

# Expert group joint opinion

Evaluation Procedure: Assessment of Study Field

Higher Education Institution: Jēkabpils Agribusiness College

Study field: Economics

Experts:

1. Alari Purju (Chair of the Experts Group)
2. Armand Faganel (Secretary of the Experts Group)
3. Anna Medne
4. Raimonda Liepiņa
5. Dainis Locāns (Employers' Confederation of Latvia)
6. Mikus Dubickis (Student Union of Latvia)

## Summary Assessment of the Study Field

### Summary Assessment of the Study Field

The objectives of the "Economics" study direction: to provide lifelong access to first-level vocational training in higher education, by acquiring professions in the labor market, with the 4th level of professional qualifications corresponding to LKI/EQF level 5. This is in line with the College Mission as set out in the Strategy: to provide quality vocational higher and initial vocational education in line with the demand of the national economy. The study direction's aims are clearly defined and attainable, they also comply with the college's strategic purpose and objectives.

Management of the study direction and both programs is being carried out at three levels: Colleges - College Board, parts of studies - methodical board of the section of studies, and departments - the department head. Direction's management is clearly development-oriented, programs are regularly updated and follow the changes in the national standards.

A quality management system was introduced, process management based on quality management principles, and is being maintained. Its processes help to achieve the aims and planned learning outcomes of the study direction and its study programs.

The descriptions of the study courses correspond to the level of difficulty of the study programme, the internship duration is appropriate, and most of the final theses are of satisfactory quality. The programmes are provided with specialized computer programs and various electronic publications are available in the library. Modernized computer classes with licensed professional programs are used to acquire the programme.

The cooperation with organisations from Latvia is on a good level. Cooperation with organisations from abroad should be improved. One big obstacle is weak foreign (English) language skills of teaching staff and students. That is creating problems in widening contacts with foreign HEIs and business organisations.

The two programmes of the study direction are with different background. "The Accounting and Finance" programme has a long-years' experience in conducting the study programme and good reputation of the programme and graduates in the external environment. "The Marketing and Innovation" programme has been developed quite recently and there are visible weaknesses. At the same time, the programme could make the whole study direction more attractive. If the College is seriously interested in viability of the programme, the additional input is necessary. The graduates of the both programmes of the economics study direction have been employed on the labor market. Especially good feedback came from the employers on professional skills of graduates of the accounting and finance study programme. At the same time, the number of students have decreased in the study direction and especially in the "Marketing and innovation" study programme. That makes necessary to increase attractiveness of the study programmes in the region and in Latvia. The cooperation with local companies in the field has a very critical role in increasing visibility of the study direction and has not been sufficient. The decrease of number of students makes necessary critical evaluation of development plan of the College with the larger involvement of employers.

### 1. Management of the Study Field

#### Analysis

The Jekabpils Agrobusiness College's main activities are based on the college's "Development and Investment Strategy 2016 - 2020", developed on the basis of trends in economic sectors, national and European frameworks, which set out the basic principles, objectives, and action lines for education development policy, including the degree of higher education. The core objective is to

provide "lifelong access to vocational training at the level of higher education at the level of the first level, by acquiring professions relevant to the fourth level of professional qualifications required in the labor market (LKI/EQF level 5).

The objectives of the "Economics" study direction: to provide lifelong access to first-level vocational training in higher education, by acquiring professions in the labor market, with the 4th level of professional qualifications corresponding to LKI/EQF level 5. This is in line with the College Mission as set out in the strategy: to provide quality vocational higher and initial vocational education in line with the demand of the national economy. The study direction's aims are clearly defined and attainable, they also comply with the college's strategic purpose and objectives.

Management of the study direction and both programs is being carried out at three levels: College level - College Board, parts of studies - methodical board of the section of studies, and departments - the department head. A new College director and two deputy directors have been appointed in the last three years. Direction's management is clearly development-oriented, programs are regularly updated and follow the changes in the national standards. The support provided by the administrative and technical staff contributes to meeting needs with regard to the study programmes of the study direction. The meeting with study programme directors, however, evidenced that their role was not very clear, there were not very clearly defined responsibilities, discussion of problems was often informal, there were not clear procedures to deal with different issues.

The College established procedures and approved internal regulatory enactments governing admissions procedures and the recognition of competences acquired outside formal education or acquired in professional experience and the results of studies in previous education. The internal regulatory act "Admission Regulations for the academic year of Jekabpils Agrobusiness College", is subject to modifications if the external regulatory enactments or internal situation change.

The College developed Rules for Control and Prevention of Plagiarism at Jekabpils Agrobusiness College, based on the Copyright Law, the Scientist Code of Ethics, the concept of Academic honesty; applying to students, academic staff, and guest lecturers and to the works of studies developed. Students and lecturers confirmed the acknowledgment of these rules.

On the college website are published relevant information regarding the interesting study programs, which also comply with the information from curriculum and syllabuses, offering needed data in the Latvian language for the candidates and the students.

At the same time, the analysis of available resources and feedback from employers demonstrated that the management has not been so successful in dealing with long-run problems. That is reflected in decrease of the number of students in the both programmes. Critically small is the number of students in the programme of "Marketing and Innovation". The College's management do not have a very good plan for dealing with the issue. The wider involvement of local business leaders and the representatives of local government in making the long-run and strategic decisions could be useful for the future development of the College.

In answer to recommendation of the last assessment that the College should introduce long distance study programme, the Self-Assessment report consists a statement that the College does not have the plan to introduce such kind a programme. The spread of COVID19 virus and lock-down of institutions made all distance learning tools and technical equipment very critical for sustainability of the study process. Fortunately, the College has technical equipment to support the distance learning activities.

## **Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses**

The aims of study direction "Economics" and both programmes are defined and achievable, comply with the College's strategy. The structure of the management of the study direction and the relevant study programmes is appropriate, decision-taking is efficient. There is a need to work more

on long-run strategic development problems due to shortage of resources. The management of the College has done regularly necessary improvements in the programmes. The study outcomes are appropriate to professional standards. The support provided by the administrative and technical staff contributes to the needs of the relevant study programmes of the study direction. The College has established a system and implemented procedures for the admission of students and these procedures are logical and efficient. The College has set academic integrity principles and mechanisms, and it uses appropriate plagiarism detection tools which are effective. All the necessary information about the study direction and programmes is published on the website.

**Strength:**

- The management system is appropriate for the realization and improvement of the study direction and related to its study programs and for solving the current problems of the study process.
- Economics study direction is the long-running experience and reputation of the Accounting and finance program in the environment; as are the professional knowledge, experience, and activities of the academic staff.

**Weaknesses:**

- The lack of funding for academic, organizational, and research activities of academic staff, and weak options for the appropriate remuneration of teaching staff in order to attract new prospective employees.
- The management system has not been so successful in dealing with the long-run problems. The wider involvement of local business leaders and the representatives of local government in making the long-run and strategic decisions could be useful for the future development of the College.

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

### **Analysis**

The College established the quality policy, which is documented and approved by directive Nr. 1-8/22 on August 30, 2019. The policy is publicly available on the College website (<https://jekabpils.jak.lv/lv/dokumenti/kvalitates-vadibas-sistema>). The objectives of the quality management system are to ensure that strategic objectives are met, to maintain the quality management system by providing a continuous development cycle (Deming circle - PDCA), to ensure continuous improvement of the level of satisfaction of all stakeholders, and to maintain the quality assurance at all levels with personal responsibility.

A quality management system processes help to achieve the aims and planned learning outcomes of the study direction and its study programmes. The quality loop is assured, interviews and documents demonstrate that all the evaluations result in feedback (meetings, conferences,...), which is used to improve the relevant processes, phases, or sub-processes. The College established the "Procedures for the Development, Approval, and Update of the Study Programme", which are publicly available on the website. Procedures for development and review of study programmes are present and in general understood by students. Employers were informed about development and review of study programmes by their representatives on the College board. The College organized also meetings with employers where the different educational issues were discussed. Meetings with employers and graduates demonstrated that information distributed to them has not been systematic. At the same time, representatives of employers participated in working groups dealing with improvements of the study programmes and also as members of the College's Board. Statistics are kept on all important information regarding studies and student performance. Feedback to students is based on surveys analysis, comments from the proposals box in the hallway, regarding the changes in programmes. A targeted update of the programmes is set every three years, the necessary minor changes are introduced annually. The working group dealing with changes in

curricula and programmes consists of teachers, students, and employers, they prepare the wording of the changes and submit them to the Deputy Director in Economics direction. Substantial changes are considered in the meetings of the departments, the decision is considered in the methodical board with the participation of the Director. Changes to the Programme shall be approved by the College Board, and results are presented on the College's website.

