

Expert group joint opinion

Evaluation Procedure: Assessment of Study Field

Higher Education Institution: RISEBA University of Applied Sciences

Study field: Arts

Experts:

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

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In its strategy, Riseba University of Applied Sciences (Riseba) has taken into account the changes in the international and national operational environment, the growing role of the creative sector in the economy, need of the jobs in the field and needs of society in Latvia and also the government/international level strategic documents. The strategy is based on the idea that Riseba is a place where “business meets art”. Thus, the Arts study field development - the BA Audiovisual Media Art programme, joint MA New Media and Audiovisual Art programme and doctoral Media Art and Creative Technologies programme comply with the Riseba strategy and strengthen the possibilities for the goal “business meets art” - if the programmes’ development continues as planned. To attain the academic, artistic and research goals Riseba is collaborating with Liepaja University (LiepU) in the two joint programmes, which is a good step to get synergy benefits. The MA- and doctoral programmes are implemented only in English to correspond with the Riseba goal to educate students for international careers.

The three programmes create a full-cycle, continuing study path in the area of audiovisual and media arts. The Arts study field aims at creating studies where practical and theoretical studies are integrated in all levels. In the doctoral programme, the focus of research is so called practice-based research in the arts, which is topical in Europe. The doctoral programme promotes critical thinking, at the same time implementing the cooperation between art and science in practice - in the same way as in surgery - and demonstrating the creative and innovation potential of the arts and media industry.

The BA-programme is mainly directed towards providing quite narrow, specific professional skills in the working life mainly for film- and tv-industry, the MA- and doctoral programmes are developed to enhance both the academic skills, knowledge and practice-based research competencies around media arts - but also to train skilled researcher-professionals for the creative industry. For not overlapping other educations and attracting international students, the experts recommend further developing the uniqueness of the programmes in Riseba. The experts recommend the Arts study field to reprofile the academic and practical content of especially the BA-programme towards wider use of both audio and visual but also new digital tools and collaborative exploration but also rethinking the BA-programme’s specialisations.

The main challenge in the BA-programme is the huge intake of students (309). The number is absolutely too much, considering the premises, equipment, the small number of full-time, elected teachers in the core studies, goals for student centred learning, workload of the staff and the quality of the studies - as well as the reputation of Riseba. It is also important to take into account that especially in the arts education there are needs for more personal supervision compared to many - for example humanistic - fields. In the MA- and doctoral programmes the challenge is the opposite: There are too few applicants. The marketing efforts should be continued and taken care that the web pages are updated with relevant info. It is also relevant to mention here, that the visual design of Riseba University of Applied Sciences is not especially attractive to international, potential arts applicants.

Considering the BA- and MA-programmes’ content, it is important to provide more compositional skills, longer working processes and the possibilities for creative exploration with the tools, also new media tools, and increase the studies of audio. The joint MA- and the joint doctoral programmes have a modern, module based curriculum that the experts praise. In the doctoral programme, the studies can be individually designed within the relevant topics and curriculum.

The university has made efforts to the previous recommendation to activate the scientific research and artistic creation activities of the academic staff and students. The Arts study field will be activating academic/artistic content of the BA-programme and shorten the programme to 3 years,

which the experts support. The university has also started a new BA specialisation: audiovisual journalism, which the experts doubt as there is no journalism studies in Riseba and the journalism content is very narrow in the curriculum. The experts also want to remind that it is difficult to activate scientific research or artistic creation of the faculty or teachers as there are very few full-time, elected teachers with a degree in the Arts and a strong industry/artistic career.

The experts conclude that one of the main challenges of the Arts study field is the limited number of full-time teachers/researchers in the core of studies/research - in audiovisual media arts and new media and emerging technology - with a degree in the Arts. It is alarming that in the large BA-programme there are only 3 out of 13 elected Riseba teachers who have a degree in the Arts. In the MA-programme there are 10 faculty members with Mg.Art and M.F.A. degrees in the study programme which is a good number. In the doctoral programme there are qualified teachers/professors but only 6 out of 17 teachers have significant experience of professional, practical work in the creative industry. As the Arts study field and research area is practice-based, it should be taken care that there are more qualified full time academics with practical experience in the arts or industry. Good steps have been already taken by recruiting 2 internationally well-known artist/researchers. Deeper cooperation of the teachers is possible only, if there is a reasonable team of elected full-time or even part-time teachers in the core of studies, in audiovisual and new media subjects.

The management structure of the Arts study field is somewhat difficult to capture for a stakeholder. The decision making is efficient but it seems to be too dependent on a singular director, not because of the clear management system. There are also several collegial bodies, of which role in the development of the programmes or in the power structure, is also somewhat difficult to capture.

Riseba has established a good quality assurance system, and the quality policy which is openly available. The internal quality assurance system is effective in many ways. According to the expert visit, the management seems also willing to further improve the system. The main area to be developed in the system is the core process descriptions/visualisations and also, clear visualisations of the organisational charts in order to show power structures transparently. Also, one of the main conclusions of the experts is that there are areas where the university could be more transparent, like the budgeting and recruiting processes. Basically everything that has to do with money remains somewhat unclear. The decision making is too dependent on a singular director, who has also several Riseba jobs at the same time - and also a status of a doctoral student - possibly in the same joint doctoral programme, he himself is in charge. If so, there is probably a historical reason for that, but the conflict of interest should be taken seriously.

The Riseba has mostly good resources and provision for the study field, but some further improvements can be made especially in the audio sphere, some software and specific studios. The provision should be improved according to the next development steps of the programmes.

