

Expert group joint opinion

Evaluation Procedure: Assessment of Study Field

Higher Education Institution: State Agency for Social Integration College

Study field: Management, Administration and Management of Real Property

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Summary Assessment of the Study Field

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The study direction “Management, Administration and Management of Real Property” and the study programme “Human Resource Management” is delivered by State Agency for Social Integration College (hereinafter – the College). The programme is adapted to the needs of persons with disabilities whose average age is 35+. The programme “Human Resource Management” is the only programme in the study direction, therefore, the evaluation of the study direction coincides with the evaluation of the programme.

The study direction and its programme make a considerable contribution to society as it increases the access to higher education for people with disabilities and fosters their competitiveness in the labour market. The College has identified the support necessary for the students and established a well-functioning support system, based on the special needs of each student. This is by far the biggest strength and advantage of the College and this study direction.

Other strengths of the study direction:

- The management is efficient and reasonably simple, as study direction consists of only one programme. Its decision-making process is efficient and involves all internal stakeholders.
- Quality assurance of the College is integrated into the quality management system of the SIVA Agency and is in accordance with ISO 9001: 2015 which results in a proper contribution to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study direction and the study programme. As a consequence, the funding of the study direction is effectively integrated into a broader package of educational and rehabilitative services for people with disabilities.
- The cooperation with local partners contributes to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study direction and the relevant study programmes. More specifically, cooperation with employers enables a unified system for the provision of internships and intern placement.
- A small number of students is justified by student-centred learning, teaching and assessment. This approach is key in implementing this study programme and all stakeholders have a common understanding of this approach.

The implementation of this study direction has a room for improvement:

One of the biggest weaknesses of this study direction and study programme is unbalanced academic and research workload of the teaching staff, as research is not a priority for the College. Moreover, the teaching staff take no part both in outgoing and incoming mobility, which should bring added value to the implementation of the study process and the study quality. The Agency (including the College) had no clear priorities regarding scientific research. The Agency neither provides funding for research nor encourages participation in competitive funding for research. International cooperation is not ensured or included in the field of scientific research, and there is no purposeful fostering of the faculty participation via international cooperation for scientific research. There is also no system or procedure to involve foreign faculty or students into the studies or other forms of collaboration. As a consequence, the results of scientific research are not integrated into the study process of the programme and it is not clear how research-based learning is utilized in teaching.

The experts thank the College staff for all the information provided and open conversations during the visit. This evaluation report provides a detailed analysis of the study direction and the programme; the experts expect that their observations and suggestions will contribute to improving the quality of study direction and study programme at the College.

1. Management of the Study Field

Analysis

The study direction “Management, Administration and Management of Real Property” and the study programme “Human Resource Management” comply with the directions of the strategic development of the Agency and the College and contributes to performing an exceptional social mission - facilitate persons with disabilities and predicted disabilities integration into society and employment. The aim of the study direction “Management, Administration and Management of Real Property” of the College is to prepare highly-skilled specialists in the area of management, marketing, and business management by providing appropriate knowledge, skills, and competencies relevant to the aims and objectives of study programmes. The specific objective is to provide first-level professional higher education and prepare personnel specialists in line with the occupational standard of level 4 professional qualification and the labour market needs. (SER p23). These aims are clearly defined and attainable.

Study direction and study programme comply with the mission and vision of the College. The mission of the College is to prepare competitive specialists for the labour market and build a stable foundation for career growth of students. The vision of the College is to become the leading educational institution in Latvia, which provides qualitative 1st level professional higher education for persons with disability and functional disorders, and education and professional development opportunities for specialists in the social sphere (College Strategy).

Study direction and study programme meet a specific need of the society, as it helps to ensure effective access to education for persons with disabilities. This contribution goes in line with one of the activity directions of the Implementation Guidelines of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities for 2014-2020 is “Education”, that stresses out the importance of access to higher education for people with disabilities to foster their competitiveness in the labour market. Moreover, study direction and study programme meet the needs and the development trends of the national economy according to the medium and long-term labour market forecasts by the Ministry of Economics and opinions by the employers (SER p23, Meeting with employers).

Management of the programme is focused on the development of this programme, as well as managerial support is very important for the implementation of the study programme (meetings with students, staff, graduates and support personnel). It is important to note that there is only one study programme in the study direction “Management, Administration and Management of Real Property” therefore the study direction is led by the head of the programme (SER p28). The management of the study programme (in this case coincides with the study direction) is very systematic and meets the standards. Development of the study programme is based on annual evaluations, discussions with staff and student surveys as well as external changes like a new occupational standard. Decisions are made in the Council of the College and at the Research and Methodological Board, involving different stakeholders like students, employers and NGO’s. Most important support is provided by the Department of Professional Rehabilitation Support and IT Department (SER p30). The IT Department is responsible for the development of the Moodle and other systems, installation and maintenance of computer equipment and the necessary software, and technical support (SER p30). The Department of Professional Rehabilitation Support is responsible to track the academic achievements and changes in the health condition of the students (SER p30). This support is common for all study directions of the College.

Admission of students is regulated by the Rules on Admission to Studies at the College of Social Integration State Agency and recognition of study period, the professional experience, and the study previously acquired formal and non-formal education is regulated by the “Commencement of Studies in Later Stages of Studies”, “Procedures for Recognition of Competences Acquired Outside Formal Education System or in Professional Experience and Learning Outcomes Acquired in Previous Learning”. Full-time and part-time studies are funded from the State budget and are available for persons with disabilities or predictable disabilities, who have received a recommendation from the

Department for the Assessment of Professional Aptitude of the Agency (SER p31). Meetings with students and graduates showed that these procedures are logical and efficient.

Achievements and learning outcomes of the students are evaluated within study courses, internships and qualification exams and are regulated by the Procedures for Evaluating the Knowledge of the Students, Traineeship Organisation Procedures and Procedures for Elaboration and Defense of Qualification Papers (SER p32). Meetings with students, graduates and teaching staff showed that these procedures are logical and efficient. Students and graduates pointed out that their knowledge, skills and competencies improved with each study year and the career results of their studies are evaluated even 6 months after graduation.

There are strict regulations for plagiarism and different plagiarism detection tools are used in the study process (SER p34-35), but they are not integrated into one platform, for example, Moodle. Lecturers and students are aware of these regulations (Meeting with academic, Meeting with students). On the other hand, there are no regulations on other academic integrity principles and there isn't the Ethical code of the College. Procedures of academic integrity and ethics are informal (Meeting with the SIVA management).