Internal quality management of the College is based on "Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area" (ESG). In Latvia, all level 1 study programs are created on the basis of the standards of the respective professions, so the graduates of College's study programmes are provided with opportunities to acquire professional skills.

The college is conducting an annual graduate survey, as well as creating a graduate database to track graduates' further working and study careers, and involving graduates in improving the study process. The graduate questionnaire clarifies the views of graduates on the content of the study programme and the study process, their development capabilities, acquired knowledge, skills, the period of practice, future/professional intentions.

Regular meetings with employers are organized in college: College Councils and Convent meetings, defense of qualifications and qualifications, college conferences, study courses in the form of lectures, outgoing activities, etc. for college, the opinion of skills managers in companies (professional in the working environment), who are heard in conversations with practice managers at College (academic staff) or received through questionnaires on student practices, is essential. According to the internal regulatory act "Procedures for the Development, Approval, and Update of the Study Programme", a working group is formed every three years, consisting of teachers, students, and employers representatives to update the programmes.

The feedback is motivating to continue the study process at Jekabpils Agrobusiness College, to take on more students, and to prepare more and more specialists for the industry (the demand for places of practice from the industry exceeds the supply from College).

## **Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses**

The necessary quality management principles have been implemented in the College. The College did necessary evaluation of studies and feedback was provided first of all to students. Employers and graduates have not been very well informed about the results of the feedback and quality management problems in general. At the same time, the representatives of employers participated in decision making on improvements in the study programmes. The College organized also meetings with employers where studies related issues were discussed. Necessary information (f.e. statistics) is presented about study process and students performance. The programmes are provided with opportunities to acquire professional skills.

From interviews with different groups it is clear that students are not really involved in self-evaluation procedures of the study direction.

SER is very formal, explaining procedures and statistics, but there is no real contemplation present about the study programmes' implementation.

The update of study programmes on a three years basis is not good enough, as the changes today are very fast.

### **Strengths:**

- Quality management of the study process: regular monitoring, analysis, optimization.
- Explaining the results of studies to students, evaluating the results of understanding studies in the study process.

### **Weaknesses:**

- A section on the College English language website related to the Quality is missing.

- The student representatives participation in the work of the self-evaluation was limited.
- A kind of reflection is expected in the self-evaluation report regarding the implementation of the study programmes in relation to the success and efficiency of studies.
- Study programmes should be entirely revised every year, not only checking for minor changes.

### 3. Resources and Provision of the Study Field

#### Analysis

The College has developed a system to determine the financial resources required for the implementation of the study direction "Economics". Calculations certify that the direct costs (academic and general staff remuneration) of the first-level professional higher education study programme "Accounting and Finance" and the first-level professional higher education study programme "Marketing and Innovation" are 1095.00 EUR or 75% of total costs for one student per year, indirect costs (expenses for operation of the College, including the library, real estate tax, lease, rent, building maintenance, telephone number and services, utilities, current repairs, special programs, etc.) per 1 student 365.00 EUR or 25% of total costs per year. 78% of the financing required for the implementation of the study direction "Economics" consists of the state budget financing, the rest of the financing consists of own revenues - tuition fees for students of the study direction. The number of students in the study direction decreased during the reported period (figures are presented in Appendixes 38 and 39 of the "Self-Assessment Report" of the College). Especially deep decline has been in the study programme "Marketing and innovation", where the number of students intake was 31 (10 of them were part-time and financed their studies paying study fee) in the study year 2014/2015 and only 11 (2 of them being part-time and paying the study fee) were enrolled in the study year 2019/2020). The total number of students in the study programme "Marketing and innovation" decreased respectively from 42 to 30. The intake of students into the "Accounting and Finance" programme was more stable, in the the study year 2014/2015, enrollment was 42 (12 of them were part-time and financed their studies paying study fee), and 33 (16 of them being part-time and paying the study fee) were enrolled in the study year 2019/2020). Total number of students in the study programme "Accounting and Finance" was 92 (39 of them part-time fee paying students) in study year 2014/2015 and 78 (39 of them part-time fee paying students) in study year 2019/2020. The decrease of number of students has a negative influence also on finances of the College.

The College has a system for financing scientific research. Research activities at the College are governed by the internal regulatory enactment "Procedures for Support of Research Activities" 27.08.2019. No. 1-8/16, which lays down the procedures for determining the directions, forms and financing of research activities. College lecturers are given the opportunity to participate in research presentations and publications, both at college and outside conferences (national and international). The College has most of necessary infrastructure resources and the material and technical provision required for the implementation of the study direction. The limited number of special software for marketing was evidenced by experts. The students and the teaching staff have access to the existing resources. There is a common system and procedures for the improvement and purchase of the material, technical, methodological, and informative provision in place.

The layout and area of the premises shall be in conformity with the specific nature of the educational programmes to be implemented by the educational institution and the number of students. The theoretical part and practice of the study process takes place in teaching audiences, computer classrooms and the IT laboratory. The study rooms comply with different technical safety requirements (fire safety, electrical safety and sanitation). The study opportunities for people with movement disorders are provided.

In the course of study direction programmes are available professional accounting and storage accounting programmes "Tilde Jumis", "Zalktis", "Krivulis", "SolCraft", "FinaWin".

Library supports and promote the study process as a whole, carry out the accumulation, systematization and preservation of printed publications, electronic publications and other documents, and shall ensure the public availability and use of information contained in it for students and lecturers. The library is accredited and uses an electronic catalog. College's students and teaching staff have access to books in all Latvian libraries that have registered in the joint database "Alise". The library offers an opportunity to access to students research conference articles and thesis, qualification reports. The planning for the purchase of teaching literature is targeted, reasonable and forms a single system in line with the requirements of the educational programmes, implemented in the educational establishment. The College has a plan to establish a Library Foundation in cooperation with the administration, the Head of the department, lecturers and the librarian.

The College has developed and implements and complies with the procedures for attracting skilled teaching staff. The selection and recruitment of the College teaching staff being carried out in accordance with the internal regulatory enactment on the Law of Academic and Administrative Positions of College (<https://jekabpils.jak.lv/uploads/files/ff/-stud-akademisko-un-administrativo-amatu.pdf>). The

College's Board is able to approve, for a period of 2 years, a guest lecturer who has appropriate education or practical experience in the industry (at least 5 years).

The academic and research workload of the teaching staff is balanced. Lecturers have been introduced to a working load calculation method that has been approved by the College Board. At the beginning of each year, the college presents calculation of individual working loads of the teaching staff working in the study directions.

The needs of the teaching staff for professional and didactic improvement are identified in a target-oriented manner. Appropriate improvement measures are undertaken, and the outcome and efficiency of the implemented measures are assessed. Special attention is ha been paid to "young" lecturers at the College. They fill out the "Support" form that helps to attract Mentor from experienced academic staff and choose the adaptation measures they need.

The College's priority tasks identified in the work plan for each academic year include 1-2 activities for the professional development of lecturers. The college provides mutual exchange of professional and academic experience between the teaching staff. For example, 2019./2020.g. one of the priorities of the work is "Linking the learning process to the sectors of the economy". The College supports teaching staff participation in the development activities of lecturers (seminars, conferences, courses, forums, etc.), by paying travel expenses, travel money, participation fees. The teaching staff members take part both in outgoing and incoming mobility, which brings added value to the implementation of the study process and the study quality. The College has obtained an Erasmus + Charter in the higher education sector. The total number of staff mobility were 12 during the reporting period, the study direction "Economics" had 4 outgoing lecturers and 2 incoming guest lecturers. The partner countries have been Spain, Malta, Slovakia, Finland, Germany and Croatia.

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 College has a major challenge of including students in the College life, providing insight into rights and responsibilities, developing social skills, and achieving regulatory compliance. Students are continuously informed of the possibilities related to studies and other areas, of the duties and rights of the self-government of students, of the funding available, of the regulatory framework and the possibilities for initiating changes there to, as well as the support provided by the College.

Financing for self-government of the students is provided in the amount of at least one-twentieth of the state financing for the study process and tuition fees each year and ranges from about three hundred and thirteen euros per year. Classrooms and computer classes are suitable for the study process. A well-equipped service hotel is available for students. The study building was renovated in the summer of 2020.

