is separate from her for at DU and she is also not expecting any kind of support for her research or artistic work. She also acknowledged not participating in any training organized by DU. So, it is quite difficult to draw conclusions as the administrative and teaching staff that could provide more clarity was not present.

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

Overall, the teaching staff fulfills the basic requirements according to the Law of Higher Education Institutions. Also, there is a hiring system in place which is developed by DU for all of its departments. The teaching staff of general education courses has a good track record of research activity. The teaching staff of the specialization courses fulfills the basic requirements with their artistic activity but lacks national and international artistic activity that would provide students with

access to highly regarded professionals. Additionally, the number of teaching staff involved in specialization courses is low, they are teaching various study courses. Also, there is no proof of the presence of foreign teaching staff.

Overall, provided information on SER was not detailed enough and experts were not able to meet any members of the teaching staff whose main place of election is DU. Also, the study program director was not present during the site visit.

#### Strengths

- 1.Hiring system is developed according to the Law of Higher Education Institutions.
- 2.The teaching staff fulfills basic requirements of the Law of Higher Education Institutions.
- 3.The teaching staff of general study courses has a good track of research activity.

#### Weaknesses:

- 1.Low artistic activity and practically no scientific activity of the teaching staff of specialized study courses.
- 2.None of the teaching staff of the specialization courses has a national and/or international track record of artistic activity.
- 3.Some members of the teaching staff cover various study courses.
- 4.There is no system developed for fostering collaboration for teaching staff. Mentioned examples on SER can't be verified.

### Assessment of the requirement [7]

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

#### **Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

The qualification of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the SP complies with the requirements of the regulatory enactments (Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No. 662 and Law on Higher Education Institutions (article 39)) as they all have either master's or doctorate degree and a track of scientific research activity and/or artistic activity though mainly on regional level with only few cases on a national level.

## 2.5. Assessment of the Compliance

### Requirements

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

#### **Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

PBSP "Design" volume is 240 ECTS (160CP) of which 30ECTS are theoretical courses of humanities and social sciences and courses that develop basic social, communicative and organizational skills, 54 ECTS are basic courses of the branch and information technology courses, 108ECTS for professional specialization courses, including state exams and defence of bachelor thesis and 9 ECTS are devoted to free elective courses. Study program has an internship in the amount of 39 ECTS.

Program structure and number of contact hours mostly complies (minimum 40%) with Cabinet Regulations no.305.

At the moment of evaluation, experts do not see how the program complies with Cabinet Regulation no. 305 paragraph no. 25 - study program must include 3 study projects (it is not made clear by study course descriptions). The program includes obligatory study courses about environmental protection ("Environmental protection" 1CP) and civil protection ("Civil protection" 1CP).

Acquirable degree is in compliance with classification in regulatory enactments.

Options for postgraduate education have been fulfilled.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

Study program is based on the profession standard - Graphic designer, which was approved on June 9, 2021.

Graphic designer is a specialization of communication designer profession, the fifth level of professional qualification (5. PKL), corresponds to the sixth level of the Latvian qualifications framework (6. LKI). Study program complies with requirements set in the professional standard, and it is achieved via different specialization and basic courses of the branch. Several study courses add to the specific students' knowledge and competencies, for example, to develop ability to identify the cultural-historical and aesthetic context of the graphic design project students must learn in the courses Art theory, Technical graphics, Concept of raster graphics, Pre-press processing etc., which sum up to a total of 13CP. The mapping of corresponding study courses to achieve the desired competencies in annex 3.2.1. provide a good overview of the situation in the program and is logical.

!NB! To whomever it might concern - unfortunately when searching for this profession standard via VISC register, nothing comes up; there might be an issue with IZM VISC webpage and this might cause confusion for anyone searching for the profession standard.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

Study course descriptions and study materials are prepared in Latvian language, and they satisfy requirements set in Law on Higher Education Institutions. Study course literature (mandatory and suggested) is somewhat outdated with books/articles from years 2000.-2010. DU should improve their procedure of periodic review of study course descriptions to ensure, that lecturers use more up to date information.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

The diploma issued complies with the state legislature and "Procedures by which documents certifying higher Education recognised by the State shall be issued" (Cabinet of Ministers No. 202). Sample of diploma contains correctly formatted diploma and diploma supplement with information mentioned in rules no. 202.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

The academic staff has sufficient Latvian language knowledge for implementing study courses and for professional and office duties. This is confirmed by a signed Rector's acknowledgement. This acknowledgement is applicable for all staff involved in study field "Arts" implementation.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

Study agreements include all necessary parts set in legislation (Cabinet of Ministers no. 70). Samples of study agreement include general information about the higher education institution, student, study program (accreditation term, amount of CP, etc.); and the order of financing. Duties and rights are described for both sides. It is advised to include information about guarantees of compensation losses (criteria No. 11 and 12), so that this information is easier for the students to acknowledge already from the beginning.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

DU has a cooperation agreement with University of Latvia confirming that in case the implementation of Bachelor study program Design is terminated, students will be able to continue studies in University of Latvia study program "Arts" sub program "Graphic Designer", which belongs to the same study field and provides equal degree to be awarded.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

University has a rector's signed attestation that confirms it will compensate losses to students if the study program is not accredited or loses its license and the student does not wish to continue studies in another study program.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

### **Assessment of the requirement [8]**

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

DU has ensured with Rector's attestation that they provide refunds and other study opportunities from partner Universities in case if the study program gets terminated; staff has proficient Latvian language knowledge; study program fits requirements set in different Cabinet of Ministers rules and study agreement includes all of the necessary information asked in the legislation.

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

The PBSP Design is compliant with the legal framework in respect to the degree issued. Concerning professional standards, the new version (MK 305) is not yet integrated into strategic documents of the study program. Whereas learning outcomes are well interconnected with the content of studies and with the specifics of the study programs, task description differ (SER and Description of the Study Program in the Annex, Parameters, Tasks of the Study program) and the version in the Program Description of the Annex sets high scale tasks and aims of educating "internationally competitive" graphic designers that might be adapted to the reality of the study program focusing primarily on the Latvian market with a strong anchoring of academic staff in the region, thus fulfilling successfully the mission of DU to strengthen the cultural potential of Latvia and the Latgale region. Speaking with employers at the experts' visit on site (8./9.8.2023) it became clear, that connections between DU and employers in the field of graphic design exist on the base of personal contacts, but are not established in a systematic way. Therefore, it is not clear, how the university gains information about the technologies and software used in the real labor market and it is not

clear, whether the equipment of DU really replies to the most actual trends on the market. Reasons for dropouts have been analyzed to the side of students (failing exams or requirements of study courses, personal reasons etc.), but not on the side of the side of DU. It might be useful to ask graduates and students directly about possible needs for innovating curriculum, academic staff members composition and technological equipment.

#### Strengths:

- 1.The study program ensures solid theoretical knowledge on arts and graphic design.
- 2.Learning outcomes are realistic, well defined and connected with the content of the Study plan.

#### Weaknesses

- 1.The definition of tasks of the study program should be aligned in all strategic documents.
- 2.New tendencies of a decrease in interest for the study program and a decrease of employment rate of graduates should be taken seriously, analyzed and eventually acted on.
- 3.Members of the teaching staff of the specialization courses have a low track of artistic activity, mainly on a regional level. There is no one with national and/or international recognition.
4. Lack of information about compliance with Regulation 305 chapter 25.

### Evaluation of the study programme "Design"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Average

### 2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Design"

#### Short-term recommendations

- |  |
|--|
| 1. Reassess the weight of traditional art courses in the curriculum, the program should ensure that it doesn't overshadow the practical aspects of graphic design.   |
| 2. Clearly define the tasks, expectations and guidance for students during their internships, re-evaluate inclusion of plein-air events within the "Professional Qualification Practice." (they could be offered as elective courses instead). |
| 3. Introduce short workshops/crash courses/master classes on contemporary design tools and software.   |
| 4. Introduce a user-friendly room reservation/scheduling program to allow online reservations and 24/7 access to rooms for individual creative work  |
| 5. Assess the workload of the teaching staff covering various study courses.   |
| 6. Unify the definition of Tasks of the SP in all documents by taking into account the specifics of the Study program and the interconnection of goals, aims, content of study plan and learning outcomes with these tasks.                    |
| 7. Redefining Plein-air (and/or similar non-digital painting or drawing courses) as an elective course, leaving more space for internships within the professional qualification practice.   |

#### Long-term recommendations

1. Over time, the curriculum should be updated to include more contemporary subjects to ensure that the program remains relevant as the design industry evolves.
2. Establish stronger ties with design companies and industry professionals, which would lead to more relevant internships, guest lectures, workshops, etc.
3. Incorporate more clearly defined project-based work into the curriculum to bridge the gap between theory and practice.
4. Ensure that faculty members are regularly trained in the latest design methodologies, tools, and industry trends.
5. Establish a robust feedback loop mechanism where students, alumni, and industry professionals can provide insights into the program's strengths and areas of improvement, as design is a rapidly developing field
6. Plan continuous investments in updating design studios with the latest software.
8. Develop a system to motivate guest lecturers to participate in training and develop their scientific research and artistic activity in collaboration with DU.
7. Develop a motivation package to attract nationally and/or internationally renowned design professionals for teaching specialization study courses.
9. Analyze and react to the new trend (2021/22) of a decrease of students' numbers and a decrease of employment rate of graduates.