Web site (<https://www.siva.gov.lv/personala-specialists.html>) of the programme has information about the study direction, qualifications, length of the studies, a short description of the study results. There is information about admission, but in general, the web page is outdated and not user friendly.

Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

Study direction " Management, Administration and Management of Real Property" of the College has only one study programme - Human Resource Management, therefore, the management of the study direction coincides with the management of the study program. Accordingly, resulting from the analysis, the management of the Study Direction goes in compliance with all criteria: the aims of the study field are clearly defined and attainable, the structure of the management of the study direction is relevant as the study direction is led by the director of the study programme (and vice versa) and the development decisions are made in the Council of the College and in the Research and Methodological Board involving different stakeholders; there are all necessary regulations for enrolment and study process; plagiarism is the main focus of academic integrity, however, there is no code of academic ethics; the information published on the website complies with the information available in the official registers.

Strengths:

The study direction and its programme make a considerable contribution to society as it increases the access to higher education for people with disabilities and fosters their competitiveness in the labour market.

The management is efficient and reasonably simple, as study direction consists of only one program. The decision-making process is efficient and involves all internal stakeholders.

There is a strong focus on plagiarism prevention.

Weaknesses:

Lack of a code of academic ethics and not enough focus on other academic integrity issues.

2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System

Analysis

The Agency (SIVA) has implemented a quality assurance system in accordance with ISO 9001: 2015 (SER p10) and its process ensure a proper contribution to the achievement of the aims and learning

outcomes of the study direction and the study programme. The system is comprehensive and clear, however, its description and contribution to the study direction and study programme are not publicly available on the web page of the Agency. The responsibilities for the quality assurance lies with the director of the College and it involves administrative staff, teaching staff and quality auditor of the Agency. The system is designed for continuous improvements of the study programme, the quality of the education and student satisfaction (Meeting with the SIVA management, Meeting with the director of SP).

The study programme and its content are reviewed annually and the development process includes discussions with lecturers and support staff, surveys of students, surveys of employers (after internships), meetings with employers, surveys of graduates (SER p36). Changes have been made to the program quite recently in accordance with the new occupational standard, accordingly the changes were made in study courses and their content. The change process was led by the director of the study programme and involved discussions with the teaching staff (Meeting with the director of SP, Meeting with academic staff). To some degree, the feedback from employers and graduates was used in the development and review of the study programme (Meeting with employers, Meeting with graduates).

The feedback and other statistics are used on a regular basis to improve the study programme (study direction as well). Some examples are the number of students, number of teaching staff, number of graduates, enrollment statistics, graduates employment. It should be noted, however, that the numbers are small, so quantitative data analysis must be complemented by qualitative data analysis. For example, the number of expelled students is growing in recent years (SER p5) and this indicates insufficient social and academic support for students. Still, the statistics do not reveal the reasons.

The Agency's internal quality assurance system is implemented in accordance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). Assessment of the standards set forth in Part 1 of the ESG is described below:

Policy for quality assurance: SIVA has adopted the quality management system that is also in force in the SIVA College. Meetings with the management of the college, programme director and stakeholders showed that quality management is well integrated into the strategic management as well as in the day to day operations.

Design and approval of programmes: Review and design of study programmes are regulated by the Internal Rules "Procedures for Updating College Study Programmes and Developing New Study Programmes". Procedures are clear, efficient and logical. The study programme is reviewed and new programmes are developed and accepted by the Research and Methodological Board and the Council of the College. Study results are defined in the course descriptions and students are introduced with the course description in the first lecture of the course. Information about the qualifications and study outcomes of the study programme is published on the web page. Internal stakeholders participate in this process actively.

Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment: studies in the SIVA College are student-centred because every student receives an individual study plan for the study programme as well as for their rehabilitation needs. Use of student-centred approach was mentioned in meetings with the teaching staff, students, graduates and support staff. That approach is fostering the development of student personalities, skills and competencies from enrollment to graduation.

Student admission, progression, recognition and certification: SIVA College has regulations and procedures for the student admission, study process, qualification, internships, recognition of non-formal and informal learning. Procedures are efficient, logical and targeted as were discussed in accreditation meetings and analysis of the documents.

Teaching staff: Teachers recruitment and development are very important because there is a special need for teachers ready to work with students with disabilities and special needs. SER and meeting with teachers show that the recruitment process is fair and transparent. Regarding teacher

development, some improvements are needed: teachers English skills, ICT teaching competence, and research competence should be raised. The College could also support doctoral studies for teachers.

Learning resources and student support: SER, meetings with programme stakeholders and findings from the tour of the facilities showed that adequate and accessible learning resources and student support are provided. Still, the high drop-out rate of students is a cause for concern and presupposes that academic support for students is not sufficient.

Information management: SIVA College collects, analyses and uses different information for quality assurance like drop-out rate, attendance at lectures, enrollment, graduation, employment statistics. However, more attention should be paid to the comprehensive analysis of qualitative data due to the small number of students.

Public information: information about the SIVA College, study direction and study programme on the home page and other media are clear, accurate, objective and up-to-date but not user friendly. The home page is outdated and hardly navigable.

On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes: there are a monitor and periodical review procedures of the study programme that involve all internal stakeholders (Meeting with students, Meeting with SIVA management, Meeting with the programme director). On the other hand, there are some gaps that need to be taken into account, like the need to improve the teachers' English language, support and develop teachers competence in research and teaching with ICT (Meeting with teachers); develop students' ICT literacy (Meeting with graduates, Meeting with students)

Quality assurance: quality management processes are audited by the internal auditor of the Agency. Regarding the quality assurance of the study direction/ study programme, in 2013 study direction was accredited for 6 years and the SIVA College implemented not all, but the majority of the recommendations.

Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

Quality assurance of the SIVA College is integrated into the quality management system of the SIVA Agency and is in accordance with ISO 9001: 2015. This ensures a proper contribution to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study direction and the study programme. The study direction fully meets these criteria: quality policy and quality assurance system contributes to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study direction and the relevant study programme; the collection and analysis of the information on the relevant study programme are appropriate. These criteria are partially met: the procedures for the development and review of the relevant study programme and the feedback mechanisms is logical, efficient, and available for all stakeholders. The aims and measures for improvement are integrated into a joint quality assurance system.

Strengths:

The efficiency of the internal quality assurance system lay in the joint quality management system with the Agency.

Strategic and clear responsibility for quality as College director is responsible for the quality assurance processes and their implementation.

Weaknesses:

Information about the quality assurance system is not publicly available.

The home page is outdated and not user friendly.