The selection and recruitment of the teaching staff of the College is open, based on competition and takes place in accordance with the internal regulatory enactments. At the same time, teachers in the study direction "Economics" also work in the professional secondary education program in the structural unit of the College in Barkava. The mobility of the teaching staff in the College has been limited due to the large workload of the lecturers and the insufficient knowledge of the English language. College's faculty have the opportunity to receive quality professional development activities both in and out of the College. The education and professional experience of the teaching staff involved in the study direction is appropriate for the qualitative implementation of the study process.

The College has a functioning student support system so that in a relatively short study period (4 semesters) students are included in the life of the College, for example, for the each student course a curator is provided from the teaching staff.

### **Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses**

The College has developed a system to determine the financial resources required for the implementation of the study direction. There is a system for financing the scientific research but these resources are quite limited. The College has necessary infrastructure resources. The students and the teaching staff have access to the necessary resources. There is a common system and procedures for the improvement and purchase of the material, technical, methodological resources. The College has developed and implements procedures for attracting skilled teaching staff. There is model of calculation working load of the teaching staff. The needs of the teaching staff for professional and didactic improvement are identified and appropriate improvement measures are undertaken, and the outcome of the implemented measures are assessed. The teaching staff members take part both in outgoing and incoming mobility, but the limited English language skills are a main obstacle for international mobility. The College has identified the support necessary for the students and established a well-functioning support system, based on the needs of the students.

Strengths:

- The College is a member of Microsoft Academy Advanced with the ability to use Microsoft software for teaching purposes.
- There is a generational shift in the College; prospective lecturers come in, who work in parallel in the industry and are able to interest students with personal example and experience.
- Special attention is being paid to "young" lecturers at the College.
- The College organizes professional development activities and financially supports teaching staff participation in various activities outside College (courses, seminars, conferences, forums, internships).
- Study opportunities for people with movement disorders are provided.
- The College has a good support system for students.

Weaknesses:

- High-skilled professionals don't get involved in academic work because of low level wage.
- Number of students workplaces in the library is limited.
- Teachers' English language skills are limited.
- The number of students in the study direction decreased during the reported period. Especially deep decline has been in the study programme "Marketing and innovation".

## **4. Scientific Research and Artistic Creation**

### **Analysis**

There are no defined separate fields of research in the study direction, however, fields of Applied



Research 2019/2020 mentioned in the report are related to Economics. At the same time, these fields of research are not aligned with the development aims of the College. The development aims of the College are about modernizing STEM education and strengthen vocational secondary education. The list of staff publications shows that only a few lecturers are somehow engaged in research work and just a few of the conference proceeding articles or abstracts listed could be related to the study programmes in the study direction.

The employers are invited to name the topics for students to study, however, there are no mechanisms to facilitate such cooperation and collaboration. In general, cooperation with the industry takes place at the very basic level (regulated by law) – participation in the qualification work defense commissions, internships, etc. Joint research and other forms of more advanced cooperation/collaboration do not happen.

Although there is a person whose responsibility applied research is, it can be observed that the research and its development is not among the priorities of the College. Scientific research is on a low level and accordingly, the outcomes thereof are not really integrated into the study process.

It can be observed that even the local stakeholders are not motivated to design and/or participate in applied research projects. There are almost no international cooperation in the field of research within the study direction and the relevant study programs. There are no future plans for the development of international cooperation in the field of scientific/applied research.

The College has not developed mechanisms for the involvement of the teaching staff in scientific/applied research (except that the development of the publication may be so taken into account in the total workload – up to 100 hours). Otherwise, in accordance with the Research support Procedure, funding may be planned “In case of the favorable financial situation”.

There is an increasing number of students involved in the Applied Research Conferences organized by the College because participation is made compulsory. At the same time, there is almost no other involvement of students in research work and no special mechanisms to promote the involvement of the students in research. There are almost no innovations implemented in the study direction, except that students participated in or did some applied research.

## **Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses**

The directions of scientific research in the study direction do not comply with the development aims of the College and they are relevant to the study direction. The list of staff publications shows that only a few lecturers are somehow engaged in research work and just a few of the conference proceeding articles or abstracts listed could be related to the study programs in the study direction. Cooperation with the industry takes place at the very basic level through participation in the qualification work defense commissions, internships. Joint research and other forms of more advanced cooperation did not take place. Students participate and present their papers at the Applied Research Conferences organized by the College.

### **Strength:**

- There is an increasing number of students involved in the Applied Research Conferences organized by the College.

### **Weaknesses:**

- Although there is a person whose responsibility the applied research is, research and its development is not a priority.
- Stakeholders are not motivated to design and/or participate in the applied research projects of the College.
- Scientific research is on a low level and accordingly, the outcomes thereof are not integrated into the study process.

- There is almost no international cooperation in the field of research within the study direction and the relevant study programmes.
- There are no plans for the development of international cooperation in the field of scientific and applied research.
- There are almost no innovations implemented in the study direction, except that students participated in or did some applied research.

## **5. Cooperation and Internationalisation**

### **Analysis**

The College cooperates with other HEIs, employers of the region, local municipalities to support the study direction. Active regular cooperation takes place during the implementation of the internship. The College provide all students with places for internship. An agreement with three parties involved in organizing internship is signed. The College have had such agreements with 150 companies (Self-Assessment Report, Annex 56) During the internship, every student is provided with an internship supervisor of the College and an internship manager of the company. The College's internal regulation "Procedures for the Qualification Practice" was updated in 2018. Based on the evaluation of qualification internship in the beginning of 2019/20 academic year, four qualification internship programmes were established in cooperation with representatives of companies where the internship takes place. The meeting with employers evidenced that they are satisfied with the knowledge and skills of the graduates of the College. That cooperation is important for organizing internships for students, which is especially important for professional study programmes. However, meetings with students and diploma papers demonstrate, that the connection between the practice and the diploma work is not always good. Quite often, Internship took place in a company the student was already working and the internship was related to the regular work of the student, though he/she had specified task for the practice. At the same time, diploma paper was on different subject that was reflected in the practice report. That was especially true in the programme of "Marketing and Innovation". Self-Assessment Report evidenced that the internship of students in other countries were related to fulfilling simple working places like waiters in restaurants and bars, which probably did not support development of their accounting or marketing skills.

The College has a unified succession to studies after mastering the professional secondary education programme in the Jelgava Agrobusiness College's unit in Barkava. After graduating that programme, the students have an opportunity to continue studies in the study direction "Economics" on the first level professional higher education studies.

College teachers (lecturers) are elected lecturers and guest lecturers. The election is governed by external laws, regulations and internal regulation. The Self-Assessment Report and experts meeting with management of the College provided evidence that the College cooperates with the HEI-s in Latvia and abroad. The College organizes together with Kaunas University of Applied Sciences the conference "Research and Analysis of Factors Affecting Economic Development" since 2013. In 2019, the students of the study direction of "Economics" of the College participated in the joint Latvia-Lithuania project "CREAzone 2.0". The coordinator of the project was Kaunas University of Technology and the aim of the project was to help young people to develop creative business modules.

Members of the teaching staff of the study field "Economics" were on staff mobility experience exchange visits abroad. The College have had Erasmus+ agreements with foreign HEI-s and 4 lecturers and 2 guest lecturers involved in study direction "Economics" visited foreign HEI-s. At the same time, the list of Erasmus+ partner agreements has been very limited, in the study year 2018/2019 there was just one Erasmus agreement with HEI of Malta. The international cooperation

has been limited, partly due to teaching staff's limited English language skills.

The College's Self-Assessment Report confirms, that the students of the study field have completed qualification internships abroad within the framework of the Erasmus mobility project. During the report period, 12 students of the study direction "Economics" completed an internship in foreign companies in Bulgaria, Greece and Spain. At the same time, most of them fulfilled working places like waiter not directly related to their professional skills in accounting or marketing.

During the reporting period, the College lecturers did not conduct lectures for foreign students and international lecturers did not conduct classes at the College. In the study direction "Economics", joint study programmes with partner universities are not planned until 2023. At the same time, the teaching staff of the College highly appreciated the opportunities for mobility and foresees international mobility as a very beneficial for personal development, improvement of English language skills and for contacts with lecturers of other HEI-s. The College introduced a position of project manager, preparing cooperation projects, organizing visits of the teaching staff and international internships of students. The College developed the "Erasmus Policy Statement (Overall Strategy)" for outgoing and incoming mobility. In the near future, no joint study programs are planned in the study direction.