## II - "Art" ASSESSMENT

### II - "Art" ASSESSMENT

#### 2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

##### Analysis

##### 2.1.1.

The PMSP "Art" (47211) complies with the study field ART and adds diversity to the study offer of Latvian Art institutions and Academies. The Study program is designed on the basis of International regulations like the European Qualification Framework (EQF) and national regulations like the Law on Higher Education Institutions [Augstskolu likums] of the Republic of Latvia and the Regulations on the state standard of second level professional higher education" (Augusts 26, 2014 Cabinet of Ministers [Ministru kabinets] Regulations No. 512). Whereas the study program complies to EQF and to the Law on HEI, DU did not yet reflect the introduction of new regulations No. 305 in its documentation. The professional qualification is not mentioned in the description of the forms for the Study program. (SER Annexes, Study program forms, p. 107). Seen the rather theoretical orientation of the PMSP it might be worth to think about the option of a transformation to an academic study program in the future.

##### 2.1.2.

The title of the SP Art, the degree of a Professional Master's Degree in Art complies with the curriculum, the aims, knowledge, skills and competencies as defined in the description of the PMSP Art (SER 3.1.2. Analysis and assessment of the study program compliance with the study field).

The aims, tasks and learning outcomes are aligned and stress the scientific foundation of Art (art



science), the capacity of students to reflect learnt information and the support of creativity and critical thinking. As the program does not primarily aim to educate artists performing practically (although space for experiencing Art disciplines is given), the admission requirements of previous Professional bachelor's degree in art or 2nd level higher or equivalent are compliant with the goals, tasks and outcomes of the study program. The duration of one year and six months is adequate to the required learning outcomes and practical skills demanded through the description of the study program (SER 110). The admission requirement of Professional bachelor's degree in art or 2nd level higher or equivalent professional education in the field of art has been approved by the senate of DU and is aligned with the content and outcomes of the Study program (SER 112) that count more on an art theorist than artistically active artist.

The language of the Study program (Latvian) is adequate to the capacities of the teaching staff and corresponds with the needs of the market.

#### 2.1.3.

In the Self Evaluation report only changes in academic staff made to improve the quality of teaching have been made. At experts' visit, there was no chance to compare the status ante quo and actual status. Thus, these changes cannot be evaluated by AIKA experts. We don't have evidence of any other change. Maybe something was done, but there are no traces of it in the given documentation.

#### 2.1.4.

The creation of the PMSP Art has been made on a strong theoretical basis including Educational development guidelines for 2021 to 2027; Strategy for sustainable development of Latvia up to year 2030; National development plan of Latvia for years 2021 – 2027, the national concept of Latvian higher education and university development – Future university 2030; Science, technology development and innovation guidelines 2021 - 2027 and Latvia's Smart Specialization Strategy.(SER 3.1.3., p. 111) DU points out that sustainability implies the support of creativity as one of the factors of the endearment of culture as such (SER 3.1.3., p. 111). Thus, the idealistic value of the study program within the context of Latvian cultural and social life is stressed and connection is made to the fact, that Art education leads to sustainability of the cultural life in Latvia and the region and ensures the conservation of the position of Art in the perception of the population. According to dropout statistics for the reporting period (Appendix 3.1.4. PMSP Art\_Statistical data), there are also students who have started their studies in the study program but have not graduated from it. The main reasons for dropping out of studies: study grade failure, not returning after an academic leave for various reasons (for example, financial difficulties, family circumstances and other factors), as well as an ill-considered choice of an inappropriate study program. The dropout statistics of the study program students generally reflect the general trends in art studies in Latvian universities. The study program is implemented only in the form of full-time studies and only in the Latvian language. (SER, 3.1.4.)

Student numbers are rather small (33 graduates in the six year period of 2017.2022), which corresponds to the fact the general assumption that cultural labor markets do not offer too many employment possibilities for art science specialists, therefore students' numbers probably comply with the economical situation. This evaluation cannot be concluded with certainty, as the university does not deliver any statistical data about the employment situation of graduates of the study program. DU admits a relatively high number of dropouts: 33 of 48 students finished their studies in the period 2017-2023. DU sees reasons for dropout in individual disposition of students and in their unrealistic expectations. The university did not yet reflect the need to take actions that would improve or prevent dropouts.

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

### **Conclusions:**

The PMSP Art has clearly formulated learning outcomes that define the research and awareness orientation of Art students. The parameters of PMSP Art comply with national and international regulations. The study program is issued in Latvian and contributes to academic diversity in the field of Arts within the academic institutions of Latvia. The number of students is in correlation with economic conditions - not too many working possibilities for Art science specialists are offered. Whereas the small number of students is not a problem as such, the relatively high dropout rate is a signal, that could motivate the university to take action to either prevent the dropouts by informing students beforehand about the reality of the study program, or by accompanying the students more closely in their study process in order to make their studies more successful, which in perspective of the relatively low number of students could be a realistic option.

### **Strengths**

1. Clear conception of learning outcomes and aims.
2. Good arguments supporting the existence of the Study program.

### **Weaknesses**

1. Significant dropout ratio of students.
2. No data about the employment situation of graduates are delivered.
3. Significantly decreasing student numbers and high dropout rates are explained only on the students side (failure at exams, incorrect expectations, financial/personal reasons etc.), but no analysis has been made about the responsibility of DU for the decrease of interest and the significant dropout rate.

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

### **Analysis**

#### **2.2.1.**

The Professional Master's Study Program "Art" at DU based on documents provided seems to offer a comprehensive approach to art education at master's level. By including a wide array of subjects for specialization ranging from traditional art forms like painting and ceramics to modern aspects like cultural management and creative industries, the programme aims to ensure that students can specialize in diverse facets of art. Program is apparently designed to make them well-rounded professionals, prepared for diverse roles within the art industry, including creation, exhibition, management, and research. Necessary balance in the structure of study plan (study plan annex 3.2.1) ensures the necessary achievement of defined learning outcomes.

While the comprehensive nature of the program is a strength, it may also be seen as a potential weakness due to small student numbers, as it includes the necessity to ensure availability of teachers with sufficient qualification to cover each discipline. Students may benefit from less, but more specialized tracks aligned with the needs of industry.

The inclusion of specialization related to cultural management, financial management, and creative industries aligns with the evolving needs of the art industry and labor market and is commendable. Some subjects of this specialization would be beneficial for all students of the program. Entrepreneurial aspects could equip all students with essential skills for building up their careers. Knowledge in management would not only enhance their employability but also prepare them for diverse roles and adaptability within the art industry.

The curriculum may further benefit from a greater emphasis on contemporary arts contexts and digital media, to enhance its relevance in the modern art landscape and attract more students.

Program complies with the state education standard (compliance with state education standard annex 3.2.1).

#### 2.2.2.

The PMSP "Art" appears to be encompassing both theoretical understanding and practical application in the field of arts (SER chapter 3.2, study plan annex 3.2.1) The theoretical courses align with the achievements and findings of artistic research, while the practical and specialization courses reflect a focus on contemporary artistic creation. The inclusion of research, creative exploration, and a significant focus on the master's thesis does indicate an expectation for students to contribute original work to the field.

The program seems to align with the relevant field of science and artistic creation. This was impossible to fully verify due to the lack of stakeholders relevant to this study program during the experts' visit on site (8./9.8.2023). Because of the summer period of the visit as well as apparent small size of department and structural changes at the DU might have contributed to that, however lack of meetings with students and academic staff made it impossible to build a full picture of the program. As indicated in SER chapter 3.2.6, there are 14 students in this program, with 15 teachers involved in the implementation of the program. Even though most members of the teaching staff are not full time, such student-teacher balance raises questions concerning management the resources of the program.