3. Resources and Provision of the Study Field

Analysis

The Agency is founded and financed by the State budget, and the funding of the study direction/programme is integrated into a broader package of educational and rehabilitative services for people with disabilities; accordingly, the State budget grant accounts for 98.6% of the budget, while income from tuition fees respectively account for 1.4%; the tuition fee of the study programmes has been determined in accordance with Cabinet Regulation (SER p.42). According to the quality management system documentation and based on the information from the meetings (Meeting with the SIVA management, Meeting with the director of SP), it can be stated that the College has developed an efficient system to determine the financial resources required for the implementation of the study direction/program. All the infrastructure is adapted to students with disabilities not only for their living but also for studies.

The situation is completely different when looking at financing for scientific research. Based on the information provided during the meetings (Meeting with the SIVA management, Meeting with the director of SP, Meeting with academic staff), it can be stated that there is no system for financing the scientific research. The College funds only the local annual conference. Teachers' research and the dissemination of their results in conferences and publications are not systematically funded.

The students and the teaching staff have access to the necessary resources. The College has developed an appropriate infrastructure of resources and the material and technical provision required for the implementation of this study direction/programme. These resources can be mentioned: Moodle environment, new computers, subscription to EBSCO database, the Agency is a member of the European Platform for Rehabilitation (EPR) (SER p.26, Visiting study facilities). However, it should be noted that not all resources are used successfully as students are learning in Latvian, and a portion of them lacks English skill to get the information of previously mentioned resources. There is a common system and procedure for the improvement and purchase of the material, technical, methodological, and informative provision, etc. in place, but there haven't been any significant changes in available resources lately. For example, books and publications which are in the library might seem outdated, as more modern and updated versions of resources are available in the market for a while already (Visiting study facilities, Descriptions of study subjects). There are enough books for every student, but most of the collection needs an update. An online material storage platform is available, used for different matters, but, as the teaching staff is in a migration process, there are two separate platforms in use. The online platform Moodle is used well and has its own usage culture.

The majority of the teaching staff are practitioners with special knowledge when teaching students with disabilities. It must, however, be acknowledged that the College has not developed and it does not implement and comply with the procedures for attracting highly skilled or titled teaching staff (for this study direction/ programme), the only minority of teachers are elected and only a few teachers hold PhD. It should be added that the academic and research workload of the teaching staff is not balanced, as the research part of the teaching staff is not a priority in the College (Meeting with academic staff). This is also reflected in the professional development of teachers. Research excellence of teaching staff is not promoted. Didactic improvement is in place and is implemented in a target-oriented manner. The teaching staff members take no part both in outgoing and incoming mobility (SER p.50) which should bring added value to the implementation of the study process and the study quality. It should be noted that the College Strategy (2020-2023) is intended to promote teacher mobility, but no quantitative or qualitative results of mobility outcomes are foreseen.

The absolute uniqueness of the Agency is that it has established a well-functioning support system, based on the needs of the students. Every student is seen as an individual, treated accordingly, and supported for the best possible study experience (Meeting with academic staff, Meeting with students).

Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

The study direction fully meets these criteria for the resources and provision: the College has identified and created infrastructure resources and the material and technical provision for students and the teaching staff; the College has identified the support necessary for the students and established a well-functioning support system, based on the needs of the students. The study direction only partly meets these criteria: a developed system to determine the financial resources required for the implementation of the study direction (the system does not include the determination for finances for the scientific research); procedures for attracting highly skilled teaching staff (the balanced academic and research workload is not in the place).

Strengths:

The funding of the study direction/programme is effectively integrated into a broader package of educational and rehabilitative services for people with disabilities.

The College has identified the support necessary for the students and established a well-functioning support system, based on the special needs of each student. This is by far the biggest strength and advantage of the College, this study direction and study programme.

Weaknesses:

One of the biggest weaknesses of this study direction and study programme is unbalanced academic and research workload of the teaching staff, as research is not a priority for the College. Moreover, the teaching staff take no part both in outgoing and incoming mobility, which should bring added value to the implementation of the study process and the study quality.

The study direction/ programme is provided with modern digital resources, but the physical library needs newer books for this programme.

4. Scientific Research and Artistic Creation

Analysis

The connection of the scientific research of an area of studies is not defined, nor ensured or efficient. Meeting with study direction management revealed that the management does not give any extra support (e.g. financial support, study leaves) for scientific publications. The management has a positive attitude towards scientific publishing, though. The lack of extra support is justified on the fact that there is no state research funding for this Agency, at the same time, the Agency doesn't seek external sources by participating in competitive funding for research (Meeting with the SIVA management, Meeting with the director of SP). This is a collage-level vocational education institution where scientific publishing is not the main activity. Even given this starting point the level of scientific publishing in the study direction is low.

The presented data on the scientific activity of teachers (SER p.59 and Annex no. 16) is inaccurate, as some publications are not classified as SIVA's.

The results of scientific research are not integrated into the study process of the programme and it is not clear how research-based learning is utilized in teaching. A national-level conference is organized, but students mainly don't take part in it with their research papers or presentations (only one case was identified over the last 5 years, SER p.60). All in all, the College has no research projects where the students could be involved. However, there is a plan to create a joint conference with another institution (Meeting with the SIVA management, Meeting with the director of SP). It should be added, that student involvement in research is limited due to student's deficiency in English (SER p. 67, Meeting with academic staff).

International cooperation is not ensured or included in the field of scientific research, and there is no purposeful fostering of the faculty participation via international cooperation for scientific research. The teaching staff participate only occasionally at international conferences to present the results of their research (SER p.59 and Annex no. 16). The college does not have any systemic tools to encourage faculty to engage in scientific research, such as support for participation in international conferences or study projects. The college has no tools to encourage students to engage in scientific research, such as scientific conferences for students or research-based study process.

Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

The directions of scientific research in the study direction does not comply with the development aims of the college. The relation between scientific research in the study direction and the study process is not adequately defined and ensured, and it is not efficient. Scientific research and the outcomes thereof are not integrated in the study process in the study programmes of all levels. International cooperation in the field of scientific research within the study direction is not adequately ensured and improved in a target-oriented manner. The college has not developed mechanisms for the involvement of the teaching staff in scientific research. The higher education institution/ college has not developed mechanisms to promote the involvement of the students in scientific research. The students of the study programme are not actively involved in scientific research.

This is a vocational institution where academic research is not the main activity. However, research-based education would require more inputs in research. The Agency has a unique approach where higher education is combined with rehabilitation, however, this practice is not explored by teaching staff research activities. The Agency has also many years of expertise on how to overcome learning obstacles for people with disabilities. Research in these areas would not only help the Agency to develop its activities but could potentially contribute to the local and international knowledge base. The Agency should support its study members in their efforts to get PhD's e.g. through study leaves or reduced teaching obligations during completion of PhD degree.