## **Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses**

The College cooperates with the institutions from Latvia and within the study direction. The cooperation is concentrated in organizing internships for students. Some foreign teachers participated in the study process but that involvement was not systematic. Limited number of students did their internship abroad. A common system for the provision of traineeships and the organisation thereof has been developed within the study direction. There are no joint study programmes. The College developed the "Erasmus Policy Statement (Overall Strategy)" for outgoing and incoming mobility. It is necessary to organize online lectures for students in the field of study with educational institutions of foreign cooperation partners.

### **Strengths:**

- The College cooperates with local companies and municipalities. The College has a unified system for realization of internship of students.
- The College has Erasmus+ contracts for lecturers and students exchange.
- Succession of studies after obtaining secondary professional education is ensured.

### **Weaknesses:**

- The connection between the practice and the diploma work is not always good.
- The foreign internship is not well organized, the students have been very often just working abroad and fulfilling simple tasks (working as waiters in restaurants, providing board services in hotels etc.).

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

### **Analysis**

The recommendations received during the previous assessment procedure were received and analyzed. Some of these recommendations concerned tools, which could be applied in short-run time. There have been made recommendations regarding the development of infrastructure of the College. The infrastructure has substantially improved due to resources from the EU Structural Funds. The project "Increasing energy efficiency in the hotel building of the Jekabpils Agrobusiness College Service" improved substantially the hotel building. The project "Improving the teaching

environment of Jekabpils Agrobusiness College STEM studies" financed purchase of computer hardware and software for 4 computer classrooms, ITK laboratories and the lecturers' office. Additionally, in 2019 was launched the project "Implementation of energy efficiency improvement methods for training corpus building". These projects improved teaching and services conditions substantially. Also the library has received additional resources and its services improved a lot.

Assessment of "Accounting and finance" programme recommended encouragement of participation of students and lecturers' in scientific activities. The College introduced certain tools to stimulate these activities by introducing calculation of working hours dedicated to scientific work into the total calculation of working load of teachers. Stimulated is the participation of students and lecturers in scientific conferences.

The recommendation to introduce a module on entrepreneurship in curricula was made by experts. The College answers that in the course "Preparation and management of projects" student develop a variety of projects (examples are included). The answer of the College is quite formal. Taking into account that the development of entrepreneurship is a complex issue, the advice would be that the College should continue with the development of this module with educating teachers in respective training modules or/and through visits to advanced business schools in the EU countries.

The recommendation that more courses on audit should be included in the curricula is under consideration still.

The recommendation that the overall language skills of the academic staff should be improved has been met with additional English language courses for the academic staff. Assessment procedure evidenced that these skills are still limited and not sufficient for international cooperation.

The recommendation to increase the mobility of students and academic staff was met with the introduction of the position of project manager responsible for the development and coordination of international contacts. Mobility of 2 students and 4 members of teaching staff has been foreseen for every study year. Participation of teaching staff in scientific conferences has been supported financially.

Recommendation to increase students' involvement in the management and evaluation process was answered with additional regulations supporting the participation of students. That is of course not an easy task because the College has part-time students, who also work parallel to their studies.

Recommendations related to the study programme "Marketing and innovation" concerned exclusion of subject "Web technologies", what was done. The recommendation that the distance learning courses could be introduced is answered by the College with the comment that distance learning studies are not offered by the College and for that reason, the measure is not applicable. The COVID19 crises suggest that that view of the administration of the College is shortsighted. During our visit, the College demonstrated that the College is at least technically prepared for distance communication.

## **Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses**

The fulfillment of recommendations received during the previous assessment procedure could be divided into three groups: fully implemented, partly implemented and postponed recommendations. Some of partly implemented recommendations are those which need more time to be fully implemented (improvement of teaching staff's English language skills, recommendation to encourage participation of students and lecturers' in scientific activities). At the same time, some efforts have been taken to move on in recommended direction. A problematic issue is that fulfillment of some recommendations was postponed.

Fully implemented recommendations:

The recommendations regarding the development of infrastructure of the College.

The recommendation to increase mobility of students and academic staff.

Recommendations related to the study programme "Marketing and innovation" concerned exclusion of subject "Web technologies"

Partly implemented recommendations:

Recommendation to encourage participation of students and lecturers' in scientific activities.

The recommendation to introduce a module on entrepreneurship in curricula.

The recommendation that the overall language skills of the academic staff should be improved.

Postponed recommendations:

The recommendation that the distance learning courses could be introduced.

The recommendation that more courses on audit should be included into the curricula.

## 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:** The continuous improvement was evident in the College during the visit. The College implemented its quality assurance system.

- 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:** The quality policy is documented and approved by directive Nr. 1-8/22 on 30 August, 2019.

- 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:** The procedures are specified in the College by "Regulation on Management of the Study Programmes" and "Regulation on Management of Study Courses", which comply with the Cabinet Regulation No. 795 of 11 December, 2018 "Regulations on Licensing of the 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:** The criteria, conditions and procedures for the evaluation of students' results are specified by the College directives "Procedures for Studies and Tests", "Procedures for the Development and Defense of Course Works", "Procedures for Qualification Practice". These documents are available on College's website.

- 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 are specified in "The by-law of academic and administrative posts", approved by the College Board. The respective documents are presented in Appendixes 43, 46 and 50.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

**Justification:** The College collects and and analysis of the information on the study achievements of students, satisfaction of the students with the study programmes, working load of the academic staff (Appendix 50). Effectiveness of the process can be improved. The key performance indicators of the College are not applied.

- 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:** The College's quality management system includes feedback procedures and related to the system corrective action procedures to address the emerging problems. The quality assurance system is described in Appendix 14 "Quality management at Study division".

- 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 cooperation with organisations from Latvia is on a good level. Cooperation with organisations from abroad should be improved. One big obstacle is weak foreign (English) language skills of teaching staff and students. That is creating problems in widening contacts with foreign HEIs and business organisations. That is a problematic issue in widening internships in foreign companies. Cooperation agreements of the College are presented in Appendix 2.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

**Justification:** Some applied research takes place. The research topics were related first of all to the development of applied higher education in general, on development of teaching methods. There is practically no research in accounting or marketing.

- 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 recommendations regarding the development of infrastructure of the College - fully implemented

Recommendation to encourage participation of students and lecturers' in scientific activities - partly implemented.

The recommendation to introduce a module on entrepreneurship in curricula - partly implemented.

The recommendation that more courses on audit should be included into the curricula - implementation postponed.

The recommendation that the overall language skills of the academic staff should be improved - partly implemented.

The recommendation to increase mobility of students and academic staff - fully implemented.

Recommendations related to the study programme "Marketing and innovation" concerned exclusion of subject "Web technologies"- fully implemented.

The recommendation that the distance learning courses could be introduced - postponed.

## 8. Recommendations for the Study Field

### Short-term recommendations

|   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers must continue to improve their English language skills.</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Empower the student representatives with the importance of the work of the self-evaluation and its tasks.</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motivate students to participate in governing bodies of the college and to be proactive in the student bodies. Explain to them the importance of their involvement.</li> </ul>       |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A kind of reflection is expected in the self-evaluation report regarding the implementation of the study programmes in relation to the success and efficiency of studies.</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add a section on the College English language website related to the Quality.</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve connection between the tasks of internship and topics of diploma work.</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give more decision-making power to the study programme directors to increase his/her responsibilities.</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The foreign internships should be organized better. Provide students with possibility for internship related closely do their curricula and qualification work.</li> </ul>           |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is necessary to organize online lectures for students in the field of study with educational institutions of foreign cooperation partners.</li> </ul>                             |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give an opportunity to incoming foreign exchange students and to the College's students to visit lectures given in English.</li> </ul>   |

### Long-term recommendations

|  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The role of research should be strengthened, appropriate mechanisms for the involvement of academic staff, students, and other stakeholders as well as international cooperation/collaboration should be established. Most probably, it is possible only by sharing resources with other higher education institutions - merging should be considered. Plans for the development of research and international cooperation in the field of scientific and applied research as well as innovative solutions in the study field should be established.</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The wider involvement of local business leaders and the representatives of local government in making the long-run and strategic decisions could be useful for the future development of the HEI.</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International cooperation could be more active. Increase number of foreign exchange partners.</li> </ul>  |

## II. "Marketing and Innovations" ASSESSMENT

### II. "Marketing and Innovations" ASSESSMENT

#### 1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

##### Analysis

The name of the study programme (Marketing and innovation), the professional qualification to be acquired (Marketing and Trade Specialist), the aim (Prepare marketing and trading specialists for the regional economy.), objectives (1. Organize student admissions in a study program. 2. Prepare and maintain a technical base appropriate to the quality study process. 3. Provide adequate academic staff, professional development, and research activities. 4. Maintain and update the methodological provision of study programs and study courses. 5. Ensure a high-quality study process that complies

with the requirements of the regulatory enactments of the Republic of Latvia.