#### 2.2.3.

Based on the provided information, it's clear that the program is structured to include both theoretical and practical elements. Courses on drawing, textile, ceramics, and others are evidently designed to provide hands-on experience, while subjects like "Philosophy of Art" and "Contemporary Art Theory" offer theoretical grounding. The program's aim to improve theoretical knowledge, develop professional skills, and initiate creative projects aligns with the intended learning outcomes. While project-based cooperative work might not be explicitly highlighted, the overall structure and content of the program seem to be in place to achieve the stated goals and learning outcomes (SER chapter 3.2.1), for example stating that the program's achievable results include the development of creative thinking and the implementation of art/cultural products. The structure of the study plan and course descriptions (SER study plan and course description annexes 3.2.1) align with some elements of student-centered learning principles. It was impossible to confirm that due to the lack of meetings with representatives of the program.

#### 2.2.4.

The DU program "Art" includes a mandatory internship referred to as "Professional Practice," structured into two distinct parts. The organization of the internship is detailed with guidelines, tasks, and alignment with learning outcomes (annex 3.2.4 art practice regulation and annexes 3.2.1 course descriptions). While the opportunities provided to students are diverse and tailored to their specialization, the information provided does not explicitly address how the internship ensures a critical engagement with the field or how it fosters innovative thinking, as well as how internships are implemented, and how the guidance is provided. The compliance with regulations and standards is evident, but a more clear understanding of how the internship adapts to individual student needs might further enhance its effectiveness. It was impossible to verify the effectiveness of internships due to the lack of meetings with representatives of the program.

#### 2.2.6.

Based on information provided by DU (SER chapter 3.2.6), topics of students' final theses align with the study program and specialisations, with corresponding topics relevant to the field. As most specialisations focus on traditional art forms and themes, final works also reflect traditional aspects,

although focus to contemporary XXI century contexts are also noticeable. Topics of final works can be noted as giving attention to historical and ecological issues, however might benefit from focus on more contemporary arts contexts (for example, digital media art, interdisciplinary practices etc.) and their relationship to tradition.

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

#### **Conclusion:**

The PMSP "Art" presents a varied approach to higher art education, encompassing a wide spectrum of subjects from traditional art forms to modern fields like cultural management and creative industries. This broad choice is designed to prepare students for diverse roles within the art industry, making them well-rounded professionals. This comprehensive nature, while a strength, also raises concerns about the program's ability to maintain depth without spreading too thin across various disciplines, also taking into account the relatively small size of the department.

The inclusion of some courses related to the evolving needs of the art industry and labor market is commendable, the curriculum may further benefit from an emphasis on emerging technologies and digital media to enhance its relevance in the modern art landscape.

The mandatory internship, referred to as "Professional Practice," is structured and aligned with learning outcomes, but lacks explicit details on how it ensures critical engagement with the field or fosters innovative thinking. DU also fails to provide evidence about the system of building up a professional network with employers of graphic designers.

The effectiveness of internships and other aspects of the program were also impossible to verify due to the lack of meetings with representatives during experts visit on site (8./9.8.2023).

#### **Strengths:**

1. Curriculum covers a wide array of subjects and provides choice for students from traditional art forms to more modern aspects like cultural management, including both theoretical understanding and hands-on experience, fostering professional skills and individual creative projects.
2. Program has clear structure and content that aligns with the stated goals and learning outcomes, adheres to state education standards.

#### **Weaknesses:**

1. The broad spectrum of subjects to specialize may be hard to sustain, affecting resources and professional quality.
2. The curriculum could benefit from a greater focus on contemporary art contexts and new media.
3. Information provided does not explicitly address how internships ensure engagement, guidance or adapt to individual student needs.
4. The contacts with employers are built on the base of personal contacts rather than in a systematical way of creating a professional network.

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

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

#### **Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

The study programme PMSP Art is designed to be aligned with the current achievements and findings in the respective field of artistic creation. It is constructed to offer an adequate combination of theoretical grounding and practical application. The final thesis serves as a cumulative exercise, requiring students to integrate knowledge, carry out practical work,

process and interpret results, and ultimately, engage in a public presentation, discussion and defence before a commission.

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

### **Analysis**

#### **2.3.1.**

The implementation of the PMSP "Art" study program takes place both using the shared infrastructure of DU and the workshops corresponding to the specifics of the compulsory elective specialization study courses with the material and technical base available at the said workshops. (SER, 2.3.2. and 2.3.3.)

The material-technical informational bases of study programs have been supplemented, including the material-technical informational base of PMSP "Art", by purchasing hardware, laboratory materials, inventory and tools, as well as replenishing the stocks of the DU library and developing information technology equipment. During the study process, students of PMSP "Art" can use thermal press and sublimation printers, professional printing equipment, equipment for post-processing of design works and equipment for data storage and processing.

The DU library provides students with access to high-quality information, offering the information resources in its collection for study and research purposes. It is also possible to order resources and materials from other libraries. The opening hours and services of the DU library make the informative resources available. (SER, 2.3.3.)

The total area of the library premises is 1000 m<sup>2</sup>, students have 2 reading rooms with free access to the collection, 2 subscriptions, Bibliography and information sector, 20 computers, 2 copy machines, 3 multifunctional devices, 2 printers, Internet, including wireless Internet access.

The library offers the following services: home delivery of books and sheet music; use of literature, databases, e-catalogues and other resources in reading rooms; electronic ordering and reservation of books to take home, extension of the term of use; computer and internet use; remote usage of EBSCO, ScienceDirect and Scopus databases; remote use of final theses developed by DU; consultations in searching for information in e-catalogues and databases; interlibrary loan and subscription services; student training for working with e-catalogues and databases; copying, printing and scanning services. (SER, 2.3.3.)

DU library regularly expands and renews the range of professional and scientific literature, including world art and culture management in Latvian and foreign languages (English, German, Russian languages), the university expands the acquisition of e-books and new databases (current subscription to Science Direct, Scopus, Web of Science, Letonika etc. (available in Latvian only from: <https://du.lv/par-mums/struktura/biblioteka/datubazes/abonetas-datubazes/>)). Academic staff and students are systematically informed about the offer and novelties of the DU library. (SER, 3.3.1.)

Implementation of the program requires inter-faculty cooperation, which is essential and, according to the SER of the DU, also necessary, but is often not fully realized.

The content of PMSP "Art" is regularly discussed at academic staff meetings and with representatives of the labor market, who are invited to participate in the State Examination Commission every year. After the results of the state tests, the students' knowledge and skills are jointly discussed, listening to the recommendations of the employers. The self-evaluation report of the study program also analyzes the results of employer surveys, which provide information about the quality of the study program in the context of labor market requirements. Study program lecturers and guest lecturers are informed about employers' proposals and comments. (SER, 3.2.1.)

#### **2.3.3.**

The source of funding for PMSP "Art" is state budget funding for studies (grant) and study fees. The cost calculation for one student in the programs of the study field was carried out in the Department

of Finance and Accounting of DU, including the costs of the wage fund and the employer's Mandatory State Social Insurance Contributions (VSAOI), business trips, materials, energy resources and inventory, book, equipment purchase and investment costs, as well as costs for student social security. (SER, 3.3.3.)

At the time of submission of the accreditation report, PMSP "Art" had a total of 14 students (1st year of study), while in the period from 2017 to 2023, the total number of students enrolled in PMSP "Art" reached 48 students. During the reporting period, a total of 33 students graduated from the study program, and all of them studied with state budget funds. Total costs (100%) for 1 (one) student in 1 (one) study year are EUR 7490.63. It can be said that the provision of the field of study, including infrastructure and equipment, guarantees a quality study environment for all those studying in the field of study (incl. for students with special needs) for high-quality implementation of the study programs included in the study field and achievement of study results.

The ratio of the number of students and teaching staff can be evaluated as successful, because it ensures an individual approach of the lecturer to the student, thus promoting opportunities for improvement of study results, cooperation in the artistic creative and scientific research field, and communication skills. (SER, 3.4.5.)

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

The implementation of the PMSP "Art" study program takes place both using the shared infrastructure of DU and the workshops corresponding to the specifics of the compulsory elective specialization study courses with the material and technical base available at the said workshops. The overall quantity and quality of these resources can be described as suitable and sufficient.

For the achievement of the learning outcomes and in order to ensure a high-quality study process the study program is revised and improved annually. Firstly, based on the results of student surveys, secondly, on the suggestions of the study program director, thirdly, on the valuable recommendations of employers.