At the moment of evaluation, scientific research had many weaknesses: the Agency (including the College) had no clear priorities regarding scientific research. The Agency neither provides funding for research nor encourages participation in competitive funding for research. The results of scientific research are not integrated into the study process of the programme and it is not clear how research-based learning is utilized in teaching. International cooperation is not ensured or included in the field of scientific research, and there is no purposeful fostering of the faculty participation via international cooperation for scientific research.

5. Cooperation and Internationalisation

Analysis

As outlined in the SAR the College cooperates with various Latvian and foreign institutions (see examples below) taking into account the target group of the College, namely, persons with disabilities. The College cooperates with other educational institutions to contribute to the exchange of experience between both the students and the teaching staff. The College has entered into cooperation agreements with institutions of higher education, such as RSU (Rīga Stradiņš University), RTU (Riga Technical University), Rēzekne Academy of Technologies, Management College, and BVK (Business Management College). Still, it should be noted that not all agreements

are related to this study direction. Some more focused collaboration related to the field of this study direction is needed to contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study direction. For example, there is no cooperation with the Latvian Association for People Management, or any professional association or employers from human resource field like WorkingDay, I-Work etc. As outlined in the SAR and was demonstrated during a meeting with the employers the College actively cooperates with the employers, to ensure traineeships for the students and contribute to the recruitment of the graduates. The programme collaborates mostly with employers who accept students for training. Students are informed about training and work opportunities. This cooperation enables a unified system for the provision of internships and intern placement.

On the College level, there is a collaboration with a business incubator, the College organizes joint lectures with Riga Management College. The College also cooperates with the Education Board of Jūrmala City Council, the representatives of which take part in the work of the qualification paper defence committee of the College, on a regular basis. There is a collaboration with the municipality's social workers.

The Agency is also a member of the European Platform for Rehabilitation, which allows it to participate in the seminars, working groups, conferences, and webinars organised by the platform, in collaboration with the representatives of EPR member states in the field of social and professional rehabilitation, thus ensuring the improvement of the study process of the College and development of the professional experience and competences of the academic staff.

The Agency, including the College, cooperates with non-governmental organisations and associations, such as the Latvian Association of the Deaf (LNS), Latvian Society of the Blind (LNB), Association of the Disabled and Their Friends "Apeirons", and Latvian Umbrella Body for Disability Organisations SUSTENTO, to ensure and enhance the study process and environment for persons with sight and hearing difficulties and other impairments. A representative of the Association of the Disabled and Their Friends "Apeirons" – a non-governmental institution for the protection of the interests of persons with disabilities, the priorities of which are the development of an accessible environment, universal design, diversification of social services, employment, informing the public, volunteering, and education – forms a part of the College Board.

Cooperation with international colleges and scientific institutions should be developed. As for international projects, the students joined a few years back Erasmus program to visit Malta and the Netherlands to learn best practices in these countries. That was an example of a mobility project implementation. The meetings with graduates and students showed that the students are aware of international mobility options but utilize them very seldom because of objective reasons (students disabilities). The meeting with academic staff showed that there is also a low activity for teachers' mobility. There is no system or procedure to involve foreign faculty or students into the studies or other forms of collaboration. Teaching staff do not participate in international exchanges

The Agency has no alumni association. That is a major weakness since collaboration with graduates and current students could potentially help to motivate the current students.

Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

The college cooperates actively with the institutions from Latvia and with a few institutions abroad. The cooperation contributes fairly well to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study direction. The cooperation partners are mainly selected in view of the specific features of the study direction.

There has not yet developed a system and procedures for the attraction of the teaching staff and students from abroad within the study direction. However, a common system for the provision of traineeships in Latvia has been developed within the study direction.

Cooperation with local partners contributes to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes

of the study direction and the relevant study programmes. More specifically, cooperation with employers enables a unified system for the provision of internships and intern placement.

International cooperation is enabled via membership of the European Platform for Rehabilitation, which allows it to participate in the seminars, working groups, conferences, and webinars organised by the platform.

Cooperation and internationalization in a framework of this study direction have a room for improvement, as their weaknesses are noticed:

There is no system or procedure to involve foreign faculty or students into the studies or other forms of collaboration.

The Agency has no alumni association. That is a major weakness since collaboration with graduates and current students could potentially help to motivate the current students.

International projects could be realized in collaboration with other institutions.

Also international mobility of teachers should be promoted.

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

Analysis

During the previous evaluation, the group of experts gave eight specific recommendations. The study direction management provided a description of the implementation in SER and in a specific document "Implementation of the Plan for the Implementation of the Recommendations Provided by the Experts During the Previous Accreditation".

The first recommendation was to "clarify the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and evaluation of studies". The SER and interviews with study direction management showed aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and evaluation of studies are conducted on annual basis. These were also reviewed in the context of updating the programme requirement to match the new professional standard in 2019. The recommendation has been implemented.

The second recommendation was to extend the study programme to include study courses of marketing, to provide a more accurate definition of the intended learning outcomes to be achieved in the study process and improve the descriptions of traineeships. The document describing how recommendations were implemented indicated that in 2014 study subject marketing was included and intended learning outcomes were reflected in the study programme of the relevant study direction. The document as well as SER and meeting with study direction management demonstrated that the recommendation was implemented.

The third recommendation related to the developing scientific activity of the academic staff within the study direction and paying more attention to scientific publicity – participation in conferences (by the academic staff and students) and ensuring access to and opportunities for international publicity in peer-reviewed magazines. As the first step, the recommendation mentioned cooperation with international partners to carry out scientific activity jointly. The document describing how recommendations were implemented the collage writes that it has improved the scientific activity of the academic staff within the study direction and promoted scientific publicity of the academic staff, including the participation in conferences (by the academic personnel and students) and access to and opportunities for international publicity in peer-reviewed magazines. The College also reports that it cooperates with international partners for joint implementation of the study direction. The same information is included in SER. However, meeting with the SIVA management, meeting with the director of SP and, meeting with academic staff showed very little effort to implement this

recommendation. The academic staff is left with their own devices to conduct scientific research. The SIVA management does not have a clear vision of what type of academic research they should promote. The recommendation is not implemented.

The fourth recommendation encouraged the Collage to seek for opportunities and partners for the graduates of the College to be able to continue studies in a bachelor study programme at other higher education institutions, starting from the third study year. The College reported that they have created cooperation with University of Applied Sciences, Rezekne Academy of Technology on possibilities of College graduates to continue their professional Bachelor study programs. However, the implementation of this collaboration is still in the process. There is no clear evidence that the recommendation is implemented.