Exercise the control and quality management, self-control of the study programme, learning outcomes (1. Is aware of the most effective measures to market products. 2. Manage information technologies (including computer programs) according to the specific nature of the work. 3. Know the factors that influence consumer behavior in the market. 4. Are familiar with and understand marketing strategies for increasing turnover. 5. Be able to plan and organize their work and work independently. 6. Is able to organize market research and analyze the results of market research. 7. Be able to draw up a trading plan and organize its implementation. 8. Be able to ensure the trade activity of the organization, in compliance with the regulatory enactments of the Republic of Latvia, as well as with the requirements of the binding international documents of the European Union. 9. Can define and adhere to the principles of professional ethics. 10. Can work on a team, plan and organize your and subordinate work, communicate with management, colleagues, clients, and partners. 11. Is able to demonstrate the initiative and take responsibility. 12. Is able to find innovative solutions to solve everyday problems according to their competence.), and admission requirements (reflectors must have obtained secondary education (attestation (diploma) on secondary education, certificates for all statutory centralized examinations passed).) are partially interrelated. The name of the program is rather misleading because the innovation component is insignificant in the content of the program (taking into account the duration of the program and the requirements set by the professional standard, it could not be otherwise), the innovation component does not appear in the learning outcomes as well. Also, the statements (the aim and learning outcomes) are very general and could be applied to any other program in the field, they do not show how the program differs from other programmes.

### **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

The name of the study programme, the degree, the professional qualification or the degree and the professional qualification to be acquired, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and admission requirements are not very well interrelated. At the time, the aim and learning outcomes are too general. The content of the study programme (study courses) corresponds to the old professional standard, at the same time, for quality assurance, as soon as the new professional standard is approved and publicly available according to the professional framework, the College should make appropriate changes in the programme and show compliance with detailed mapping at the level of each defined learning outcome.

Strengths:

- The programme widens scope of studies at the College if it is realized with necessary resources and improved content of studies.

Weaknesses:

- The name of the programme does not fully correspond to its content and learning outcomes.
- The statements (the aim and learning outcomes) are very general and could be applied to any other programme in the field of business studies, they do not show how the programme differs from other programmes.

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

### **Analysis**

The descriptions of the study courses correspond to the level of difficulty of the study programme, the internship duration is appropriate, and most of the final theses are of satisfactory quality. These factors comply with the provisions from regulatory enactments. The content of programme courses complies with the aims of the study programme Marketing and innovations. The programme is



contemporary if compared with foreign programs, also due to regular interactions with graduates and employers, many invited guest lecturers etc. Learning outcomes' achievement is secured, but lecturers could improve the practice of including more of their own scientific and professional research in the content of studies. So, the programme's students and graduates would gain more competencies and be even more prepared for fulfilling the needs of the relevant industry, when at the internship or entering the labor market.

Other study implementation methods seem appropriate, students are particularly welcoming the interventions of industry practitioners as guest lecturers, they would also like more study visits. The evaluation methods are suitable and they contribute to the achievements of the programme's aims and learning outcomes.

Proofs have been presented that demonstrate the use of surveys' results for the improvement of the study programme. The students are aware of the study exchange opportunities, obstacles seem to be the low self-confidence in mastered foreign language skills and working duties for part-time students. Learning outcomes achieved during mobilities have been recognized.

When assessing the results of the qualification practice and the results of the surveys, an update of the internship programme is carried out. The content of the programme is examined at the meeting of the section profiling and operators shall be invited to provide qualifications. If significant changes are made, the programme is submitted to two experts in the sector to provide a review on the appropriateness of the qualification practice to the professional standard and the current market situation. Student feedback has contributed to the positive changes at College. Regular meetings with employers are organised in college: College Councils and Convent meetings, defense of qualifications and qualifications, college conferences, study courses in the form of lectures, outgoing activities, etc. for college, the opinion of skills managers in companies (professional in the working environment), who are heard in conversations with practice managers at College (academic staff) or received through questionnaires on student practices, is essential. The feedback is motivating to continue the study process at Jekabpils Agrobusiness College, to take on more students and to prepare more and more specialists for the industry (the demand for places of practice from the industry exceeds the supply from College).

The condition for selecting the topic of the final theses is that the topic should reflect the competences and skills defined in the old professional standard. At the same time, for quality assurance, as soon as the new professional standard will be approved and publicly available according to the professional framework, the College should make appropriate changes in the programme and show compliance with detailed mapping at the level of each defined learning outcome.

## **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

The students are aware of the study exchange opportunities, obstacles seem to be the low self-confidence in mastering foreign language skills and working duties for part-time students. The English language skills of most of the students are weak. A small number of students attending the program. The programme is been offered only in Latvian, other languages might be considered (English). Distance learning as a form of study could be a chance to increase the number of applicant students. The programme is in compliance with the competencies and skills defined in the old professional standard. At the same time, for quality assurance, as soon as the new professional standard will be approved and publicly available according to the professional framework, the College should make appropriate changes in the programme and show compliance with detailed mapping at the level of each defined learning outcome.

Strengths:

- Lecturers and guest lecturers acknowledge students with up-to-date themes.

- Guest lecturers invited to courses are seen as additional study quality.

#### Weaknesses:

- Small number of enrolled students.
- The study programme does not provide enough training in English language skills.

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

#### **Analysis**

The funding of the programme comes from state budget funding supporting full-time studies and tuition fees for part-time studies. The state grant of the study programme "Marketing and Innovation" provides 80% of the educational process, that is, 20 state-funded study places (full-time studies). The number of students in the study programme decreased. The number of students intake was 31 (10 of them were part-time and financed their studies paying study fee) in the study year 2014/2015 and only 11 (2 of them being part-time and paying the study fee) were enrolled in the study year 2019/2020). The total number of students in the study programme "Marketing and innovation" decreased respectively from 42 to 30. The decrease of number of students in the study programme has negative influence also on available resources.

For the needs of the study programme, professional periodicals and databases are subscribed and are in the library. Students in the programme are provided with professional marketing programmes and open access presentation sites during the study process, so that students improve their creativity and artistic approach to presentation processes. There are problems related to material and technical provision: lack of latest marketing software, digital marketing. Several qualification papers rather do not meet the criteria – they do not reflect the competences required by the profession standards. Cooperation with local companies was limited. The development of the programme needs a qualified programme director, who is not just organising the study process but who as also business contacts and who could actively manage all the issues related to the study programme, including applied research in the field of marketing and innovation.

#### **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

The funding of the programme comes from state budget funding supporting full-time studies and tuition fees for part-time studies. The study provision, informative provision (including libraries), material and technical provision, and financial provision comply with the specific features and the conditions for the implementation of the study programme. At the same time, there are features related to the programme, which make the possibility to ensure a high-quality study process in the future debatable. The number of students is small in decreasing in the programme. Programme management should be improved. The contacts with local business environment in the field of marketing and innovation are limited.

#### Strengths:

- Good provision of library resources for the programme "Marketing and Innovations".
- Students are satisfied with the service provided in the service hotel.
- Students in the programme are provided with study materials, which are also available in electronic form.
- The study type "lectures to take with you" is successfully used.

#### Weaknesses:

- There are a small number of students in the study programme, not all the study places financed from the state budget are fulfilled.

- The students of the programme wanted a faster flow of information about changes in the study process.
- Cooperation of the study programme “Marketing and Innovation” with local companies is not taking place.
- Study programme’s director position is not a permanent position, he or she is asked to do only specific things, not working regularly;
- Material and technical provision (lack of latest marketing software, digital marketing);
- Qualification papers rather do not meet the criteria – they do not reflect the competences required by the profession standards;
- The possibility to ensure a high-quality study process in the future is debatable.