#### **Strengths:**

1. Individual approach of the lecturer to the student, thus promoting the opportunities of improved study results.
2. The material-technical-informational base of the study program has been supplemented.
3. Regularly expanded and renewed library resources.

#### **Weaknesses:**

1. Stronger inter-faculty cooperation is essential, but is often not fully realized.
2. Not all of the facilities can be accessed by students without the academic staff.

### **Assessment of the requirement [6]**

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

#### **Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

The study provision, informative provision (including library), material and technical provision and financial provision is fully compliant with the conditions for the implementation of the study program and ensuring the achievement of learning outcomes.

## 2.4. Teaching Staff

### Analysis

#### 2.4.1.

There are 19 members of the academic staff mentioned in the study plan of the SP "Arts" (annex 3.2.1., PMSP Art\_Study plan\_EN"). However, according to SER 15 members of the academic staff are involved in the implementation of the study program (SER, section 3.4.1., p.124). For seven members DU is their main place of employment and eight are visiting lecturers. In annex 2.3.7. "CV\_EN " 14 curriculum vitae of the academic staff are provided. All of them have either master's or doctoral degree (six members have a doctoral degree, annex 2.3.7. "CV\_EN"). At the time of the evaluation CVs of some members of the academic staff were not provided, they were provided only after evaluation was done (Ieva Krūmiņa, Jeļena Koževnikova), however these are high-level well-known professionals, so there are no doubts about compliance of their qualification with regulatory enactments.

#### 2.4.2.

There have been some changes in the academic staff in recent years including for the study courses "Analysis of modern art theory", "Psychological problems of art", "Ceramics" among others. According to SER (section 3.4.2., p. 126) all staff members were successfully replaced either by elected members of the academic staff or guest lecturers and these changes have not left any negative impact on the implementation of the study courses. However, SER doesn't provide information whether there is an established system in place for successful overtake of the study courses. Also, nothing is being said about the hiring policies in this SP. Unfortunately, members of the academic staff of this SP were not present during the experts visit, so it was not possible to gain further information. Also, the SP director was not present during the meeting with program directors.

#### 2.4.4.

As previously mentioned, not all CVs of academic staff members have been provided, so it can't be fully verified. However, those 15 CVs that are provided show that all members of the academic staff fulfill the requirements of the Law on Higher Education Institutions. They have at least five years of practical experience and in some cases they are also either scientifically or artistically active.

According to annex 2.4.4. "Research and artistic creative activity\_EN" some members of the academic staff of the PMSP "Arts" are artistically active with main achievements on regional and in some cases on national and international level, for example, Žanna Vērdiņa has had a personal exhibition in Unna, Germany. Positively, some academic staff members have stayed artistically active also during the pandemic, for example, Zeltīte Barševska has had two virtual exhibitions in 2021 and 2022.

With all that said the overall number of artistically active members of the academic staff is very low and there is a lack of national and international presence which raises doubts whether the staff can fulfill aims of the master's level study program. Again, as none of the members participated in the meeting with experts, there was no chance to explore this further.

Also, when it comes to scientific research the activity is very low. This again raises questions about the ability to function as a master's level program which should be very much focused on research excellence. There are only two members of the academic staff with a track record of research in the field of arts. (SER, annex 2.4.4.). Also, though there are scientific research directions set for the field of arts (SER, section 2.4.1.), the actual research covers only a small part of these directions focusing on specifics of Latgale region, traditional art and mixed painting techniques.

It is also worth mentioning that though some members of the academic staff have extensive professional experience it is not directly related to their taught study course. For example, Daina Krīviņa has a great experience in municipal project management as a Head of Daugavpils

Municipality Department of Development but she is not actively working in arts management. As the study course "Culture Management (theory and practice)" is the only one where students can gain practical culture management skills it would be advisable to attract to the study program, for example, a guest lecturer with extensive practical experience in arts management.

#### 2.4.5.

As members of the academic staff were not present during the expert's visit it is very hard to verify whether there is an established system in place to foster mutual cooperation. According to SER (section 3.4.5.), there are various forms of collaboration, however no specific examples are mentioned. According to annex 2.4.4., two members of the academic staff have developed joint scientific publications.

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

Overall, members of the academic staff fulfill the requirements of the Law on HEI (excluding four whose CVs have not been provided). They have practical experience and in some cases they are scientifically and/or artistically active. However, those are only a couple of members that are highly active and it raises questions whether it is enough to fulfill study program aims and to function successfully as a professional master's study program. There is a lack of international scientific and artistic activity, also some members are teaching study courses that are not related to the field of their education or professional experience. There is no evidence of an existing system of change management.

#### Strengths

1. Some members of the academic staff have a good track record of scientific and/or research activity.

#### Weaknesses:

1. Overall, artistic and research activity is very low.
2. Some courses are taught by academic staff members whose education and professional experience is related to other fields.

### **Assessment of the requirement [7]**

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

#### **Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

Five members of the academic staff have not provided their CVs, so their research and/or artistic activity as well as professional experience can't be verified. From those that have provided only some are active. There is a lack of national and international scientific and artistic achievements.

## **2.5. Assessment of the Compliance**

### **Requirements**

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



**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

PMSP "Arts" volume is 90ECTS of which 22 ECTS are dedicated to learning the latest achievements in the theory and practice of the branch, 24ECTS are dedicated to research and creative work and design and management study courses, 14ECTS are dedicated to professional practice and 30ECTS for state examination.

The program includes obligatory study courses about environmental protection ("Environmental protection" 1CP) and civil protection ("Civil protection" 1CP) if the student has not acquired this knowledge during bachelor studies.

Acquirable degree is in compliance with classification in regulatory enactments. Number of contact hours complies (minimum 30%) with the regulations.

Study program does not comply with Cabinet of Ministers rules 305, point 37. as no professional qualification is awarded, however no LKI level 7 equivalent professional standard exists

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

According to the New Cabinet of Ministers rules 305, not yet in force during the creation of SER that served as basis for this evaluation, professional qualifications must be implemented. The changes of the regulatory framework should be implemented (or DU changes the study programs into an academic study program, not requiring the implementation of professional qualifications). These changes have to be made before the decision of the upcoming next accreditation.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

Study course descriptions and study materials are prepared in Latvian language, and they satisfy requirements set in Law on Higher Education Institutions.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

The diploma issued complies with the state legislature and "Procedures by which documents certifying higher Education recognised by the State shall be issued" (Cabinet of Ministers No. 202). Sample of diploma contains correctly formatted diploma and diploma supplement with information mentioned in rules no. 202.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

The academic staff has sufficient Latvian language knowledge for implementing study courses and for professional and office duties. This is confirmed by a signed Rector's acknowledgement. This acknowledgement is applicable for all staff involved in study field "Arts" implementation.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

Study agreements include all necessary parts set in legislation (Cabinet of Ministers no. 70). Samples of study agreement include general information about the higher education institution, student, study program (accreditation term, amount of CP, etc.); and the order of financing. Duties and rights are described for both sides. It is advised to include information about guarantees of compensation losses (criteria No. 11 and 12), so that this information is easier for the students to acknowledge already from the beginning.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

DU has a cooperation agreement with University of Liepāja confirming that in case the implementation of master study program Arts is terminated, students will be able to continue studies in University of Liepāja joint study program "New media and audiovisual arts", however since this is a joint study program (Liepāja University and RISEBA), it is advised to have an agreement with RISEBA too. Additionally study content of DU arts could be more similar to Arts Academy of Latvia rather than Liepāja University.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

University has a rector's signed attestation that confirms it will compensate losses to students if the study program is not accredited or loses its license and the student does not wish to continue studies in another study program.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

**Assessment of the requirement [8]**

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

Study program Arts does not comply with Cabinet of Ministers rules 305, point 38. as no professional qualification is awarded, however no LKI level 7 equivalent professional standard exists. Additionally, the agreement provided with Liepāja University should be re-evaluated as they provide a different study curricula and it is a joint program meaning DU should also sign an agreement with RISEBA in that case. However, experts suggest considering signing an agreement with Arts Academy as they could potentially provide closer study curricula to the DU content.

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

Conclusions:

This study program is partially compliant with the requirements set in Law on Higher Education Institutions and different Cabinet of Ministers rules, deficiencies like agreements with other universities and compliance with Cabinet of Ministers rules 305, point 38. should be eliminated during a 2 year period and the professional qualification should be added in the Description of the Study program (SER Study program forms, p. 107f).