The fifth recommendation asked the Collage to involve the academic and administrative staff more actively in the partnership of other Latvian and foreign higher education institutions thereby improving the exchange of experience and strengthening the cooperation. In the document describing how recommendations had been implemented the College reports that it has organised the participation of the teaching staff in international conferences and provided information on the schedule of international events and opportunities to participate in these events. The SER as well as meeting with the SIVA management, meeting with the director of SP and meeting with academic staff showed only little effort to implement this recommendation. Only very few staff members had participated in international conferences. This recommendation was only partially implemented.

The sixth recommendation concerned replenishing the library resources by providing books and professional magazines in foreign languages as well as ensuring a system and opportunities for the students to access to scientific and professional databases. The Collage reported that the stock of the library is replenished with the latest literature on a continuous basis and that the College has subscribed to EBSCO database - a multi-disciplinary database of e-books, e-magazines, and other e-resources consisting of several full-text and review databases used for the acquisition of the study programme. Onsite visit to library showed that EBSCO database is available and that there are a few books available in English. The recommendation is implemented.

The seventh recommendation was to merge the study programmes "Human Resource Management", "Marketing and Trade", and "Accounting and Taxes", into one study programme with different specialisations, thus optimising the resources and ensure more transparent study process management. The Collage had decided not to follow this recommendation as it is according to the Collage not possible to implement the sectoral study courses in this way, as they differ depending on the study programme. The argument is valid.

The eight and final recommendation was to develop plans for the mobility of students and the academic staff, especially for international mobility, thus allowing the academic staff to develop foreign language skills to promote the internationalisation processes. In the document describing the implementation of the recommendations, the Collage states that it "has organised the improvement of foreign language skills of the teaching staff, organising the participation of the teaching staff in international conferences and researches within cooperation agreements and in collaboration with partners abroad". However, the SER and the meeting with the SIVA management, meeting with the director of SP and meeting with academic staff showed very little effort in this area. Also meeting with students and graduates informed this evaluation group that English language teaching should be improved. The recommendation has not been implemented.

Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

Out of the eight recommendations three recommendations have been fully implemented (programmes aims, program contents, improving library resources). Two recommendations have been partially implemented (seeking partners, improving international exchange). Three recommendations have not been implemented (promotion of scientific research, international mobility, merging programs [as explained above at the time of the previous evaluation there were three programs in the study direction). There were valid grounds not to implement one of them (merging programs).

7. Assessment of the Requirements for the Study Field

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Overall, the internal quality assurance system is established and works efficiently with some minor areas of improvement.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Quality assurance of the SIVA College is integrated into the quality management system of the SIVA Agency. Its quality management system is designed and maintained in accordance with the requirements of the European Standard ISO 9001: 2015 Quality (SER p10) Policy and procedures are clear, efficient and logical.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Review and design of study programmes are regulated by the Internal Rules "Procedures for Updating College Study Programmes and Developing New Study Programmes".

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Achievements and learning outcomes of the students are evaluated within study courses, internships and qualification exams are regulated by the Procedures for Evaluating the Knowledge of the Students, Traineeship Organisation Procedures and Procedures for Elaboration and Defense of Qualification Papers (SER p32).

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Internal procedures and mechanisms for assuring the qualifications of the academic staff and the work quality have been developed by the Internal Rules "Regulations on administrative and academic positions at the Social Integration State Agency College".

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Accreditation meetings and document analysis showed that the SIVA College collects analysis of the information on the study achievements of the students, employment of the graduates, satisfaction of the students with the study programme, efficiency of the work of the academic staff.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Meetings with programme's stakeholders and document analysis showed that the college shall ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study direction whilst implementing their quality assurance systems.

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Justification: 'The studies include cooperation with employers, employer organisations, non-governmental organisations. Cooperation with other colleges, municipality, scientific institutions on International level should be developed. (List of Collaboration Agreements) At least cooperation with Latvian Association for People Management or another professional organisation in this field, or Employers from human resource filed like WorkingDay, I-Work etc.'

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Justification: This is a vocational institution where academic research is not the main activity. However, research-based education would require more inputs in research. The connection of the scientific research of an area of studies is nor ensured, nor efficient.

The Agency has also many years of expertise on how to overcome learning obstacles for people with disabilities. Research in these areas would not only help the Agency to develop its activities but could potentially contribute to the local and international knowledge base. The Agency should support its study members in their efforts to get PhD's e.g. through study leaves or reduced teaching obligations during completion of PhD degree.

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Justification: The recommendation related to developing scientific activity of the academic staff within the study direction and paying more attention to scientific publicity – participation in conferences (by the academic staff and students) and ensuring access to and opportunities for international publicity in peer-reviewed magazines is not implemented.

The recommendation encouraged the Collage to seek for opportunities and partners for the graduates of the College to be able to continue studies in a bachelor study programme at other higher education institutions, starting from the third study year is only partially implemented.

The recommendation asked the Collage to involve the academic and administrative staff more actively in the partnership of other Latvian and foreign higher education institutions thereby improving the exchange of experience and strengthening the cooperation was only partially implemented.

The recommendation to develop plans for the mobility of students and the academic staff, especially for international mobility, thus allowing the academic staff to develop foreign language skills to promote the internationalisation processes has not been implemented.

Out of the eight recommendations three recommendations have been fully implemented (programs aims, program contents, improving library resources). Two recommendations have been partially implemented (seeking partners, improving international exchange). Three recommendations have not been implemented (promotion of scientific research, international mobility, merging programs [as explained above at the time of the previous evaluation there were three programmes in the study direction]). There were valid grounds not to implement one of them (merging programmes).

8. Recommendations for the Study Field

Short-term recommendations

Implement recommendations received during the previous assessment procedures: only three recommendations out of eight have been fully implemented. The importance of the implementation of the recommendations has not diminished, some of them are repeated in these recommendations once again. This recommendation should be implemented within next 12 months.

Balance academic and research workload of the teaching staff by making research a priority for the College. This recommendation should be implemented within next 12 months.

Work out and implement the plan to foster research activities for teaching staff and students. This recommendation should be implemented within next 12 months.

Allocate the funds for scientific research and dissemination of findings in conferences and publications. This recommendation should be implemented within next 12 months.

Improve teaching staff hiring and other HR policies and activities to attract more elected teaching staff for the study programme. This recommendation should be implemented within next 12 months.