#### **4. Teaching Staff**

##### **Analysis**

In the study programme “Marketing and Innovation”, the number of lecturers is 9 and there are 6 guest lecturers (Appendix No. 45). The qualification of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme, they all have a master degree or have been working at least six years in particular field. During the last two years, the number of teaching staff with master and doctoral degrees has increased. Two lecturers are doctoral students. Lecturers increased number of examples based on their own research work in the study process. That is one evidence that the College undertakes measures in a target-oriented manner to ensure the quality of the implementation of the study programme and the compliance of the study programme with the requirements set forth in the regulatory enactments.

Internal procedures and mechanisms for assuring the qualifications of the academic staff and the work quality are specified in "The By-law of Academic and Administrative Posts", approved by the College Board and presented in Appendix. The College’s Board has approved the “Lecturers Load Calculation Standards”, which specifies the types of work to be included in the lecturer's workload and the extent thereof. The College has developed a “Support Procedures for Research Activities”. At the same time, the research in the field of marketing and innovation has been very limited. The College’s support for scientific research has been not sufficient.

The mechanism for mutual collaboration between the teaching staff members is in place. To ensure the qualitative process execution within the order set in the College, the lecturers meet for informative meetings on Monday mornings, twice a month for the Department’s meetings.

The collaboration includes exchange of mutual experience in discussions about the link between study courses and teaching groups in order to understand the coverage of different topics in different subjects (e.g. lecturers of similar courses follow topics and succession in order to make adjustments to the planning of lessons as needed). At the meeting of the Study direction at the beginning of the academic year, the lecturers involved in the implementation of the study programme shall discuss the topics planned for each study course, and shall hear the recommendations of their colleagues. After the College Applied Studies Conference, the teachers exchanged views and recommended that their contributions to the Conference would be considered as an additional material, used in courses where that material would be useful..

##### **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

The College undertakes measures to support the implementation of the study programme. The qualification of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme complies formally with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme. There is a need to have more lecturers with practical experience in marketing to be involved in the

implementation of the programme. Research in the field of marketing and innovation is very limited. The College's material support for teaching performance in research is insufficient.

Strengths:

- The college pays attention to the training of guest lecturers in working with students, providing information and education related support, sharing experience.
- The College supports the lecturers participation in international conferences.

Weaknesses:

- Involvement of business people with widely recognized achievements in the field (especially in innovation) has been limited.
- Attracting prospective practitioners is difficult due to low remuneration.
- The College's material support for teachers' performance in research is insufficient.

## 5. Assessment of the Compliance of the Study Programme "Marketing and Innovations"

### 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:** Diploma is provided in "Description of the Study Programme "Marketing and Innovation"" -other mandatory attachments.

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:** Agreements about possibilities to continue the education is signed with Alberta College on 21.06.2018. Agreement is presented in Appendix no. 2.

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:** Document, confirming that the College guarantees to the students a compensation, is presented in "Description of the Study Programme "Marketing and Innovation"" -other mandatory attachments".

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:** Document is presented by the College, that the level of the official language proficiency for performing professional duties is provided. That document is presented in "Description of the Study Programme "Marketing and Innovation" -other mandatory attachments".

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** Fully compliant. The study programme or any part of it is not implemented in English.

- 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:** The sample of the study agreement is provided in "Description of the Study Programme "Marketing and Innovation"" -other mandatory attachments".

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** Study courses and study materials have been prepared In language in which the study programme is implemented (Latvian) and they comply with requirements (Appendix 8).

- 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:** Partially compliant

**Justification:** The name of the programme does not fully correspond to its content and learning outcomes. Some qualification papers rather do not meet the criteria – they do not reflect the competences required by the profession standards. The statements (the aim and learning outcomes) are very general and they do not show how the programme differs from other programmes. (Material is presented in Appendix 6). The content of the study programme partially comply to the old professional standard. At the same time, for quality assurance , as soon as the new professional standard will be approved and publicly available according to the professional framework, the College should make appropriate changes in the programme and show compliance with detailed mapping at the level of each defined learning outcome.

- 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:** Partially compliant

**Justification:** The content of the study programme (study courses) partially comply to the old professional standard. At the same time, for quality assurance , as soon as the new professional standard will be approved and publicly available according to the professional framework, the College should make appropriate changes in the programme and show compliance with detailed mapping at the level of each defined learning outcome.

- 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:** In the study programme “Marketing and Innovation”, the number of lecturers is 9 and there are 6 guest lecturers (Appendix No. 45). The qualification of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme formally complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme. One teacher as doctoral degree, all other teachers have a master degree or have been working at least six years in particular field (Appendix 42). Total number of publication of the teaching staff of the study direction during the period 2012-2019 has been 21. List of publications of teaching staff members is short and publications are not in particular field of marketing or innovation (Appendix 26). Though that is a professional study programme, studies should be supported by applied research in the field. Involvement of business people with widely recognized achievements in the field (especially in innovation) has been limited.

- 15 P5 - Overall rating

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

**Justification:** The name of the programme does not fully correspond to its content and learning outcomes. The statements (the aim and learning outcomes) are very general and they do not show how the programme differs from other programmes. Some qualification papers do not meet the criteria – they do not reflect the competences required by the profession standards; List of publications of staff members is short and there are no publications in the field of marketing or innovation.

## Requirements (R6-R8)

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

**Justification:** There is a small number of students in the study programme, not all the study places financed from the state budget are fulfilled (Information is provided in Appendixes 27, 28 and 29). Material and technical provision is not sufficient (lack of latest marketing software, digital marketing);

- 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:** Partially compliant

**Justification:** The College's material support for teaching performance in research is insufficient. Meeting with employers envisaged that cooperation of the study programme "Marketing and Innovation" with local companies is limited.

- 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 name of the study programme, the degree, the professional qualification or the degree and the professional qualification to be acquired, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and admission requirements are not very well interrelated. The descriptions of the study courses correspond to the level of difficulty of the study programme, the internship duration is appropriate, and most of the final theses are of satisfactory quality. Learning outcomes' achievement is secured, but lecturers could improve the practice of including more of their own scientific and professional research in the content of studies. The material and technical provision comply with the specific features and the conditions for the implementation of the study programme. At the same time, there are features related to the programme, which make the possibility to ensure a high-quality study process in the future debatable (limited research in marketing and innovation, weak interrelationships with local companies, limited English language skills of lecturers, what is an obstacle for international exchange of students and to participation in joint international programmes and research projects).

Strengths:

- The descriptions of the study courses correspond to the level of difficulty of the study programme, the internship duration is appropriate, and most of the final theses are of satisfactory quality.
- The content of programme courses complies with the aims of the study programme "Marketing and innovation".
- Lecturers and guest lecturers acknowledge students with up-to-date themes.
- Guest lecturers invited to courses are seen as additional study quality.

Weaknesses:

- The name of the programme does not correspond fully to its content and learning outcomes.
- The statements (the aim and learning outcomes) are very general, they do not show how the programme differs from other programmes.
- There is a small number of students in the study programme, not all the study places financed by the state budget are fulfilled.
- Material and technical provision is not sufficient (lack of latest marketing software, digital marketing).
- Tasks and responsibilities of the Programme Director are not clear enough.
- .English language skills of lecturers and students are limited.

### **Evaluation of the study programme "Marketing and Innovations"**

Evaluation of the study programme:

Average

### **6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Marketing and Innovations"**

#### **Short-term recommendations**

- Distance learning as a form of study could be used as a chance to increase the number of applicant students.
- The possibility to ensure a high-quality study process is debatable if the programme continues with the existing resources. At the same time, the programme could make the whole direction more attractive. If the College is seriously interested in viability of the programme, the additional input is necessary. The cooperation with local companies in the field is also a very critical component in development of the programme.
- To activate events for the College in popularization of the study program "Marketing and Innovations" and promotion of recognition. To improve the cooperation of the study program "Marketing and Innovation" with local companies.
- Improve the flow of information about changes in the study process and other issues related to the study programme.
- Increase cooperation of the study programme "Marketing and Innovation" with local companies.
- Make the Study programme's director position stronger, give her/him more decision making power and give concrete responsibilities not just about the current management problems, but also responsibilities related to development of the programme.
- Improve technical provision for the programme (add latest marketing software, digital marketing tools).
- Improve quality of qualification papers.
- As soon as the new professional standards are approved and publicly available according to the professional framework, the College should make appropriate changes in the programme and show compliance with detailed mapping at the level of each defined learning outcome for the study programme.