The Arts study field collaborates not only with Liepaja University but also with other Latvian arts universities. The collaboration seems to be mainly in the official agreement level, but could be increased in creative activities and projects. Local employers actively engage in teaching, advising programme councils, and by offering internships, which are well available for BA-students. The experts recommend attracting more industry experts to teach in wider spheres of the audiovisual and new media industry, like multimedia composition skills and computer graphics as well as sound design.

Cooperation with foreign institutions is primarily through ERASMUS+. During the expert visit it became clear that Riseba has an efficient and welcoming Erasmus+-office and Riseba wants to enhance internationalisation, which is crucial especially in developing the MA- and doctoral programmes and research in the arts. There is insufficient outgoing faculty mobility in the Arts study field which is also understandable as there are very few full-time teachers in the audiovisual core studies. To enhance international collaboration and to diversify funding, the experts recommend searching for collaboration possibilities with international universities and in international projects.

In experts opinions Arts study field is developing well. It has a stable history in educating professionals for the audiovisual field, especially for TV. The current dynamic plans to develop more academic practice-based studies in 3+2+3 year study path is relevant even though there are many challenges to win. To develop the practice-based research, and education that is leaning to it, expects that there is more industry experienced teachers/researchers with a degree, preferably in the Arts. The possible artistic-technological innovations for the society expects also inputs in international collaboration with strategically chosen universities in the similar area.

I - Assessment of the Study Field

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1.1 Management of the Study Field

Analysis

1.1.1

In its strategy - as described in the Self-Assessment Report (=SAR, paragraph 1.1) - Riseba University of Applied Sciences (Riseba) has considered the changes in the international and national operational environment, growth possibilities of the creative industries, need of the jobs in the field and needs of society in Latvia and the government/international level strategic documents. In its values, the university manifests the aim to make a positive impact on the sustainable development of society.

In the SAR (page 4 and 7) Riseba's vision is to be a recognised university of business, arts and technology, a place where "business meets art". The aim of the Arts study field is to ensure the development of the Latvian economy in the creative industries by educating highly competent operators, directors, producers, audiovisual journalism specialists, professional artists, theorists and researchers, ensuring high-quality studies in all three-level study programmes that would be in demand in the creative industries market in the European Union and beyond. (SAR, page 13) The Arts study field aims to develop a contemporary three cycle education, where practice and theory are intertwined in all levels. The experts agree, that Arts study field is justified (SAR, page 7) by the importance of the growing role of the creative sector in the economy. In experts opinion Riseba's strength (with LiepU) is the wider technological aspect of audiovisual media arts and potential connections to business.

The Arts study field aims are defined, clearly linked and comply with the Riseba strategy and strengthen the possibilities for the Riseba goal "business meets art" - if the programmes'

development continues as planned. The Arts study field is designed to meet the needs of the society and economy by boosting creative sector growth through education.

The interconnection between the study programmes of the study field is basically logical: The BA Audiovisual Media Arts, the joint MA New Media and Audiovisual Art and the joint doctoral Media Art and Creative Technologies programmes create a full-cycle, continuing study path around audiovisual and media arts. According to the meeting with the Riseba teachers (3.8.2023), practical and theoretical studies are integrated in all programmes, which interconnects the programmes. In the SAR (page 20) it is expressed that "Art study programmes are unique in the Latvian context concerning that they provide understanding of media theories and promote critical thinking, at the same time implementing the cooperation between art and science in practice and demonstrating the creative and innovation potential that it encourages..."

In short, the aims of the programmes of the Arts study field are the following:

The BA-programme provides now a basic applied education for tv-, video- and filmmaking professionals. BA-programme objective is - as the title of the programme suggest - as expressed in the SAR (page 14): "to prepare... wide-profile specialists in the audiovisual field for work in public and private mass media, television, cinema, radio, video and cinema post- production and visual special effects companies, sound recording and sound effects creation studios, as well as internet social networks..."

The joint MA-programme with LiepU gives a wide, more academic, and topical view of the audiovisual field. According to the SAR (page 19) the MA-programme offers education in the latest trends of and immersive technologies, in-depth research based on artistic creation under the guidance of international and local teaching staff. Students have, according to the Riseba web pages (programme info), possibilities to use more innovative forms, such as extended and virtual reality, 360-degree video, performances, and culture analytics. According to the MA study plan (Annex 3.2.6) the studies include compact theoretical and practical studies, as well as basic competencies for research work.

The joint doctoral programme that was launched in February 2022 (SAR page 16), offers an academic doctoral degree (PhD) in digital arts and audiovisual media rooted in practice-based and practice-led approach that reflects cutting edge contemporary artistic investigations, critical analytical research methods and technological innovation. The aim of the doctoral programme expressed in the Riseba webpages (doctoral programme introduction) is to train "research-oriented professionals who display a wide range of expertise in new technologies, audiovisual arts and digital cultural processes, who have acquired specific skills in creating works of art and innovative media products, and who are competitive in the labour market of arts, innovation technologies and creative industries, be it more traditional art and media production practices, cultural analytics, data visualisation, or augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), Extended Reality (XR), artificial intelligence, and Volumetrics." The aims of the young joint doctoral programme are ambitious. According to the programme descriptions on the web pages/SAR and the study plans, it can be summed up that the BA is now mainly directed towards providing specific professional skills in the working life in film- and tv, the MA- and doctoral programmes are developed to enhance both the academic skills, knowledge and practice-based research competencies around creative industries and also to train skilled researcher-professionals for the industry.

As film, tv, video, sound design, sound art, new media technology are an essential part of creative industries, the programmes comply with the Arts study field aim to ensure the development of the Latvian economy in the creative industries. In the big picture, the aims of the programmes are linked to the study field aims to create a modern 3-cycle study path. As Riseba's strength (with LiepU) is the wider technological aspect of audiovisual media arts and potential connections to business, it would be important to continue to further profile the programmes and the study field, which will be discussed later in detail.