Improve the policies of teaching staff development to improve their English skills, research competence, use of research-based teaching, as well as foster more lecturers to do their studies at the PhD level. This recommendation should be implemented within next 12 months.

Encourage teachers for international mobility. International projects could be realized in collaboration with other institutions. This recommendation should be implemented within next 12 months.

Improve when possible the use of Moodle as an instrument, including the feedback and assignment giving parts. Integrate a plagiarism software (Turnitin or similar) into Moodle to improve study quality. This recommendation should be implemented within next 12 months.

Update the available study literature in the library to include more books in English language and more up-to-date books in Latvia which are relevant for the study direction. This recommendation should be implemented within next 12 months.

Work out and implement the Ethical and Academic Integrity Code. This recommendation should be implemented within next 12 months.

Sign a cooperation agreement with the Latvian Association for People Management or similar and employers from this specific field. This recommendation should be implemented within next 12 months.

Study literature should be updated (Human resource management, Mathematics for economists, Practical organization of personnel management, Personality psychology, Basics of project management, Basics of sociology, Marketing). This recommendation should be implemented within next 12 months.

Long-term recommendations

Develop a system to determine the financial resources required for the scientific research relevant to the study direction. This system could include state funding as well as seeking external sources by participating in competitions for external funds.

Establish long term partnerships with different higher education institutions to improve the availability of study and scientific research materials and resources.

Develop policy and procedures for attracting teaching staff with scientific research competence and capabilities, as well as fostering more College lecturers to do their studies at the PhD level.

Develop the directions of scientific research that comply with the development aims of the College and relevant to the study direction. The Agency has a unique approach where higher education is combined with rehabilitation. However, this experience is not reflected in the research activities of the teaching staff. The Agency has also many years of expertise on how to overcome learning obstacles for people with disabilities. Research in these areas would not only help the Agency to develop its activities but could potentially contribute to the local and international knowledge base.

Ensure that graduates and employers have the opportunity to actively participate in managing the direction of the program. After graduation, graduates lose contact with the college, so we recommend setting up an alumni club that could contribute to the development of the college and field of study. Employer participation should not be limited to formal surveys, more active methods, as roundtable discussions, etc. should be organized, thus improving the field of study and the relevance of programs to the needs of the labour market. Make quality assurance system publicly available for the stakeholders.

II. "Human Resource Management" ASSESSMENT

II. "Human Resource Management" ASSESSMENT

1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

The name of the study programme "Human Resource Management" goes in line with the legislative requirements for the first-level professional higher education degree. The aim of the programme corresponds to the uniqueness of the College and emphasise the opportunity for the persons with disabilities to acquire the knowledge, skills, and competencies required for their integration into the labour market and to become a personnel specialist. The programme is designed to provide the student with disabilities with the competencies necessary for the personnel specialist in Latvia (SER p. 74; Meeting with the SIVA management, the academic staff). Programme objectives and inherent learning outcomes are defined in accordance with the occupational standard, however, they do not reflect a new principle where "less emphasis is placed on comprehensive knowledge, skills, and competences." (SER p.78), as the programme composition remains with "a greater focus on the acquisition of comprehensive study courses " (SER p.20) and sectorial training is provided in a minimal amount, i.e. 37 CP (while minimum requirement is not less than 36 credit points) (SER, annexes). Additionally, neither programme objectives nor inherent learning outcomes rely on or support the unique vision of this HE and student selection system applied in this HE. Additionally, the learning outcomes are defined in a vague way, their structure is unclear as practical and research competencies are repeated several times, some outcomes are overlapping, for example, learning outcome "Able to organise staff training and development" and "Participates in personnel management development processes in the organisation" describe mainly the same outcome (SER p.76). Accordingly, the objectives of the programme should be clarified by reflecting the uniqueness of this study programme and the new standard and the programme outcomes needs to be refined.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The name of the study programme, the aim and admission requirements are interrelated; the programme objectives and learning outcomes do not reflect a new professional standard.

The main strength of the programme is the direct link with the special needs of the students. The title of the programme and its aim is well-tuned and support the vision of SIVA.

The programme objectives and inherent learning outcomes are defined in accordance with the legislative requirements, however, they do not reflect a new standard and remain mainly focused on comprehensive study courses. Moreover, programme objectives and inherent learning outcomes do not reflect the uniqueness of the program, which is stated in the purpose of the program. The learning outcomes are defined in a vague way, their structure is unclear as practical and research competencies are repeated several times, some learning outcomes are overlapping.

2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

The descriptions of the study courses represent the learning outcomes and the content of the study courses in an appropriate way (SER p.81). The content of each study course complies with the aims of the study programme (Anexsess). Still, it should be noted that neither the descriptions of study courses indicates other than evaluation methods used, therefore, there is a lack of clarity as to how the student-centered proach is implemented in this study program. Individualized approaches were mentioned during the meetings with the teaching staff and students, but neither the teaching staff nor the students could name new and innovative study methods in this programme.

It should also be noted that the study literature indicated in the subject descriptions is not updated as well as study courses lack contemporary topics as 'talent management', 'virtual team management", etc. In summary, there is no evidence that study implementation methods are novel

and students are provided with up-to-date knowledge in the field.

Student-centred learning teaching and assessment are indicated as a key approach in implementing this study programme (SER p.41, p.89.) and is perceived as a 9 point (values) approach. The meetings with all groups during side visit confirm that all stakeholders have a common understanding of these principles and that the principles are put into practice.

There are mechanisms in place to ensure feedback from students, employers, and graduates (SER p.96) the results of the survey are used to improve the quality of the studies. Students and alumni confirmed that a feedback questionnaire is provided with each year which enables them to provide feedback and comment on their learning experience. They emphasize the importance of their suggestions for the improvement of the study process (Meeting with students, Meeting with graduates). It should be noted that only statistical survey data are presented in the self-analysis report, although the analysis of qualitative data is more important given the small number of students and graduates.

Students' incoming and outgoing mobility is utilized very seldom (meetings with graduates and students) because of the objective reasons (students' disability).

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The descriptions of the study courses modules, the traineeship, and the final thesis is appropriate; the content is relevant and in compliance with the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme.

The study implementation methods lack novelty and therefore only minimally contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme. Student-centred learning and teaching principles are taken into account.

The outcomes of the surveys conducted among the students, employers, and graduates are used to improve the quality of studies, however, only quantitative data are used for this, which is not logical given the small number of students.

Because of objective reasons (student's disabilities) the students can avail themselves of the incoming and outgoing mobility opportunities very seldom; in case of mobility, the learning outcomes achieved during such mobility are recognised.