### Long-term recommendations

- Lecturers should improve the practice of including more of their own scientific and professional research in the content of studies.
- Other languages might be considered (English) in the case of the whole programme or at least for some subjects in the Latvian language programme. That would support students international mobility.
- Improve foreign language (English) skills of students by increasing volume of the subject "Business English". That is especially important in the field of "Marketing and innovation" because both aspects of studies and business activities are international.
- Increase available resources for the Study Programme. Acquire additional marketing software. Support research in the field of marketing and innovation.

## II. "Accounting and Finance" ASSESSMENT

### II. "Accounting and Finance" ASSESSMENT

#### 1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme



## Analysis

The name of the study programme (Accounting and finance), the professional qualification to be acquired (Accountant), the aim (Prepare competitive accountants for the labor market in accordance with the qualification level 4 professional standard, and the requirements of the first level vocational higher education which are able to carry out full accounting of financial operations, prepare financial statements in accordance with the applicable legislation of the Republic of Latvia, calculate and analyze the financial performance of the company, manage other accounting officers, and ensure that students are provided personal growth.), objectives (1. Organize student admissions in a study program. 2. Prepare and maintain a technical base appropriate to the quality study process. 3. Provide adequate academic staff, professional development, and research activities. 4. Maintain and update the methodological provision of study programs and study courses. 5. Ensure a high-quality study process that complies with the requirements of the regulatory enactments of the Republic of Latvia. 6. Exercise the control and quality management, self-control of the study program.), learning outcomes (1. General and specialized knowledge of the profession of the accounting officer at the level of vision, understanding, and use. 1. Capable of producing and processing accounting documents, collecting information in accounting records. 2. Shall be able to produce financial statements, tax returns, and statistical reports within the specified time limits. 3. An analytical approach shall be able to initiate the necessary changes in the organization of accounting. 4. Can explain practical issues in the accounting field, debate them by arguing their views. 5. Is able to find innovative solutions to day-to-day challenges. 6. Can work on a team, plan and organize your and subordinate work, communicate with management, colleagues, clients, and partners. 1. Respect for professional ethics. 2. Ability to show initiative and take responsibility. 3. The desire for continuous development and self-development. 4. Ability to assess the relevance of accounting information in the public context.), and admission requirements (on the basis of the external regulatory framework, reflectors must have obtained secondary education (attestation (diploma) on secondary education, certificates for all statutory centralized examinations passed)) are interrelated. The statements (the aim and learning outcomes) are general and could be applied to any other programme in the field, they do not show how the program differs from other programmes.

## Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The name of the study programme, the degree, the professional qualification or the degree and the professional qualification to be acquired, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and admission requirements are interrelated. At the time, the aim and learning outcomes are too general. At the time, the aim and learning outcomes are too general. The content of the study programme (study courses) corresponds to the old professional standard, at the same time, for quality assurance, as soon as the new professional standard is approved and publicly available according to the professional framework, the College should make appropriate changes in the programme and show compliance with detailed mapping at the level of each defined learning outcome.

Strengths:

- The programme has a clear traditional build-up, logical structure and provides appreciated by the labor market professional qualification.

Weaknesses:

- The statements are too general, they do not show how the programme differs from other programmes.

## 2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

## Analysis

The trends in science in the “Accounting and Finance” study programme are less pressing as the college implements a first-level vocational higher education programme, focusing on practical research. To this regard, descriptions of study courses are of an adequate quality. Internship is of a good quality; external partners had some suggestions about the proper timing because of their work congestion in certain periods of the year (spring). Diploma papers seem to be in line with the programme aims and of fitting quality. Internships, courses’ descriptions and diploma papers comply with the regulatory enactments. Programme’s content is comparable to similar programmes, it is of high quality and complies with the aims of the study programme. Without doubt it ensures the achievement of the advertised learning outcomes and fulfills the needs of the relevant companies.

The study and evaluation methods used contribute to the achievement of the set programme and study courses goals. Programme demonstrates learner-centered education, which aims to develop learner autonomy and independence by putting responsibility for the learning path in the hands of students by imparting to them skills, and the basis on how to learn a specific theme.

The college is subject to regular monitoring of the quality of the study programme, one of its types is student surveys on topical issues such as the quality of the study process, the content of the study programme, study organization, teaching, household conditions, public activities, practices, future expectations. The surveys show students' assessment of the study process and non-study activities, point to the weaknesses and strengths of the study process, reflect the quality of our overall work, indicate gaps and gaps that need to be addressed.

Regular meetings with employers are organized in college: College Councils and Convent meetings, defense of qualifications and qualifications, college conferences, study courses in the form of lectures, outgoing activities, etc. for college, the opinion of skills managers in companies. Managers said that soft skills are very important in companies also for accountants, as they have to present the financial situation to other company's departments, and they feel that graduates lack these skills (presenting, communicating...).

Surveys’ results are being used for constant improvements in the study programme. No problems have been detected in recognizing the learning outcomes achieved during mobilities. The condition for selecting the topic of the diploma paper is that the topic should reflect the competencies and skills defined in the old professional standard.

## Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

It is an established program, well known in the region, with regular numbers of matriculation. The descriptions of the study courses/ modules, the traineeship, and the final thesis comply with the provisions set forth in the regulatory enactments. The content is relevant and complementary, and it complies with the aims of the study programme, ensures the achievement of the learning outcomes, and meets the needs of the relevant industry and the scientific trends. The outcomes of the surveys conducted among the students are used to improve the quality of studies. The feedback from employers and graduates has been limited and not regular.

Companies managers would recommend to include more soft skills (presentations, communication skills, public speaking) to the programme curricula, as accountants have to present their work to other stakeholders in the companies and their external environment. The programme is in compliance with the competences and skills defined in the old professional standard. At the same time, for quality assurance, as soon as the new professional standard will be approved and publicly available according to the professional framework, the College should make appropriate changes in the programme and show compliance with detailed mapping at the level of each defined learning outcome.

Strengths:

- Long-years' experience in conducting the study programme.
- Good reputation of the programme and graduates in the external environment.

Weakness:

- Not enough soft skills included in the programme curricula.

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

#### **Analysis**

The library's reading room provides free Wi-Fi Internet, a computer for students, 10 spaces for reading. The library provides copying and scanning services, locking and laminating device. The library uses the electronic co-catalog "Alice" of the Integrated Library Information System "Jekabpils Region and the Library of Public and Schools of Nereta county."

The educational building has well-equipped 8 computer classes and one IT laboratory. The number of spaces in computer classrooms varies from 24 desktops to 32. Computer classrooms are equipped with modern IT equipment, computer programs, audio and video equipment, interactive blackboards and free access to wireless Internet.

The funding of the programme comes from state budget funding supporting full-time studies and tuition fees for part-time studies. For the needs of the study programme, professional periodicals and databases are subscribed and are in the library. The College Library supports and promotes the study process in general, collects printed matter, electronic publications and other documents, as well as ensures public access to and use of the information contained therein for students and lecturers. The library subscribes to the electronic resources required for the program (databases and professional electronic journals). Electronic study materials are available at the address of the college website.

Licensed accounting and warehouse accounting programs (five in total) are used for the acquisition of professional study courses in the program "Accounting and Finance". During the visit, the meeting with local entrepreneurs confirmed that the program provides a quality study process, which is facilitated by the material and technical provision of the study process. The College has been active in initiating projects to improve infrastructure. At the same time, there is a limited number of applied research projects and published papers in the field of accounting and finance.

#### **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

The funding of the programme comes from state budget funding supporting full-time studies and tuition fees for part-time studies. The study provision, informative provision including libraries, material and technical provision, and financial provision comply with the specific features and the conditions for the implementation of the study programme, support achievement of the learning outcomes, and indicate the possibility to ensure a high-quality study process also in the future. Research activities could be intensified.

Strengths;

- The programme "Accounting and Finance" is provided with specialized accounting computer programs and various electronic publications are available in the library.
- Modernized computer classes with licensed professional accounting programs are used to support the programme.
- Students in the program are satisfied with the services offered by the service hotel of the educational institution.

Weaknesses:

- Students were asking for more involvement of business people in study process. That requires additional resources.
- Additional resources are also needed to support research in the study field.