Evidenced by the SAR, experts visit (2-3.8.2023), meetings with the management and staff and

excursions in the premises, the study field and the programmes comply with the main directions of the strategic development of Riseba.

1.1.2

The Riseba has done a SWOT-analysis and it is well introduced in the SAR (pages 21-22, table 2.1). The analysis identifies and describes the strengths, weaknesses, possibilities and threats of the Arts study field very well. Some of the found strengths of the Arts study field are the possibility for full-cycle studies, modern study rooms and good contact with the professional environment. These aforementioned 3 strengths were proved also during the expert visit (2-3.8.2023).

One of the found possibilities for development is - for example - the creation of sustainable and inclusive practices for the field and cooperation with the largest universities in Latvia and international universities with similar profile. Riseba has found out that some of the weaknesses are the insufficient number of students enrolled in the Master's programme, few specialists with scientific degrees that could be attracted to teach, and also by now, insufficient research cooperation with partner universities.

The identified threats are mainly economical and connected to the university's financing, competition for students and thus attractiveness of the programmes for the paying students. To tackle the identified weaknesses and threats in the SWOT-analysis the university expresses - for example - in the SAR (page 23) that "it would be necessary to activate the scientific and creative activities of academic staff in order to raise the qualifications of teachers to increase the reputation of the programmes."

The university aims to tackle some of the identified threats by developing an attractive five-year study path: 3 year bachelor's + 2 year master's programme. The objective (SAR page 24) is to change the professional BA-programme Audiovisual Media Arts into a more academic model, retaining its basic features but offering students also a possibility to specialise in audiovisual journalism. The idea is to create a logical path for practice-based academics from BA-level on even to the doctoral level.

According to the teachers' view on a meeting (3.8.2023), the 3-year bachelor programme would offer the students more compact and economically lighter studies. The experts support the idea, as the 3+2 model is quite typical in Europe. The shorter BA may help to attract BA-graduates to apply for MA-studies after some years at the labour market, or even straight. The students were also for the change from 4-years to 3-year studies because of economic reasons. They also expressed that at the moment the last semester is a too "empty" period of study as there is only writing/finishing of the final work and students feel like "paying for nothing". The university tackles the weaknesses and threats mainly by the development plan, which is well written and the development goals are also expressed well. The experts appreciate that the university has honestly identified the weaknesses and threats. The experts also agree with many of the findings in the SWOT-analysis. The development goals are well written in the development plan. However, the experts realised that the "actions part" was lacking in the development plan.

1.1.3

The management structure of the Arts study field is somewhat difficult to capture for a stakeholder. According to the SAR (Annex 1.2) there is the Faculty of Media and Creative Technologies under which is the Audiovisual Media Arts Department under which are the 3 programmes.

According to the SAR (page 25), the Arts study field is directed by the head of department, and under him/her are the programme directors, who are primarily in charge of the daily activities of the study programme and the quality of the study process (SAR, page 26). It is difficult to understand what is the difference between "study field/ study direction" and department, between faculty and department. It is also difficult to see who are the directors in charge and what is the power structure

between them. It seems that the study field is dependent on few people in charge of many positions. The experts found out during the site visit (2.8.2023) that the management is very ambitious and willing to develop the Arts study field. The decision making is efficient but it seems to be too dependent on a singular director, not because of the clear management system.

There are several collegial bodies, of which role in the development of the programmes it is also somewhat difficult to capture. In the SAR (page 25), it is said that “for strategic and tactical management and improvement of the programmes, the Study Programme Council of Riseba Art Direction has been established. The Study Programme Council’s task is to help in the development of study programmes and increase the quality. On the other hand, in Annex 2.2, Study Programme Committee is visualised and in the picture on the SAR (page 8), Programme Boards are visualised. In the SAR (page 23) it is expressed that the Council of the Study Direction has been established. In the SAR (page 43) it is said also that there are joint councils of the master's and the doctoral programmes to coordinate their work. In the Annex 2.17 it is expressed that Riseba and LiepU do not have their own joint doctoral council in music, visual arts and architecture. Probably it is a question of translation/s, but it would be important to use one translation for clarity, as the reader/stakeholder has difficulties to understand, if every programme has a council or only the study field or department has one.

After discussion with the experts and the staff in the meeting 3.8.2023, it became clear that the administrative and technical staff are appreciated by the students and are working well and supporting the students.

1.1.4

According to SAR (page 29) Riseba has developed a system and introduced procedures for the admission of students, recognition of the study period, professional experience, previously acquired formal and non-formal education for the assessment of student achievements and study results. Mainly all this has been proved in the annexes.

There are procedures developed for the admission of students: According to Annex 1.3. the Admissions Committee is responsible for the admission process for undergraduate and graduate students. It decides on the enrollment and matriculation of applicants, reviews applicant appeals and proposals. It is anyhow difficult to see who is in charge of the smoothness of admission processes and for example updating of the web pages accordingly. The experts suggest growing the role of the Communications Department in controlling and updating the web pages.

Admission requirements are proved by the link Admission requirements (for academic year 2023/2024). In the Annex 1.10, it is expressed that all information about the admission process, the selection criteria and admission requirements for applicants is available at the University’s Information Centre and on Riseba’s web pages. On the Riseba web pages, it is possible to find the general admission criteria of Riseba for all BA-, MA- and doctoral-level admissions, but not the specific requirements for the Arts study field programmes, nor the steps for admission. Thus, the admission process, the steps, cannot be easily understood by potential students. In the Admission requirements document the admission criteria are anyhow explained.