Whereas the theoretical basis of the aims, tasks and the curriculum composition are well reasoned, the significant dropout rate of students points to the necessity to take action by either preventing dropouts with a better information system before students enter the program, so their expectations are aligned with the reality of the program or/and by accompanying students more intensely on their way. DU sees the dropout reasons only on the side of students, but does not take any effort to analyze them from the side of the university in self-evaluating the qualifications and pedagogical skills of academic staff, in re-looking at the curriculum orientation, in creating new stimuli by inviting guest teachers from abroad or by creating cooperation with experts who are leading personalities in the Arts' scene in Latvia. It is also not visible, how DU works with data from graduates and their employment situation - no data are provided by DU.

Strengths:

1. The Study program description contains a clear conception of learning outcomes and aims.

2. The social and economic justification is well analyzed and contains persuasive arguments.

Weaknesses:

1. The significant dropout ratio of students shows the need to look at the relationship between the well designed rational framework of the Study program and the reality of the Study program.
2. No data about the employment situation of graduates are delivered.
3. Artistic and scientific activity of the academic staff is very low.
4. In program is a lack of national and international achievements, collaboration projects.

## **Evaluation of the study programme "Art"**

Evaluation of the study programme:

Average

## **2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Art"**

### **Short-term recommendations**

1. As one of the dropout reasons of students is the inadequate choice of study program, effort should be made to present the Study program in a realistic way to adepts and future students (e.g. by offering consultations before application, by advertising the curriculum content to applicants, by opening lectures to visitors etc.)
2. As the dropout rate is significant, DU should analyze the reasons and take action (feedback of students who failed, critical analysis of curriculum composition, individual support system for students, evaluation of pedagogical skills of teaching staff etc.)
3. Review and clarify the range of specialization subjects to ensure that professional quality is maintained across all of them, this may include consolidating similar subjects or focusing on areas where faculty expertise is strongest.
4. Develop clear guidelines and processes for how internships ensure critical engagement with the field, foster innovative thinking, and adapt to individual student needs.
5. Re-evaluate signed agreement with LiepU about study opportunities in case if DU Arts programme gets terminated, since LiepU is implementing a joint programme with RISEBA consider signing another agreement with the third party or consider signing a new agreement with Arts Academy of Latvia as they might provide a more similar study content to DU.
6. To review the academic and professional qualifications of the academic staff members and whether they comply with their taught study courses. In the cases where it is not compliant, make necessary changes to academic staff.
7. Address the issue regarding changes in the regulatory framework for the awarding of professional degrees. Must be implemented until decision on accreditation is being made.

### **Long-term recommendations**

1. More intense cooperation with other Art Study programs in Latvia or in a European context might contribute to raising the prestige and attractiveness of the Study program.

2. It might be worth investing more into connections with future employers and into activities for the future integration of students to the labor market.
3. Gradually introduce more courses leading to possible specializations that focus on contemporary arts contexts, new media.
4. Establish regular meetings and communication channels with stakeholders relevant to the study programme, including industry professionals, alumni, and students, this will help in continuous improvement and alignment with industry needs.
5. Develop a research and artistic activity development plan with clearly set goals, results expected including bonus program to foster motivation of the academic staff for their artistic and scientific activity.

## **II - "Music" ASSESSMENT**

### **II - "Music" ASSESSMENT**

#### **2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme**

##### **Analysis**

##### **2.1.1.**

The PMSP Music complies with the study field of ART - the study program is a continuation of the PBSP Music and is as such aligned with the general and specific aims of DU's mission, the needs of the sector and the needs and possibilities of the labor market in the specific field of Music as a part of the general field of Art (for information about the used legal national and international framework see 2.1.1. of the PBSP Music).

The purpose of the PMSP Music is to enable graduates of the DU to improve one's professional artistic education, to follow and adapt to rapid developments in the field of music playing art and science locally and internationally, and to contribute to the development of the cultural environment of Latvia, especially Latgale region. (SER, 3.1.3.) which is compliant with the general aim and mission of DU.

Concerning the learning outcomes, they are not yet defined in a way, that complies with the Master level of the PMSOP Music: as the PMSP Music is a continuation of the PBSP Music, learning outcomes at Master level should be more complex and demanding than learning outcomes at Bachelor level, which is not yet the case. The direction of the music field is determined by the documents regulating the development of the country: National Development Plan of Latvia (NDP) for 2014 -2020 and Latvia's sustainable development strategy until 2030, which provides for the maintenance of a strong, contemporary national identity, ensuring the existence and development of the Latvian nation, language and culture. The priority is the research of national identity (culture, art, music). (SER, 3.1.2.)

This study program is partially compliant with the requirements set in Law on Higher Education Institutions and different Cabinet of Ministers rules, deficiencies like the lack of compliance with Cabinet of Ministers rules 305, point 38. can be identified.

##### **2.1.2.**

The duration and scope of the study program implementation (including different study program implementation options), as well as the implementation language, are reasonable and justified.

The PMSP Music offers a degree of Professional Master's Degree in Music, which relates to the content of the study plan and complies with the requirements of the labor market. A closer look should be taken towards the learning outcomes of the PMSP Music, because there is not much

difference between the requested learning outcomes of the Bachelor of the Professional Study Programs Music (compare SER 3.1.2.;, pages 193 for Bachelor and 130 for Master level). If DU names “improving one's professional artistic education” (SER 3.1.2.;, p. 133) as one of the three rather general goals of the study program, then this goal is too basic for Master's level and does not take into account the whole process the student went through at Bachelor level. The same remark on a too basic character applies also to tasks and learning outcomes, e.g. the task to “develop students' artistic and scientific activity skills” is not only rather general, but does also not take into account, that the Master's degree has it's sense in going much deeper into the specifics of the artistic evolution of musicians in practice and in the scientific and entrepreneurial aspects. It's therefore recommended to deepen the description of goals, tasks and learning outcomes.

Comparing the required knowledge of the PBSP Music (SER 3.1.2.,, p 200) and the PMSP Music (SER 3.1.2., p. 130), the knowledge, skills and competencies for the Bachelor and Master level are in some respects practically identical, e.g. DU names the following learning outcome in the field of knowledge for the Master SP Music: “Languages and communication; “1. Music theory and history; 2. The art of playing music in different ways of performance; 3. Organization of artistic projects; 4. Music pedagogy and psychology.” (SER 3.1.2., p. 135). Not only are the learning outcomes in the aspect of knowledge too basic for Master's level, but they are basically the same than in Bachelor level, and their presentation is even less elaborate than the presentation of learning outcomes/knowledge for the Bachelor's study program that presents the following list: “Demonstrate basic knowledge of languages and communication; 1. Systematize knowledge of music theory and history; 2. Understand different types of playing in the art of performing music; 3. Have a command of the organization of artistic projects; 4. Understand music pedagogy and psychology” (SER 3.1.2.;, p. 200).

It's recommended to DU to invest care in elaborating learning outcomes at Master's level: they should on one side be a logical continuation of Bachelor's learning outcomes, but also be significantly more advanced and complex, so that the learning outcomes comply with the evolution of the student during studies.

The duration of 1 year and 6 months is sufficient. The study program language Latvian does not interconnect with the Bachelor's level study program Music, which is realized in Latvian and English, but this fact does not seem to be a problem. in practice, as there are no international students in the Bachelor level program.

#### 2.1.3.

The Self Evaluation report does not mention corrections to the study program's parameters, only to the evaluation of academic staff and states that consequent changes in the composition of academic staff are made (SER 3.1.1. Description and analysis of changes in the parameters of the study program). Those changes are not visible in the list of academic staff and can therefore not be evaluated by AIKA experts. SER also speaks of annual evaluations of visiting teachers and the fact that not everybody is re-invited (SER 3.1.1. Description and analysis of changes in the parameters of the study program), but this detail is not a sign of a correction made to the study program as such.

#### 2.1.4.

DU monitors the professional integration of its Master graduates and describes working positions of graduates between 2017 and 2023 (SER 3.1.3. Economic and/ or social substantiation of the study program analysis of graduates' employment: mostly employment is given by music schools, cultural centers, theaters and orchestras. DU gives statistical data about the number of students (between 8 and 13) that indicate a slowly decreasing interest of students. Whereas the PMSP Music disposed of 16 students in total in 2017/18, the number of students decreased to 8 students, in 2022/23, which

is a loss of 50% in total. Looking to the sub programs of the PMSP MUSIC, the same situation as in the Bachelor level can be seen: whereas singing, piano and wind instruments are always present (with lower student numbers accordion as well), percussion and string instruments struggle with existence and don't have any students in 2023 (SER 3.1.3. Economic and/ or social substantiation of the study program, analysis of graduates' employment). Concerning the decrease of student numbers in total, the Study Director stated at the experts' visit on site (8./9.8.2023) that DU could accept more students, but that the state funded study places are limited to currently 8 and that therefore no more students are accepted, even though the interested was bigger. It is true that the State funded study places are restricted to 8, but experts could not evaluate, whether more students could have been accepted, because data about applicant numbers are not part of the documentation.