Strengths:

Student-centred learning, teaching, and assessment is a key approach in implementing this study programme and all stakeholders have a common understanding of this approach.

There are mechanisms in place to ensure appropriate feedback from students, employers, and graduates, and the results of the survey are used to improve the quality of the studies.

Weakness:

The study implementation methods lack novelty, only individual support to the students is applied in the programme.

3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

The College has a good study infrastructure for delivering the programme (e.g. library, auditoriums, computer labs, facilities for rehabilitation etc.), funds for the study provision is stable (SER p.45). The financial provision complies with the specific features and the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and its students as every student in the given study programme is individually supported (Meeting with students, Meeting with graduates). It indicates that the purchase of the methodological and informative provision is systematic at the College. The study

infrastructure and financial provision create the prerequisites for the achievement of the learning outcomes and indicate the possibility to ensure a high-quality study process.

Material and technical provision is sufficient as there are enough materials and instruments for students to work with, tests and exams are available to be taken and passed virtually. Courses and lectures that are given remotely are gaining more sustainable, are enjoyed by students and academic staff. Professors are considering to adopt remote teaching more (Meeting with academic staff). However informative provision has some room for improvements. Informative provision mainly lies in using Moodle as a source “of knowledge depending on the individual skills of each student” (SER p.45). Moodle is used actively and is the main source of information in studies. During the visit, there was an opportunity to get acquainted with the material provided on the Moodle platform; these are teacher slides and links to open sources of information, but there were no e-books and other in-depth sources of knowledge (Visiting study facilities). There is a risk that using only slides and links to open sources will not ensure a high-quality study process. The literature indicated in the description of the study subjects is also not up-to-dated (Annexes). The informative provision in the physical library is sufficient but have a room for improvements like an update of the available books as most of them are available in the more recent versions.

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The study programme meets both criteria, however, has some room for improvements. The College has a good study infrastructure for delivering the programme. The financial provision complies with the specific features and the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and its students as every student in the given study programme is individually supported.

Material and technical provision is sufficient as there are enough materials and instruments for students to work with, students and teachers enjoy using e-platform (mainly Moodle).

Informative provision is acceptable, however, has some room for improvements. There is a risk that containing teachers' slides and links to open sources in the Moodle, will not give students adequate access to the knowledge needed to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The literature indicated in the description of the study subjects is also not up-to-dated. The informative provision in the physical library is sufficient but have a room for improvements like an update of the available books as most of them are available in the more recent versions.

4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

According to the SER, there is only a small annual change of the teaching staff. The students' survey results don't show important changes in the satisfactions with studies; therefore, it can be assumed that the change in the composition of the teaching staff has no negative effects. Overall, interviews with students and graduates showed a high level of satisfaction of the study process and quality.

Academic staff is dominated by teachers with professional experience, several teachers are delivering most of the program. It should be noted that some teachers teach up to five study subjects (e.g. Ilze Boitmane), which does not guarantee deep specialization of teachers in the subject being taught. In total, 15 lecturers are involved in the study programme - 4 with a PhD degree, 11 with a Master's degree (two are working on a doctoral thesis). Six lecturers (or 40%) are elected academic staff at SIVA (data from State Education Information System), others are guest lecturers from other HEI or industry. There is no presumption that the situation will change in the nearest future as only two lecturers are studying at the PhD level at the moment. In general, the qualification of the teaching staff members meets the minimum requirements for the implementation of the study programme, however, improvements are needed in this area..

The teaching staff of the study programme produced 20 scientific articles, books and methodological

materials in the last six years of which only five were produced by elected academic staff of SIVA (four by the same author, not all publications are attributed to SIVA). There is no support for scientific activities for lecturers of the study programme (Meeting with the SIVA management, Meeting with the director of SP) nor research competence developed in teaching staff (Meeting with academic staff). The College is organizing annual scientific conference, but it had only local speakers in 2019, also it was organized without conference proceedings; only a few presentations were related with the content of this study programme. The Agency is a member of the European Rehabilitation Platform (EPR), which gives an opportunity for the teachers to be involved in international conferences, seminars, webinars in order activities (SER p.53), however, there was no evidence of the use of this platform to promote international cooperation. Thus, it can be argued that scientific research is not promoted nor their outcomes are integrated into the study process, academic staff is not actively involved in scientific research in the fields related to the content of this study programme; international collaboration is very limited.

The teaching staff is collaborating and this collaboration is contributing to the improvement of the study courses. Collaboration is based more on didactic discussions than on scientific (research) collaboration (SER, Meeting with academic staff).

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

In general, the quality of the teaching staff of the study programme is average: more guest lecturers than elected academic staff, low scientific activities and results.

Strengths:

The qualification of the teaching staff members meets the minimum requirements for the implementation of the study programme

There is a simple cooperation mechanism between the teaching staff.

Weaknesses:

Academic staff is dominated by teachers with professional experience, there are few teachers with an academic degree, therefore research-based education is not guaranteed in this programme.

The scientific research is not promoted nor their outcomes are integrated into the study process, academic staff is not actively involved in scientific research in the fields related to the content of this study programme.

The international collaboration is very limited.

5. Assessment of the Compliance of the Study Programme "Human Resource Management"

Requirements

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Complies with the regulations No.202 of the Cabinet of Ministers, "The process of issuing state-recognised higher education documents".

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Given the unique nature of the service (delegated to the SIVA, provided with in the State budget) to provide vocational rehabilitation services that provide first-level vocational higher education for persons with disabilities and predictable disabilities including rehabilitation, it could be concluded that the College will provide the students with the options to continue the acquisition of education in another study programme which includes the same support to the students. Taken into consideration that SIVA provides not only higher education, but also other services to persons with disabilities and predictable disabilities, we can conclude that their activities complies with the regulations.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Complies with the example of study agreement and with the regulations No.70 of the Cabinet of Ministers, " Terms and conditions to be included in the study agreement" and SIVA letter to Academic information center (attached in e-platform (study programme attachments) No. 1-8/49 (10.02.2020).

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Notice #1-71/52 issued by the Ministry of Welfare confirms that the national language skills of SIVA-compliant programme faculty match the regulations on extent and assessment process of national language skills required for performing professional and official duties.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Justification:

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Justification: N/A

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Justification: N/A

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Complies with the regulations No.70 of the Cabinet of Ministers, " Terms and conditions to be included in the study agreement".

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in Latvian language in which the study programme is implemented. Study literature should be updated (Human resource management, Mathematics for economists, Practical organization of personnel management, Personality psychology, Basics of project management, Basics of sociology, Marketing).