According to the Riseba’s and Liepaja University’s web pages, the admission criteria for the joint MA- and joint doctoral programmes seemed not to be as identical as they should be. According to Latvian legislation (Augstskolu likums section 55.1 2.3) there should be uniform requirements in relation to the implementation of the joint study programme. The parts of the joint study programme together should form a content-unified and sequential joint study programme.

The information on the web pages gives an impression that the joint MA-programme does not comply with the legislation expectations. It is difficult to get the information about the joint programmes’ admission criteria and entry steps, as well as about content.

The uniforming of the joint MA-programme seems to have a question as there are two specialisations in LiepU according to their web pages (programme info): Acoustic arts / Digital Music

and Digital Networked Media and in Riseba there are also two specialisations according to their web pages (July 2023): Audiovisual Media Art and Multimedia Stage Art.

According to the Study plan (Annex 3.2.6) and the SAR (page 138) there are 4 specialisations in the MA-programme of which the first two are provided by Riseba and the last two by LiepU: 1. Audiovisual media arts, 2. Multimedia performing arts, 3. Sound design and electronic music and 4. Arts and research in digital environments. It remains unclear if a student of Riseba can choose LiepU's specialisations and vice versa.

It would be important to explain the system in the same way in both partners' web pages. It seems that the information is not accurate and informative to attract international arts students to Riseba. It would be good to name the process owner for the admission procedures to ensure its smooth realisation with LiepU because any collegial committee can't be in charge of factual operational process.

The recognition of the study period, professional experience, prior formal and non-formal education and for the assessment of students' achievements and learning outcomes has been established in Riseba and documented by the Annex 2.5. The recognition of non-formal education and professional experience is implemented by the Alignment Commission under the leadership of the Vice-Rector for Studies. It examines each specific application of a student with the attached supporting documents and decides on the fact and amount of the alignment. This is documented with Annex 2.4. According to the site visit (meeting 3.8.2023), the system is working well, although some students had not used the possibility for the recognition of prior formal education.

1.1.5

There are appropriate methods for assessment to measure if the learning goals are achieved. According to the SAR (pages 31, 32) the implementation of study achievements and study results is based on the principles of student-centred education. Riseba evaluates the quality of students' knowledge based on an order of the Ministry of Education and Science and according to the unified assessment criteria of Riseba. All study courses are assessed according to the study course descriptions, which determine the assessment system of the course.

According to the SAR (page 34) it is expressed that a faculty member ensures that assessment methods/tests have been selected in the manner that the method can accurately assess the level of knowledge of the students, the compliance with the achievement of the objectives of the study programme and the needs of students.

The SAR (pages 31-34) lists assessment methods as: exams, compulsory examinations, tests (paper/work), seminar discussion, activity in lectures, reports, independent presentation, final exam work and student/audience discussion. Study results are evaluated according to two indicators: Qualitative rating in percentage and final mark in 10-point system and quantitative assessment – the number of credit points according to the amount and significance of the study course. Assessment methods of courses/ modules are exams and compulsory examinations where quality is measured by numbers (1-10 scale). At least in doctoral programme (Annex 3.3.9) also pass-fail-assessment is used.

Examinations at Riseba are organised both in writing and orally. The final assessment after the study course includes the assessment of the student's work of the whole study course, including participation and quality of work during classes, results of tests and independent work, as well as the assessment of the examination. The final assessment consists of three components – compulsory examinations (constituting 40% of the final assessment), examination (constituting 30% of the final assessment), as well as other examinations (constituting 30% of the final assessment).

The quantitative assessment system is uniform in the university and is based on Latvian system and is well known to students. However, it seems that the emphasis is on quantitative measuring the achievements by numbers, which might be stressful for the students. The experts recommend that qualitative methods like group/student discussions and self-assessment methods could be increased

especially when assessing the artistic/creative works of students.

1.1.6

According to SAR (page 37) compliance with the principles of academic integrity is regulated by 1. The Code of Academic Integrity of Riseba, 2. the Regulations on the Control and Prevention of Plagiarism and 3. the Code of Ethics. Thus, the university has created regulation on the control and prevention of plagiarism and has determined the procedure for identifying plagiarism. In practice, since 2013 Riseba has used the Computerised Plagiarism Control System, where the staff can check students' written and final papers. From 2021 on, the university has used the anti-plagiarism platform Ourigin. According to Annex 1.3 the Riseba has also put up the Ethics Committee that accounts, record reports of ethics violations, and applies sanctions for ethics violations and the Appeal Committee that examines student appeals for ethics or State Examination Board violations during the defence of the final theses. The experts found out that Riseba has put into action all the demanded procedures for academic integrity. However, artificial intelligence brings new possibilities and challenges to the study field and its integrity, which could be taken into account in the future regulations.

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

Conclusions :

Evidenced by the SAR, experts visit meetings with the management and staff and excursions in the premises (2-3.8.2023), the Arts study field and the 3 programmes are justified and comply with the main directions of the strategic development of Riseba. Riseba and Arts study field have taken into account the changes in the international and national operational environment, growth possibilities of the creative industries, need of the jobs in the field and needs of society in Latvia and also the government/international level strategic documents. The Arts study field development - BA, Audiovisual Media Art programme, joint MA, New Media and Audiovisual Art programme and joint doctoral, Media Art and Creative Technologies, programmes are justified from the strategic point of view.

The interconnection between the three study programmes is basically logical in the sense that the BA, the joint MA and the joint doctoral programme create a full-cycle, continuing study path in the area of audiovisual and media art. As Riseba's strength (with LiepU) is the wider technological aspect of audiovisual media arts and potential connections to business the study field needs to continue the profiling of the programmes, which will be discussed later in the document.