#### **4. Teaching Staff**

##### **Analysis**

Within the study programme "Accounting and Finance", 16 lecturers deliver study courses: 10 lecturers and 6 guest lecturers (of which 5 guest lecturers are representatives of general staff; daily are present at the College). The qualification of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements set forth in the regulatory enactments. Internal procedures and mechanisms for assuring the qualifications of the academic staff and the work quality are specified in "The by-law of academic and administrative posts", approved by the College Board and presented in Appendix. The College's Board has approved the "Lecturers Load Calculation Standards", which specifies the types of work to be included in the lecturer's workload and the extent thereof. The College has developed a "Support Procedures for Research Activities". In the study programme, lecturers are long-term, have practicing accountants, regularly develop themselves professionally, share academic and professional experience, manage methodological working groups

In the College. The study process is based on research, which obliges teaching staff to promote research activities, to engage in the same process and to advise, educate, support students. However the College's material support for teaching performance in research is insufficient. There is a limited participation of teaching staff in joint projects with enterprises, the research project writing capacities should be improved. The College supports the participation of lecturers in international conferences.

The mechanism for mutual collaboration between the teaching staff members in place. To ensure the qualitative process execution within the order set in the College, the lecturers meet for informative meetings on Monday mornings, twice a month for department meetings.

The collaboration consists exchange of mutual experience in discussions about the link between study courses and teaching groups in order to understand the topics in which study courses are removed (e.g. lecturers of similar courses follow topics and succession in order to make adjustments to the planning of lessons as needed); at the meeting of the section at the beginning of the academic year, the lecturers involved in the implementation of the study programme shall discuss the topics planned for each study course, and shall hear the recommendations of their colleagues.

Following the College Applied Studies Conference, the teachers exchange views and recommend that they complement the types of own-initiative works, by bringing together the tasks of different courses in the same study area.

##### **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

The College undertakes measures in a target-oriented manner to support the implementation of the study programme. The qualification of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme. Lecturers involved in the program are long-term, practice as accountants, regularly develop themselves professionally, share academic and professional experience, manage methodological working groups In the College. The study process is based on research, which obliges teaching staff to promote research activities, to engage in the same process, and to advise, educate, support students. However, the College's material support for teaching performance in research is insufficient. There is a mechanism for mutual collaboration between the teaching staff

members in place.

Strengths:

- The college pays attention to the training of guest lecturers in working with students, providing informational and educational support, sharing experience.
- The college ranks at the national level, as a master of high-quality accountants.

Weaknesses:

- Attracting prospective practitioners is difficult due to low remuneration.
- The college's material support for teaching performance in research is insufficient.

## 5. Assessment of the Compliance of the Study Programme "Accounting and Finance"

### 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:** Diploma is provided in "Description of the Study Programme "Accounting and Finance"" -other mandatory attachments".

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:** Agreements about possibilities to continue the education is signed with Rezekne Academy of Technology on 23.11.2015. Agreement is presented in Appendix no. 2.

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:** Document, confirming that the College guarantees to the students a compensation, is presented in "Description of the Study Programme "Accounting and Finance"" - other mandatory attachments".

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:** Document is presented by the College, that the level of the official language proficiency for performing professional duties is provided. That document is presented in "Description of the Study Programme "Marketing and Innovation" -other mandatory attachments".

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:** N/A

- 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:** The sample of the study agreement is provided in "Description of the Study Programme "" -other mandatory attachments".
- 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:** As a whole, study courses and study materials have been prepared In language in which the study programme is implemented (Latvian) and they comply with requirements. Materials are presented in Appendix 8.
- 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 is in full compliance with the competences and skills defined in the professional standard (Appendix 7).
- 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:** The study programme fully complies with the 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:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** Within the study programme "Accounting and Finance", 16 lecturers deliver study courses: 10 lecturers and 6 guest lecturers. The qualification of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements set forth in the regulatory enactments. At least six years practical work experience is supporting teaching in professional study programme for all of the teaching staff. At the same time, more applied research and related to that publications would be needed. Information is provided in Appendixes 42, 45, 46.

15 P5 - Overall rating

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** The programme fully complies with the requirements set by legal requirements. The resources are sufficient to guarantee sustainability of the programme.

## 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:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** The study provision, informative provision, material and technical provision and financial provision are sufficient to guarantee sustainability of the programme.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** The qualification of academic staff is fully compliant with requirements.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

**Justification:** N/A

## Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The name of the study programme, the degree, the professional qualification or the degree and the professional qualification to be acquired, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and admission requirements are interrelated. The descriptions of the study courses correspond to the level of difficulty of the study programme, the internship duration is appropriate, and the diploma papers are of satisfactory quality. Learning outcomes' achievement is secured, but lecturers could improve the practice of including more of their own scientific and professional research in the content of studies. The material and technical provision comply with the specific features and the conditions for the implementation of the study programme.

Strengths:

- Long-years' experience in conducting the study program.

- Good reputation of the programme and graduates in the external environment.

Weaknesses:

- Companies managers would recommend to include more soft skills (presentations, communication skills, public speaking) to the program curricula, as accountants have to present their work to other stakeholders in the companies and their external environment.
- Low level on English language skills of students and teaching staff.

### **Evaluation of the study programme "Accounting and Finance"**

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

## **6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Accounting and Finance"**

### **Short-term recommendations**

- The statements (the aim and learning outcomes) that describe the programme could be revised so it is possible to show how the programme differs from other programmes.
- More soft skills (presentations, communication skills, public speaking) should be provided by the programme curricula, as accountants have to present their work to other stakeholders in the companies and their external environment.
- As soon as the new professional standards are approved and publicly available according to the professional framework, the College should make appropriate changes in the programme and show compliance with detailed mapping at the level of each defined learning outcome for the study programme.

### **Long-term recommendations**

- As one of the weakest point examined during the experts' visit was low level on English language skills of students, the additional resources should be provided to overcome that gap. The volume of the subject "Business English" should be increased in the programme.

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

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

#### **Assessment of the Requirements for the Study Field**



| Requirements   | Requirement Evaluation |                     | Comment  |
|--|------------------------|---------------------|--|
| Pursuant to Section 5, Paragraph 21 of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education, the higher education institution/ college shall ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study direction whilst implementing their internal quality assurance systems: | Fully compliant        |                     | The continuous improvement was evident in the College during the visit. The College implemented its quality assurance system.  |
| R2 - The cooperation with different organisations from Latvia and abroad implemented within the study direction ensures the achievement of the aims of the study direction.  |                        | Partially compliant | The cooperation with organisations from Latvia is on a good level. Cooperation with organisations from abroad should be improved. One big obstacle is weak foreign (English) language skills of teaching staff and students. That is creating problems in widening contacts with foreign HEIs and business organisations. That is a problematic issue in widening internships in foreign companies. Cooperation agreements of the College are presented in Appendix 2. |
| R3 - Compliance of scientific research and artistic creation with the development level thereof (if applicable).   |                        | Partially compliant | Some applied research takes place. The research topics were related first of all to the development of applied higher education in general, on development of teaching methods. There is practically no research in accounting or marketing.   |

| Requirements   | Requirement Evaluation |                     |  | Comment  |
|--|------------------------|---------------------|--|--|
| R4 - Elimination of the shortcomings and deficiencies identified during the previous assessment of the study direction, if it has been conducted, or the implementation of the provided recommendations. |                        | Partially compliant |  | <p>The recommendations regarding the development of infrastructure of the College - fully implemented</p> <p>Recommendation to encourage participation of students and lecturers' in scientific activities - partly implemented.</p> <p>The recommendation to introduce a module on entrepreneurship in curricula - partly implemented.</p> <p>The recommendation that more courses on audit should be included into the curricula - implementation postponed.</p> <p>The recommendation that the overall language skills of the academic staff should be improved - partly implemented.</p> <p>The recommendation to increase mobility of students and academic staff - fully implemented.</p> <p>Recommendations related to the study programme "Marketing and innovation" concerned exclusion of subject "Web technologies"- fully implemented.</p> <p>The recommendation that the distance learning courses could be introduced - postponed.</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   | Marketing and Innovations (41342) | Partially compliant | Partially compliant | Partially compliant | Not relevant | Average  |
| 2   | Accounting and Finance (41344)    | Fully compliant     | Fully compliant     | Fully compliant     | Not relevant | Good   |

### **The Dissenting Opinions of the Experts**

The experts team closely cooperate during the assessment process and in preparation of assessment report which gave them a clear impression and common opinion.