Concerning the unequal distribution of students between the sub programs, the same comment as in Bachelor level can be applied: apparently only strong artistic personalities attract students. It is therefore recommended to reconsider the composition of academic staff in sub programs like string instruments or percussion.

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

The PMSP Music fulfills the aim of supporting and nourishing the cultural life of the Latgale region and offers diversity to Master study programs in the academic scene of Latvia.

The presented goals, tasks and learning outcomes are too basic for a Master level study program and should be elaborated further, so that the development line from Bachelor to Master level is logical and shows a clear evolution..

The employment situation of graduates is favorable and some of the sub programs, like e.g. singing, wind instruments and piano correspond to a remarkable interest from students. In general, student numbers are much lower than in Art Academies like e.g. the Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music in Riga, but that's usual for Art faculties of universities.

The study program aims to be international, and a certain network with Polish and Lithuanian institutions is established and active, but internationalization is not adapted to the new geopolitical context and international students are only present through ERASMUS+ mobilities.

#### **Strengths**

1. The PMSP Music plays an important role in fulfilling the aim of DU to support and nourish cultural life in Latvia and especially in the Latgale region.
2. The number of students is stable and graduates usually find employment after studies.

#### **Weaknesses**

1. The definition of goals, tasks and learning outcomes in the Master program is too similar to the definition of learning outcomes in the Bachelor program and their definition is not elaborated in a manner that would clarify the evolution from Bachelor to Master level.
2. Even though the language of the study program is Latvian only, effort could be made to intensify the offer of international guest lecturers not only from Poland and Lithuania, but also from a wider range of countries.

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

### **Analysis**

#### **2.2.1.**

Based on SER chapter 3.2.1. and study plan annex 3.2.1., the PMSP Music at DU is designed with a

comprehensive approach, covering a range of subjects from music history and theory to psychology and creative research besides specialization and individual musical subjects. This aligns with the national regulations, as stated, and offers a full-time attendance structure over 1.5 years. The program specializations include accordion, piano, wind instruments, string instruments, and singing. There are areas that could be improved further. While the program claims to meet the needs of the industry, labor market, and scientific trends, it would be beneficial to know how these alignments are reviewed and updated. Meetings with employers and alumni demonstrated certain reluctance to provide suggestions towards the improvement of the study program.

The assessment methods, primarily exams and questionnaire tests, could potentially be limiting. Contemporary master level studies often involve project work, discussions etc. Basic study forms might not fully help with the range of skills and competencies that students develop, as master studies are expected to contribute towards development of individual and original thinking.

Moreover, the program seems to focus heavily content-wise on traditional forms of music education and could benefit from incorporating more contemporary or interdisciplinary elements.

Program appears to be quite insular, focusing largely on Latvian music culture and traditions, which is understandable for a regional university. While it is important for a locally-grounded education, the program might benefit from a more international perspective, in addition to visiting international teachers.

#### 2.2.2.

Awarding of a professional master's degree in music in this program is based on the achievements and findings in the relevant field of music research and artistic activities. The final examinations require the student to demonstrate appropriate knowledge, skills, and competence in playing an instrument or solo singing. Artistic exams together with thesis demonstrate that the degree is awarded not just for course completion, but for a demonstrated mastery and understanding of contemporary issues in music science and artistic creativity.

#### 2.2.3.

The PMSP Music seems to be comprehensive based on SER chapter 3.2.3. and study plan annex 3.2.3..

The program's claim to be student-centered could be questioned on the grounds of how well it actually adapts to individual learning styles and needs. The program appears to be highly robust, which could potentially limit the room for student cooperation projects or electives.

While regional focus is presented as a strength, it could also be a limitation if it does not adequately prepare students for the global music market, which is increasingly interconnected and diverse. The program's evaluation methods, although comprehensive, might also be critiqued for potentially emphasizing breadth over depth.

The program claims to integrate modern teaching approaches, it would be worth emphasizing how effectively these are implemented and whether they genuinely contribute to achieving the learning outcomes. While teaching staff experts met live are undoubtedly professional and motivated, no evidence concerning any special methods or teaching approaches have been observed.

#### 2.2.4.

As indicated in SER chapter 3.2.4. and annex 3.2.4, the internship or practice component of the study program appears to be structured, offering a blend of concert practice and master classes. The program sets clear tasks to bridge theoretical knowledge with practical skills.

Effectiveness of the practice is tied to its real-world applicability, which is not entirely clear from the description. While the program seems to offer a variety of venues for practice, the quality of these venues and the level of professional engagement they offer could be a determining factor in the effectiveness of practice.



Evaluation process, although detailed, relies heavily on self-assessment and the judgment of the concert practice leader. This could introduce a level of subjectivity that might not fully reflect the student's capabilities or growth during the internship. More guidance would be beneficial.

#### 2.2.6.

The topics of students' final theses do appear to be relevant to the field of music and aligned with the study program. The master's thesis focuses on an in-depth study of a specific piece of music, which is directly related to the student's state exam performance. This ensures that the thesis work is not just an academic exercise but also has practical implications for the student's professional development as a musician.

The thesis topics cover a wide range of aspects, from classical to contemporary, and involve various instruments and vocal performances (the contemporary field is slightly underrepresented). The thesis also aims to be an "applied interdisciplinary study," although the extent of this interdisciplinarity is not entirely clear. The focus on stylistics, interpretation, and methodological problems related to learning a specific piece of music indicates a comprehensive approach to music education, relationship to artistic work and being in line with principles of artistic research.

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

#### Conclusions:

The PMSP Music has a comprehensive curriculum, which aligns with national regulations and also offers a combination of theoretical and practical education in music. This ensures that students are equipped with the foundational knowledge and skills they need in their respective specializations. The program's rigidity and regional focus could potentially limit students' exposure to diverse musical styles and global market changes.

#### Strengths:

1. The program offers a comprehensive curriculum that aligns with national standards and integrates both theoretical and practical aspects of music education.

#### Weaknesses:

1. The program's regional focus and rigid structure may limit students' exposure to global musical trends and hinder adaptability.
2. The evaluation process for internships relies heavily on self-assessment and subjective judgment, potentially disrupting the measure of a student's growth and capabilities.

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

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

#### **Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

The study programme PMSP Music is designed to be aligned with the current achievements and findings in the respective field of musical creation. It is constructed to offer an adequate combination of theoretical grounding and practical application. The final thesis serves as a cumulative exercise, requiring students to integrate knowledge, carry out practical work, process and interpret results, and ultimately, engage in a public presentation, discussion and defense before a commission.

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

## Analysis

### 2.3.1.

As many of the graduates from the bachelor's degree program continue their education in Master's program, the available provision (informative, study, material, technical, etc.) is familiar to them – fine premises, a very unique pool of instruments, as well as very good conditions for the teaching staff and students of the program thanks to the EU project funding that allowed the program to move into new building 7 years ago.

During the study process of PMSP Music, the following program implementation forms are utilized: individual practical lessons, group practical lessons, lectures, seminars, tests, academic concerts, colloquiums, master classes, consultations, tests and exams, studies with the use of computer equipment and students' independent work.

Not only the administrative staff, but also the teaching staff and students comment on a good range of instruments available to implement and fulfill the above goals,, but agree that the constant improvement of and addition to the already existing pool of instruments would be appreciated as the ambitiously set goals will continue to develop and improve the program. (experts' summer visit at DU (8./9.8.2023))

There is also a well-established DU library that is open 9 hours a day, 45 hours a week. The reading room is open on weekdays from 9:00 to 20:30 and on Saturdays from 10:00 to 17:00. The bibliography and information sector is open on working days from 9:00 to 17:00. Books/sheet music can also be handed in outside of the library's working hours, using the book/sheet music handing machines. The collection of the library is 267,655 copies, including 233,868 books and 20,322 periodicals (368 titles). Of these, the library offers 13,465 sheet music collections and 25,594 books related to music literature, history, theory, methodology, pedagogy and psychology. The library contains the most essential reference materials for musicians. (SER, 2.3.3.) As the management emphasizes the universal and comprehensive nature of their study field (i.e. not only the theoretical and scientific aspect, but also the professional performance experience and practice), one should also mention the adequate venues for the artists to have their on-stage experience. The DU provides such possibilities in their own premises, but also collaborates closely with the professional music and arts stages in the city and the region.