A relevant SWOT-analysis has been done and the good observations and targets have been integrated into the development plan (Annex 2.1). The experts couldn't see what actions are to be done to attain the targets listed in the development plan, nor who are in charge of the actions.

The management structure of the study field and the collegial bodies role in the development of the study field remains somewhat unclear. It is difficult to understand the "study field", faculty, department structure and who are the directors in charge and what is the power and work division between them. It seems that the power structure is dependent on few people in charge of many positions and decision making is too centralised. The names/roles of the statutory bodies remains unclear - which are statutory, which are established for university's own needs.

A system has been set up and procedures developed for the admission of students, for the recognition of the study period, professional experience, prior formal and non-formal education. The learning outcomes are logical according to the annexes.

On the Riseba web pages it is possible to find the general admission criteria of Riseba for all BA-, MA- and doctoral-level admissions, but not the specific requirements for the Arts study field programmes, nor the steps for admission. Thus, the admission process, the steps, can't be easily

understood by the potential students. According to the Riseba's and Liepaja University's web pages, the admission criteria for the joint MA- and joint doctoral programmes seemed not to be as identical as they should be.

Methods, principles, and procedures for assessing achievements of students have been developed and are defined and the students are aware of them. It seems that the emphasis is on quantitative measuring the achievements by numbers, which might be stressful for the students. The experts also found out that Riseba has put into action all the demanded procedures for academic integrity but there has been no reaction yet to the development of artificial intelligence.

Strengths

1. The Arts study field takes into account the changes in the international and national operational environment, needs of the economy and society/business in Latvia and the government level strategic documents in the development of the programmes.
2. Riseba's strength (with LiepU) is the wider technological aspect of audiovisual media arts and potential connections to business.
3. The full cycle study path - BA, MA, doctoral programmes - is basically logical and the goal is ambitious.
4. The SWOT and the development plan have been done well.
5. The university has relevant principles and regulations for academic integrity and a code of ethics.

Weaknesses.

1. The profiling of the programmes for the 3-cycle study path is not fully developed. (Will be discussed later.)
2. The measuring of the achievements of the students is mainly based on quantitative measuring by numbers.
3. In the development plan of the Arts study field, the actions part - what is to be done to reach the development targets - is missing.
4. According to the Riseba's and Liepaja University's web pages, the info and admission criteria for the joint MA- and joint doctoral programmes seemed not to be as identical as they should be.
5. The possibilities and potential challenges of artificial intelligence have not yet been taken into account in the regulations.

1.2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System

Analysis

1.2.1

Riseba has established the quality assurance system and the quality policy which are proved in the SAR (pages 37-57), the web pages (<https://www.riseba.lv/en/about-riseba/quality-assurance>) and by the discussions with the expert group during the site visit on 2-3.8.2023. According to the evidence the quality assurance system is based on the standards set in European standards and guidelines (ESG). One of the main quality assurance mechanisms is provided by study programme councils which involve all of the stakeholders including graduates, students and employers, it is responsible for annual inner evaluation and supervision of the study programmes. Riseba quality assurance

system has been developed with intent to clearly define the powers, responsibilities and actions of all university members and stakeholders and to ensure the achievement of programmes according to the desired goals and to ensure the continuity of quality of studies. Riseba has created several documents to describe the powers: Two basic pictures are available of the university structure (1.2, and 1.3) + a Study Direction Structural Scheme (2.2) and a document, where the main university bodies and responsibilities are listed, and a textual explanation in the SAR (table 2.2. And 2.3, page 26). Work descriptions of the staff are probably also available as the staff mentioned them in the meeting with the experts. After reading the SAR and the expert visit (2-3.8.2023) in Riseba, a common understanding of the experts is that the work division between faculty and department (study field?), and the work division between the directors working in the university is somewhat difficult to capture from the documents or discussions. It is also difficult to understand the tasks of the very many collegial bodies and especially the power structure between collegial bodies and operational directors.

The management structure of the university/faculty/department/study field/programmes is not as transparent as it could be. It is difficult to find a visualisation/documents of the structure of the organisation /s with the directors in charge under vice-rectors' level. It is also somewhat difficult to understand the council structure/collegial bodies organisation (SAR, page 8, Annex 1.3) and their connection with the operational directors - what is the power division between the Riseba organisation (SAR, Annex 1.2) and collegial bodies (SAR, Annex 1.3). Good visualisations and a document, where the main work division of the university/faculty directors - for example economic rights between the directors - is missing.

Also, the experts did not see properly from the SAR or discussions how the budgeting and recruiting processes are executed and who is/are making the decisions at the end and who are the actual process owners from beginning to the end of the processes. The experts recommend creating an organisational chart of the university and faculties, clear visualisations, where everybody can see, who are the decision-making directors and their "marching order", combined with the main collegial bodies. It would be good to see which bodies are statutory and which for advisory purposes only (for example with different colours).

It would be also advisable to document the operational staff's work division openly. It is recommended to define the core processes and their owners (the actual title, who oversees the process, so called process owner) visualise processes, like the budgeting process (head of finances) and the process of recruiting the professors and full-time teachers (process owner: head of HR?).

Riseba has developed Quality Policy and the goals of quality assurance. The document is publicly available at their website: <https://www.riseba.lv/en/about-riseba/quality-assurance> (visited 6.8.2023). Riseba has developed several internal regulations that describe procedures when developing new study programmes, study programme mapping, and study regulations, that apply the procedures for organising study programmes. Riseba informs that for each programme the mapping is performed to show the compliance of the objectives of the programme and study results with the European Qualification Framework and Latvian Qualifications Framework requirements.