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: The study programme are updated to the new profession standard of "Personnel specialist" approved at the PINTSA meeting of 16 October 2019, protocol No.7, and published on the VISC website in January 2020.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Justification: N/A

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: Complies with the regulations No.141 of the Cabinet of Ministers, " First-level Professional Higher Education Standard"

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Justification: N/A

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Justification: Not all member of the academic staff has either publications published in reviewed editions within the last six years. Only five were produced by elected academic staff of SIVA (four by the same author). The number of teaching staff who have publication and teaching staff with practical work experience is unbalanced in the programme.

15 P5 - Overall rating

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Justification: Not all requirements are fully met.

Requirements (R6-R8)

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Justification: The study programme fully meets these criteria for the resources and provision: the College has identified and crated infrastructure resources and the material and technical provision for students and the teaching staff; the College has identified the support necessary for the students and established a well-functioning support system, based on the needs of the students. The study programme only partly meets these criteria: a developed system to determine the financial resources required for the implementation of the study direction (the system does not include the determination for finances for the scientific research); procedures for attracting highly skilled teaching staff (the balanced academic and research workload is not in the place).

The study programme is provided with modern digital resources, but the physical library has a room for improvements as most of the collection needs an update.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Justification: All lecturers have scientific or academic degrees in subjects of their study courses or professional experience, according to the requirements set forth in the regulatory enactments.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Justification: N/A

Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The programme meets the most of formal requirements., it has these strengths:

1. Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment is a key approach in implementing this study programme and all stakeholders have a common understanding of this approach.
2. The College has a good study infrastructure for delivering the programme. The financial provision complies with the specific features and the conditions for the implementation of the study program and its students as every student in the given study program is individually supported.
3. Material and technical provision is sufficient as there are enough materials and instruments for students to work with, students and teachers enjoy using e-platform (mainly Moodle).

Areas of improvement:

1. The programme objectives and inherent learning outcomes do not reflect a new standard and remain mainly focused on comprehensive study courses. Moreover, programme objectives and inherent learning outcomes do not reflect the uniqueness of the program, which is stated in the purpose of the program.
2. The study implementation methods lack novelty, only individual support to the students is applied in the program.
3. Academic staff is dominated by teachers with professional experience, there are few teachers with an academic degree, therefore research-based education is not guaranteed in this programme.
4. The scientific research is not promoted nor their outcomes are integrated into the study process, academic staff is not actively involved in scientific research in the fields related to the content of this study programme; international collaboration is very limited.

5. There is a risk that using only Moodle, which contains teachers' slides and links to open sources, will not give students adequate access to the knowledge needed to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The literature indicated in the description of the study subjects is also not up-to-dated.

Evaluation of the study programme "Human Resource Management"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Average

6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Human Resource Management"

Short-term recommendations

Adjust programme objectives and inherent learning outcomes to the requirements of the new professional standard.

Reflect the uniqueness of the program in the programme objectives and inherent learning outcomes.

Improve the quality of Moodle resources or guarantee that Moodle is not the only source of information for students in their self-study.

Long-term recommendations

Apply innovative teaching methods in the implementation of the program (in lectures and in the whole study process). The implementation of this proposal will require appropriate training of teaching staff.

Balance the numbers of teaching staff with academic degree and teaching staff with professional experience.

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

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

Assessment of the Requirements for the Study Field

Requirements	Requirement Evaluation		Comment
<p>Pursuant to Section 5, Paragraph 21 of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education, the higher education institution/ college shall ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study direction whilst implementing their internal quality assurance systems:</p>	Fully compliant		<p>Overall, the internal quality assurance system is established and works efficiently with some minor areas of improvement.</p>
<p>R2 - The cooperation with different organisations from Latvia and abroad implemented within the study direction ensures the achievement of the aims of the study direction.</p>		Partially compliant	<p>'The studies include cooperation with employers, employer organisations, non-governmental organisations. Cooperation with other colleges, municipality, scientific institutions on International level should be developed. (List of Collaboration Agreements) At least cooperation with Latvian Association for People Management or another professional organisation in this field, or Employers from human resource filed like WorkingDay, I-Work etc.'</p>
<p>R3 - Compliance of scientific research and artistic creation with the development level thereof (if applicable).</p>		Partially compliant	<p>This is a vocational institution where academic research is not the main activity. However, research-based education would require more inputs in research. The connection of the scientific research of an area of studies is nor ensured, nor efficient.</p> <p>The Agency has also many years of expertise on how to overcome learning obstacles for people with disabilities. Research in these areas would not only help the Agency to develop its activities but could potentially contribute to the local and international knowledge base. The Agency should support its study members in their efforts to get PhD's e.g. through study leaves or reduced teaching obligations during completion of PhD degree.</p>

Requirements	Requirement Evaluation		Comment
<p>R4 - Elimination of the shortcomings and deficiencies identified during the previous assessment of the study direction, if it has been conducted, or the implementation of the provided recommendations.</p>		<p>Partially compliant</p>	<p>The recommendation related to developing scientific activity of the academic staff within the study direction and paying more attention to scientific publicity – participation in conferences (by the academic staff and students) and ensuring access to and opportunities for international publicity in peer-reviewed magazines is not implemented.</p> <p>The recommendation encouraged the Collage to seek for opportunities and partners for the graduates of the College to be able to continue studies in a bachelor study programme at other higher education institutions, starting from the third study year is only partially implemented.</p> <p>The recommendation asked the Collage to involve the academic and administrative staff more actively in the partnership of other Latvian and foreign higher education institutions thereby improving the exchange of experience and strengthening the cooperation was only partially implemented.</p> <p>The recommendation to develop plans for the mobility of students and the academic staff, especially for international mobility, thus allowing the academic staff to develop foreign language skills to promote the internationalisation processes has not been implemented.</p> <p>Out of the eight recommendations three recommendations have been fully implemented (programs aims, program contents, improving library resources).</p> <p>Two recommendations have been partially implemented (seeking partners, improving international exchange). Three recommendations have not been implemented (promotion of scientific research, international mobility, merging programs [as explained above at the time of the previous evaluation there were three programmes in the study direction). There were valid grounds not to implement one of them (merging programmes).</p>

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

No.	Study programme	R5	R6	R7	R8	Evaluation of the study programme (excellent, good, average, poor)
1	Human Resource Management (41345)	Partially compliant	Partially compliant	Fully compliant	Not relevant	Average

The Dissenting Opinions of the Experts

There were no cases of experts' disagreement during the evaluation of the study direction "Management, administration and real estate management" and study programme "Human resource management"