Last but not least, the Faculty of Music and Arts of DU organizes various cooperation projects with partner institutions abroad (e.g. Lithuania, Poland, among others) to promote the development of scientific communication on the international scale and to enrich the scene with new findings, to stimulate the DU academic staff and students. In the PMSP Music program, the research component is especially important: it is intended to carry out research activities in cooperation with DU researchers, joining research groups and preparing students for further music science studies at the doctoral level. (SER, 3.1.2.)

### 2.3.3.

The PMSP "Music" is funded from the state budget financing for studies (subsidy) and tuition fees. The main source of funding is the state budget financing. The cost calculation for one student in the program of the study field has been made at the Department of Finance and Accounting of DU, including the salary fund and the employer's SSIA, the costs of business trips, materials, energy resources and inventory costs, the costs of purchasing books, equipment and investments, as well as the costs for social security of students. (SER 2.3.1.)

Since the number of budget places in the program has decreased and the region does not provide enough resources (i.e. unemployment is strongly present) for the potential students to pay for their studies with their own resources, an emphasis has to be put on recruiting and attracting more international students, which is repeatedly mentioned by the management, administrative, as well as the teaching staff of the DU. (SER 2.6.1. Overview of implementation of the

recommendations\_EN)

Whereas, the funding for the improvement of the educational material and technical base (such as additional improvement of auditoriums, purchase of educational literature, purchase of instruments, purchase of visual aids and software, etc.) is mainly provided from various projects (e.g. ERDF, ESF).

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

DU has developed and successfully implemented the professional higher education master's study program (PMSP) "Music". This popularity of this program illustrates the necessity and importance to have the professional musical education in the region in order to prevent differences in music education services across the country and in order to promote balanced development of the field, as well as to expand the possibility of creating high-quality professional education in music throughout Latvia, thus promoting accessibility which goes together with the regional development.

The resources allocated for the program by the DU are sufficient and of high quality (on some occasions even surpassing those available in the capital of Latvia). There is also a successful partnership with international partner institutions in Lithuania and Poland, which is a good basis for further development. DU has not yet established a new strategy of connecting to new European and global possible partners. Changes in the geopolitical situation should be included in new strategic development of the university and the study programs of the Study field ARTS.

Strengths:

1. Sufficient and high-quality resources available.
2. A couple of enthusiastic and charismatic personalities among teaching staff (e.g. voice studies) serve as magnets for the program and the region, serving as powerful supervisors and mentors.
3. Current and former students of the program are particularly active participants in the cultural life of Latgale and organizers of events, thus supporting and illustrating the objectives of the program.
4. Some international collaboration with Polish and Lithuanian partners is existing.

Weaknesses:

1. Not all sub-programs dispose of attractive artistic personalities within the staff.
2. International and national connections are mainly made through personal contacts, there is a lack of a complex strategy.

### **Assessment of the requirement [6]**

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

The study provision, informative provision (including library), material and technical provision and financial provision is fully compliant with the conditions for the implementation of the study program and ensuring the achievement of learning outcomes.

## **2.4. Teaching Staff**

### **Analysis**

#### **2.4.1.**

All twelve representatives of the academic staff involved in the implementation of PMSP "Music" have a doctorate or master's degree. They all have practical experience in a higher education

institution and have a track record of scientific and/or artistic activity which provides the necessary qualification to successfully fulfill the aims and learning outcomes of the SP. According to SER 58,33% are professors. However, it is worth mentioning that out of seven professors, only two are elected professors at DU, five are visiting professors. Positively, similar to PBSP "Music" there is a stable network established that provides visiting lecturers from Jazeps Vitols Latvian Academy of Music as well as foreign HEI, for example, Karol Lipinski Academy of Music in Wroclaw. (SER, section 3.4.1., p. 163)

#### 2.4.2.

According to SER (section 3.4.2., p. 165-166) the teaching staff of the SP is evaluated yearly based on the results of research work, artistic activity and pedagogical and organizational work implemented. Also, visiting lecturers are being evaluated and there have been cases when the collaboration has been terminated. This is regulated by certain internal regulatory acts such as "Regulations on elections in academic positions at Daugavpils University" and "The procedure for evaluating the scientific activity of the academic staff of Daugavpils University". The application of these acts and procedures was only partially verified by teaching staff members during the expert's visit (8/9.08.2023.) as some mentioned that they have not provided any information about their activities recently. That raises concerns about the regularity of evaluation and whether all members of the teaching staff are evaluated every year. On the other hand, during the expert's visit (8/9.08.2023.) students and graduates pointed out the high level of qualification of the teaching staff and mentioned it as one of the main reasons they chose the SP.

#### 2.4.4.

According to SER (3.4.1., table no. 6) 8 out of 12 members of the academic staff of the SP have a track record of both scientific research published in peer-reviewed editions and artistic activity, for example, assistant professor Ilona Bagele, professor Ēvalds Daugulis, visiting professor Andris Vecumnieks among others. Also, during the site visit members of the academic staff acknowledged that their motivation to develop their research and artistic activity is high. It is worth noting that some members of the academic staff have a very high quality track record including extensive national and international artistic activity. However, for some members of the academic staff qualifications can't be fully verified as, for example, Vasilijs Suserts is not included in the annex 2.4.4. Research and artistic creative activity\_ENG and also his CV is not included in annex 2.3.7. During the expert's visit he participated in the meeting with academic staff members and mentioned his artistic activity, however, specific examples were not mentioned. The same applies to Jelena Borele whose CV has not been provided. CV of Marija Piskunova has been provided but it doesn't include information on either research or artistic activity, her professional experience as a teacher exceeds five years, however, she only has 3 years of experience in higher education.

There is a bonus system in place that fosters research activity (mentioned by members of the teaching staff during experts' visit, 8/9.08.2023). However, during experts' visit not all members were well informed about it. Additionally, the current system doesn't include artistic activity which would be advisable especially to motivate artistic achievements on national and international levels.

#### 2.4.5.

During the expert's visit it was observed that members of the academic staff know each other very well, they have experience performing together and also creating music ensembles together with students. The overall atmosphere is very supporting and positive. Also, members of the academic staff mentioned that they have received support from more experienced colleagues that has helped them to develop their scientific research activity, which is a sign of collaborative environment. Positively, the established international network has led to joint projects, for example, "Reducing the fragmentation of study programs and strengthening the sharing of resources at Daugavpils

University" that engaged members of the teaching staff from Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Belarus. There is also a good track record of working in international competition juries, various ERAF and ESF projects and others. That fosters collaboration between staff members as they participate in projects together and also provides the necessary international experience that can be later transmitted into the development of study courses. As there is a high proportion of visiting members of the teaching staff, it would be advisable to develop an internal mechanism that would engage them in collaborative processes, for example, joint workshops or annual study program meetings that would include everyone - both elected and visiting members of the teaching staff.

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

#### **Conclusions:**

Overall, members of the academic staff are highly qualified, they have a good track record of both research and artistic activity. There is a good track record of international activity including participation in projects, international competition juries etc. For some members the provided information in their CVs is not sufficient to verify their qualification. Although members of the academic staff mentioned a bonus system in place for research activity, they didn't know specifics. Also, they acknowledged that they don't know whether artistic activity is also evaluated and bonuses can be earned.

#### **Strengths**

1. Some very strong members of the academic staff.
2. Track of national and international artistic activity of some members of the academic staff.
3. Positive atmosphere and dedication to the program from the members of the academic staff.

#### **Weaknesses:**

1. Some members of the academic staff don't have verifiable qualifications.
2. The qualification level is not even among the members of the academic staff. There are clear leaders with excellent track records and there are members with only regional artistic activity and low-level research activity.
3. No bonus system is developed for artistic activity.

### **Assessment of the requirement [7]**

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

All twelve representatives of the academic staff involved in the implementation of PMSP "Music" have a doctorate or master's degree. They all have practical experience in a higher education institution and have a track record of scientific and/or artistic activity.

### **2.5. Assessment of the Compliance**

#### **Requirements**

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

The PMSP Music volume is 90CP of which 11 ECTS are dedicated to learning the latest achievements in the theory and practice of the branch, 3ECTS are dedicated to pedagogy and psychology, 27ECTS are dedicated to research and creative work study courses, 9ECTS are dedicated to professional practice, 9ECTS are dedicated to free elective courses and 30ECTS for master thesis development and state examination.