As established during site visit (2-3.8.2023) when a new study course is developed or a previously existing one is being renewed, study course goals and outcomes are aligned with study programme goals according to Riseba internal regulation "Process of updating the study course description", this process is also coordinated by study programme director as they will ask the responsible staff for implementing the course to make sure study course goals are aligned with the study programme. Regarding joint study programmes - a joint council from Liepāja University and Riseba was established, and the council meets approximately twice a year to revise different aspects of joint masters and doctoral study programmes. Joint council functions are to organise and supervise development of joint study programmes, coordinate and promote interdisciplinary cooperation, evaluate problems of the study process, and prepare proposals for solving problems etc.

There is also a yearly self-assessment report done annually by the programmes. Unfortunately at

the time of evaluation, at the site visit (meeting with the management 2.8.2023) it was concluded that Riseba Quality Management centre does not cooperate with Liepāja University (LiepU) quality management centre, therefore there could be inconsistencies with how the procedures are dealt with at the partner, LiepU. Overall Riseba internal quality management system is well developed, but in some aspects, it lacks transparency for example not all university members and stakeholders are familiar with formal feedback procedures and how their feedback is processed, and for example the budgeting and recruiting processes are not as transparent as they could be.

1.2.2

According to the SAR (pages 45-49) RISEBA “Regulations on Procedures for the Development, Approval and Supervision of a Study Programme” describes the necessary steps for developing a new study programme and the process includes vital information on programme feasibility analysis, compliance with Riseba strategy etc. other vital components for successful programme developing. Riseba divides development of new programmes into three main stages. First stage “Ideas and feasibility stage” of the development where potential study programmes are analysed in terms of potential goals and objectives and their link to Riseba strategy as well as planned study results, competitors etc. After the justification for all of the criteria is found, it gets presented to Riseba Management Group which decides if it is possible to create a new study programme. If everything gets accepted, then Riseba Rector issues an order and appoints the responsible person. In the second stage, the programme gets developed according to its specifics with all of the requirements set in internal and external regulations. If everything is complying, the draft gets approved by Quality Manager and later Riseba Management Group. In the third stage, a documentation package is submitted for external evaluation by AIKA and the licensing process.

Regarding programme renewal: If a decision is made to make significant changes to the study programme, it is discussed with the Program Council, which includes industry stakeholders and Riseba students. According to the opinion of the Programme Council, the content of the significant changes to the programme and the resources necessary for their implementation are evaluated. If the Management Group supports the significant changes in the study programme, the Programme Director prepares all the necessary documentation for the Study Accreditation Commission. Annual reviews of study programmes are prepared by responsible programme councils and for joint study programmes - joint study programme councils.

Riseba has created a good systematic feedback system for students, graduates and employers. Students give feedback after every course in the Moodle management system, which the university vice-rector introduced at the meeting 3.8.2023. Students can also give feedback every year by a survey, which was also proved by the asked, extra annex. During the meeting with the students on 3.8.2023 it was observed that the possible student complaints or suggestions are taken well into account. Students also mentioned that informal feedback can be easily given. The staff and teachers were praised as they were seen not only as lecturers but also as their mentors, who always support the students.

During the meetings on 3.8.2023, it was anyhow found out that all students/employers/stakeholders are not familiar with formal (and anonymous, if necessary) procedures regarding giving feedback and how the feedback is processed in Riseba. Sometimes there could be a lack of transparency regarding statistics of given feedback and the steps that are taken afterwards. There is often informal 1 to 1 feedback given, especially for employers, but it is unclear how and if their feedback is taken into account. Deming’s cycle’s end phase - what has been done about the feedback - can be improved, for example, in case of student feedback by publishing general survey statistics on the web pages and later being transparent about the steps taken to fix any issues or improve processes. Another possibility is to encourage staff to mention to the students at the beginning of the study course the improvements done to the study course since the previous implementation.

1.2.3

As described in SAR (pages 50 and 51) and confirmed during the visit, Riseba accepts both formal and informal student feedback. Statistics on informal feedback are not being recorded. Riseba describes the complaint's procedure in three stages.

First stage: examination of an informal complaint, which happens immediately. If it is a simple complaint and can be resolved quickly with Riseba staff without further research, then an apology or explanation of the problem is provided to the relevant person. The recipient of the complaint is obliged to report the complaint to the immediate supervisor, who analyses the situation, if necessary, informing the Quality Manager about it.

Second stage is the examination of a formal complaint, which gets registered and can take up to 30 days. The Quality Manager, together with the responsible Head of the structural unit looks for solutions and discusses the plan for resolving the complaint.

Third stage includes appeals to higher decision-making bodies such as programme council, arbitration court, senate and others and can take up to 30 days. A more detailed description of each procedure and those responsible are described in the "RISEBA Complaints and Proposals Handling Procedure".

During the reported period, one complaint was formally submitted, and it was resolved. It should be noted that the students consider study programme management as easily approachable for problems, students are highly motivated and especially MA- and PhD- students. The fact that during a 10-year period only one formal complaint was submitted leads experts to believe that on a daily basis informal feedback is used to resolve issues and can lead to lack of transparency.

While informal feedback can be useful as it proves that the management is easily approachable and prepared to solve problems in an easy way, it also lacks the transparency regarding issues or suggestions that could have been submitted in the previous ways as there is no way to check if the issues persist or they are resolved. However, as mentioned previously, this process is not happening very effectively, there is no clear way for students to get familiar with the statistics from their feedback and the results of what gets changed because of their feedback. While the mechanisms are there and students are informed about the possibilities to submit feedback, they are not informed about the impact of their feedback.

1.2.4

The experts had difficulties in analysing the statistics of the number of students. According to the SAR (page 5, figure 1.1), in the Arts study field there are 291 students in 2021 and 235 students in 2022. On the other hand, in the Annex 3.1.2 "Statistics on students in the study program Audiovisual Media Art" BA there are altogether 309 students in study year 2021/22. 44 students have left, which possibly means that 265 students are studying in the programme. If we count the students from different study years of BA there are altogether 199 students. Annex 3.2.2. Master students adds to the numbers (309+ or 235+ or 199+) in 2021/22 17 students and from the doctoral programme 4 more, which makes 220. It would be important to see easily how many students are really enrolled in the studies, who are actively studying and paying for the studies and thus using the premises and teachers' time. Now, the experts cannot fully understand, if the number is closer to 300 or 200 students. Riseba should gather statistics on the amount of students that take an academic gap year. It must be also mentioned here that according to the statistics (Annex 3.1.2) it seems that too few of the BA-students graduate annually. Riseba also compiles information of the CSB on employment of Riseba graduates, registered unemployed persons, graduate profession, number of emigrant graduates by sectors and study programmes. Data collected is also analysed in study programme council, to understand exmatriculation causes and evaluations of the study courses and study programme content and other factors.

At the end of the study year, the Riseba Quality Manager performs a summary of the evaluations of

the study course surveys, indicating the average assessment of students for the study course. The results are ranked according to the assessment and the obtained data provide information on the highest and lowest rated study courses. These data are taken into account when inviting teaching staff to teach study courses and drawing up study plans for the next academic year. The mechanisms are efficient and provide effective focus on the improvement of the study field. However, Riseba should encourage students to fill out annual feedback surveys as there is a concern regarding the rule that surveys that have been completed by not less than 25% of the students in the group are taken into account and in case of small student groups, which is relevant for this study field, every opinion matters to ensure that Riseba is on the right track. The mechanism for obtaining and providing feedback, including from students, graduates and employers, is effective and focused on the improvement of the study field.

1.2.5

The information published on Riseba web pages <https://www.riseba.lv/index.php/en> corresponds mostly with the information provided in AIKA the e-platform.

At the end of July 2023, the titles of the programmes were not defined nor explained very well in the marketing material in the Riseba web pages (<https://riseba.lv/en/home/>). A potential student should get a clear understanding, what is meant by “audiovisual media arts”, “audiovisual art,” “media art” and “new media” as well as specialisations like “audiovisual journalism” not to misinterpret the programmes. The BA- and doctoral programmes were introduced on the Riseba web pages with basic info about them. For some reason, MA-programme was introduced on the web pages only very briefly. It may be that the web pages were in the process of redesign. The experts realised that after reading the information in the SAR and the Riseba web pages about the joint programmes, the programmes’ admission criteria, content and practical issues remained somewhat unclear. It must be also noted that during the evaluation, information regarding the joint study programmes differs for their partner - Liepāja University (LiepU). The information on the Riseba and LiepU web pages did not comply with the legislation expectations. The uniforming of the joint programmes seemed to be insufficient as there are - for example - different specialisations in LiepU and in Riseba according to the web pages in July 2023.

In the SAR (pages 136-138) and the study plan (3.2.6) the system is explained better: The joint programme offers 4 specialisations, of which two are provided by Riseba and the two by LiepU. It remains unclear if a Riseba student can choose a specialisation provided by LiepU. Even though Riseba is not responsible for their partner website it is important that the information is identical for both partners (for example, the degree to be awarded for Master study programme on Liepāja University website is incomplete (<https://www.liepu.lv/lv/594/jauno-mediju-maksla>) (viewed in Latvian 06.08.2023.) and degree to be awarded and tuition fee differs for doctoral study programme on Liepāja University webpage (<https://www.liepu.lv/lv/846/mediju-maksla-un-radosas-tehnologijas>) (viewed in Latvian 06.08.2023.). Regarding information on Riseba website (<https://riseba.lv/en/home/>), there is a discrepancy between criteria for mobilities and Erasmus possibilities: on study programme descriptions it is written that Erasmus is possible for only full-time students (for example, <https://www.riseba.lv/en/node/8065> Bachelor programme, viewed 06.08.2023. in English); however, on the general Erasmus information website (<https://www.riseba.lv/en/node/9979> viewed 06.08.2023. in English) it is noted that mobilities are possible for both part-time and full-time students.

Riseba should be more transparent with the upcoming changes in the accreditation, because currently on the Riseba web pages outdated information of the current programme parameters are still visible, which could cause certain confusion for the potential students. For example, Riseba website lacked information (August 2023) on the MA-programme’s specialisations and the same for BA-programme’s upcoming changes. In future cases, Riseba could better describe on the website the planned changes which would undergo for existing programmes under re-accreditation process,

such as Bachelor programme changing from professional to academic and from 4 to 3 years. It has to be mentioned here that Riseba's visually outdated design/web pages may diminish the attractiveness of the "business meets art"- university. The marketing info and visualisation of the web pages is insufficient to attract international arts students.

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

Conclusions :

Riseba has developed a good internal quality assurance system and it is effective in many ways. There is also a relevant Quality policy openly available. According to the expert visit, the management seems also willing to further improve the system. The students have several channels, for example the Moodle, to give feedback on their studies and the stakeholders can give feedback by a survey. The feedback is taken into account, but the information about the improvements should be also informed. A mechanism for informing about the actions done, impact of the feedback, should be developed.

The data acquired within the system and procedures are mainly sufficient - the statistics about the number of students should be more transparent - for systematic analysis of the study programmes and stakeholder approval and general satisfaction of the quality and other factors. The experts acknowledge that Riseba informed at the end of the evaluation that the statistics were submitted incorrectly, therefore assertion about transparency of statistics cannot be taken into account. The process for study programme renewal and new programme development ensures goals alignment with Riseba strategy and includes stakeholder feedback. Riseba has established procedures and policies to ensure a good quality of education according to ESG standards. The quality assurance alignment with LiepU should be ensured. The web pages mostly have basic, but partly differing information. Also some information about the current and future development are missing. The visual web design of Riseba seems outdated to attract especially arts students.