The PSMP Music includes obligatory study courses about environmental protection ("Environmental protection" 1CP) and civil protection ("Civil protection" 1CP) if the student has not acquired this knowledge during bachelor studies.

The acquirable degree is in compliance with classification in regulatory enactments. Number of contact hours complies (minimum 30%) with the regulations.

The PMSP Music does not comply with Cabinet of Ministers rules 305, point 37. as no professional qualification is awarded, however no LKI level 7 equivalent professional standard exists.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

According to the New Cabinet of Ministers rules 305, not yet in force during the creation of SER that served as basis for this evaluation, professional qualifications must be implemented. The changes of the regulatory framework should be implemented (or DU changes the study programs into an academic study program, not requiring the implementation of professional qualifications). These changes have to be made before the decision of the upcoming next accreditation.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

Study course descriptions and study materials are prepared in Latvian language, and they satisfy requirements set in Law on Higher Education Institutions.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

The diploma issued complies with the state legislature and "Procedures by which documents certifying higher Education recognised by the State shall be issued" (Cabinet of Ministers No. 202). Sample of diploma contains correctly formatted diploma and diploma supplement with information mentioned in rules no. 202.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

The academic staff has sufficient Latvian language knowledge for implementing study courses and for professional and office duties. This is confirmed by a signed Rector's acknowledgement. This acknowledgement is applicable for all staff involved in study field "Arts" implementation.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

Study agreements include all necessary parts set in legislation (Cabinet of Ministers no. 70). Samples of study agreement include general information about the higher education institution, student, study program (accreditation term, amount of CP, etc.); and the order of financing. Duties and rights are described for both sides. It is advised to include information about guarantees of compensation losses (criteria No. 11 and 12), so that this information is easier for the students to acknowledge already from the beginning.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Non-compliant

DU has no agreements with any universities for Music study program. If this study program gets terminated, DU will not be able to provide opportunities for students to continue their education in another study program or partner university.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

University has a rector's signed attestation that confirms it will compensate losses to students if the study program is not accredited or loses its license and the student does not wish to continue studies in another study program.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

### **Assessment of the requirement [8]**

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

Master study program Music does not comply with Cabinet of Ministers rules 305, point 38. as no professional qualification is awarded, however no LKI level 7 equivalent professional standard exists. Additionally, no agreements with any universities for Music study program. If this study program gets terminated, DU will not be able to provide opportunities for students to continue their education in another study program or partner university.

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

Conclusions: The PMSP Music as a logical continuation of the PBSP Music fulfills the same aims of supporting and nourishing cultural life in the Latgale region and Latvia by supporting and holding in the country young talents and by creating future teachers, soloist and chamber musicians.

This study program is partially compliant with the requirements set in Law on Higher Education Institutions and different Cabinet of Ministers rules, deficiencies like agreements with other universities and compliance with Cabinet of Ministers rules 305, point 38. should be eliminated during 2 year period. As in the Bachelor level, not all the sub programs attract students and the inequality of attractiveness of sub programs has not yet been analyzed by DU and no action plan is visible. There are international cooperations, but they are mainly focused to Polish and Lithuanian partners. Internationalization should be strengthened by searching partners in other countries and by implementing even more master classes, blended projects and other formats.

The learning outcomes of Bachelor and Master level are very similar, therefore the university's view of how students grow and how much more complex Master level studies is not visible at all.

Strengths:

1. Good partnerships with Lithuanian and Polish partner institutions.



2. Some of the sub programs are attractive to students because of strong artistic teacher personalities.
3. Students and teachers are loyal to the university.

**Weaknesses:**

1. The learning outcomes of the Master level are too similar to the learning outcomes of the Bachelor level.
2. Although the program on Master's level is realized in Latvian only (whereas the Bachelor's program offers a not much used English version), students should obtain more connection to international trends and developments in a broader range of countries.
3. Not all of the sub programs seem to be attractive to students.
4. The range of international cooperations is too narrow (mainly Polish and Lithuanian partners) and the intensity of national and international cooperations could be even stronger.

### **Evaluation of the study programme "Music"**

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

### **2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Music"**

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

- |   |
|---|
| 1. Adapt the goals, tasks and learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competencies) to Master level and to the duration of the Master Study program.                           |
| 2. Provide agreement with other universities about taking over students from this study programme in case it gets terminated.   |
| 3. Review and update the alignment of the program with industry through regular consultations with employers and alumni.  |
| 4. Introduce more diverse assessment methods, such as project work and discussions, to better evaluate a range of skills and competencies.                                      |
| 5. Not enough proof of sufficient guidance of students before, during and after their internship projects.  |
| 6. The program's interdisciplinary integration is declared, but not clearly defined.  |
| 7. Address the issue regarding changes in the regulatory framework for the awarding of professional degrees. Must be implemented until decision on accreditation is being made. |

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

- |   |
|---|
| 1. Strengthen international partnerships and resources for both, the Bachelor and Master level of studies.  |
| 2. Analyze why some sub programs are not chosen by students and draw consequences, especially looking into the academic staff for those sub programs. |
| 3. Incorporate more contemporary and interdisciplinary elements into the curriculum.  |

4. Develop a more objective and comprehensive evaluation process for internships, possibly involving external assessors or industry professionals.
5. Develop a plan to motivate teaching staff to engage in research activity including clear bonus system both for research and artistic activity, mechanisms to improve research skills of the teaching staff, etc.
6. The curriculum might benefit from focusing on contemporary trends (digital competencies, musicians' role in the society etc.)
7. Clear up Inconsistencies in documentation concerning professional qualification that could lead to confusion.

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

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

##### **Assessment of the Requirements for the Study Field**

<b>Requirements</b>	<b>Requirement Evaluation</b>		<b>Comment</b>
R1 - Pursuant to Section 5, Paragraph 2.1 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions, the higher education institution/ college shall ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study field whilst implementing its internal quality assurance system:		Partially compliant	While DU has demonstrated commitment to quality assurance and has mechanisms in place for the continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study field, there are areas of concern that prevent a full compliance rating. Specifically, the gap of a subsequent strategy post-2020 (which included disrupting events like pandemics and war in Ukraine) until mid-2023, ambiguity in feedback mechanisms, and concerns regarding stakeholder engagement and feedback as well as evidence of complains to IKVD contribute to potential weaknesses in the assurance of continuous development and improvement. Given that two of the individual points (1.1;1.6) is evaluated as "Partially compliant," the overall requirement R1 is also deemed "Partially compliant".

Requirements	Requirement Evaluation	Comment
R2 - Compliance of scientific research and artistic creation with the level of development of scientific research and artistic creation (if applicable)	Partially compliant	The results are not evenly distributed among SP with some being somewhat successful, for example, bachelor and master's SP "Music" while others are clearly underperforming, for example SP "Arts Management". There is a lack of a systematic approach and no evidence of established policy in a written form for financial bonuses for excellent artistic activities (the university has got only rules for financial bonuses for scientific activities) . Not all the study programs have clear research directions.
R3 - The cooperation implemented within the study field with various Latvian and foreign organizations ensures the achievement of the aims of the study field.	Partially compliant	The delivered documents of DU as well as the interviews with the DU management confirm that a certain number of national and international partners does exist, but the intensity of national cooperation on the basis of annual conferences and a small number of master classes could be optimized. The range of international partnerships (at this state rather limited to Lithuanian and Polish partners) could be widened and a systemic strategy of building up new partnerships reacting to the loss of former partnerships as a consequence of the actual geopolitical situation should be built.
R4 - Elimination of deficiencies and shortcomings identified in the previous assessment of the study field, if any, or implementation of the recommendations provided.	Partially compliant	While recommendations like literature acquisition are fulfilled, recommendations that are vital for the development of this study field, such as, stable student amount for certain programs, recommendations in tandem with internationalization are poorly implemented, especially in art side of the study field. Bachelor music program fails to provide a formal agreement about students' opportunities to study elsewhere in case the program gets terminated.

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

<b>No.</b>	<b>Study programme</b>	<b>R5</b>	<b>R6</b>	<b>R7</b>	<b>R8</b>	<b>Evaluation of the study programme (excellent, good, average, poor)</b>
1	Art Management (42211)	Not relevant	Partially compliant	Partially compliant	Partially compliant	Average
2	Music (42212)	Not relevant	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Partially compliant	Good
3	Design (42214)	Not relevant	Partially compliant	Partially compliant	Fully compliant	Average
4	Art (47211)	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Partially compliant	Average
5	Music (47212)	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Good

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

No dissenting opinion has been expressed.