Strengths:

1. Quality Policy is easily available at Riseba webpages and has clearly defined mechanisms for quality assurance system.
2. The feedback mechanisms are provided systematically.
3. Management is willing to improve and continue to develop quality and the quality system.
4. Staff and study programme management is acknowledged as easily approachable.

Weaknesses:

1. Quality assurance system lacks good visualisations of the organisation structure and process descriptions/visualisations of core processes. For example, funding/budgeting and recruiting academic staff processes are not as transparent as they should be.
2. Not all students or stakeholders know how and if their feedback has been taken into account. The closing of Demings cycle (PDCA-cycle), the information about the actions done/impact of the feedback could be improved.
3. Too few students participate annual surveys.
4. Regarding information on Riseba website, there is a discrepancy between criteria for mobilities and Erasmus possibilities and the information on the Riseba and LiepU web pages did not comply with the legislation expectations.

Assessment of the requirement [1]

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Riseba has established good internal quality assurance procedures, like SWOT-analysis, development plan and regular feedback systems for continuous development. Riseba has established a separate structural unit called Quality Centre to continuously enhance the quality. The discussions during the experts visit also evidenced that the university is aware and willing to develop the quality continuously. The main weakness of the Inner Quality Assurance System of Riseba, realised by the experts, is the lack of core process-descriptions and good visualisations - for example about the organisational charts with directors to clearly show the powers. The management system is described in detail in separate pictures/texts, but the real power structures of the staff, the well visualised organisational chart with directors/staff but also including the main collegial bodies is lacking. Now, the power structures between the directors and many collegial bodies remain somewhat hidden, which increases the likelihood for development of a so called "informal organisation". The transparency of power structures, especially of economic and recruiting powers and processes, should be improved. The core process descriptions are missing and should be created for transparency reasons. There are also sufficient mechanisms for gathering student/stakeholder feedback, but the mechanisms for informing students/stakeholders about the impact of their feedback is missing.

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Riseba has a well-developed Quality Policy, its goals and the feedback system. The systematisation of different surveys is especially well done. Especially core process descriptions with good visualisations are lacking. There is one good example of a visual process description in the SAR (page 70) about procurement of literary sources- process. There are many detailed regulations that assure the quality. The experts suggest searching for user friendlier ways of giving instructions/rules and creating for example guides and visualisations about rules and processes - in cases that it is possible.

- 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

Riseba has developed a clear procedure for the development and internal approval of the study programmes which is well explained in the SAR. The name of the regulation is "Studiju programmas izstrādes, apstiprināšanas un uzraudzības nolikums". The programmes make an annual self-assessment and the university supervises teachers', students' and programmes' performance. The data collected is analysed and the performance is discussed between internal university members.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Riseba has developed procedures for evaluation and preparation of final thesis and unified study

regulations which provide reassurance that students achieve the intended learning outcomes of the study programme.

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Riseba has developed Academic Personnel Policy which includes regulations for full time, part time and guest academic personnel. The assurance of academic staff qualifications is developed. Academic personnel policy includes an academic personnel evaluation system, which includes criteria of analysis of feedback from students, attendance of classes (per assessment), evaluations of work in scientific, teaching, and organisational work. The remuneration policy remains partly unclear and could be published even more in detail for transparency reasons.

- 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

Riseba ensures that different types of data is collected systematically by Study Quality Centre and other departments that support study organising. Analysis of said collected data is organised by department heads, study programme directors and analysis is discussed throughout different councils and committees (e.g. study programme council). KPI's are mentioned in the University strategy and evaluated periodically. The student statistics are however difficult to interpret reliably.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Riseba has developed a Study Quality Centre which is in charge of implementing Internal Quality Assurance System. The management is willing to develop the quality continuously. New internal regulations are prepared with new tendencies (e.g., when developing joint study programmes, joint study programme council was introduced) to enhance quality assurance for all involved sides.

1.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Field

Analysis

1.3.1

Riseba has established a system for determining and redistributing the financial support for the implementation of the study field and the study programmes, which is described in the SAR: Riseba is dependent mainly on the (70-80%) revenues from tuition fees (SAR page 57). The Arts study field is financed from the state grants, LiepU self-revenue, development projects and small grant projects etc.(SAR, page 64). In the SAR (page 93), it is also expressed that the teaching staff is financed both from the revenues of the university and by attracting funds from various project funds.

Riseba has modernised their accounting and financial management system (SAR, page 59), which certainly ensures more detailed and effective financial information, for example, by study programmes. According to the SAR (page 58), the financial resources at the disposal of the faculty are planned annually and are used in accordance with the tariffs, plans and estimates approved by

the Riseba Management, which ensures control over the use of financial resources.

There are two tables (SAR pages 60-61, tables 2.5 and 2.6) to describe the expenditure of Riseba and the Arts study field: There is a table of the structure of the whole university expenditure (table 2.6) and a table of the Arts study field expenditure (table 2.5) as percentages.

The experts could not get the picture of the funding distribution between faculties nor information in Euros, nor the understanding of the funding for the arts programmes compared to - for example - other similar size programmes of Riseba. The tables only describe the overall division of expenditure. It is not possible to get information about the budgeting system for the coming year, or what are the resources allocated for students' or teachers' artistic creation/projects in the programmes. It is only possible to see, for example, how much there is faculty funding (SAR, page 60) for scientific activities as a percentage. There is funding for scientific/applied research/artistic creation in Riseba but it is limited. According to the table 2.6, from the university expenditure about 3% is allocated to scientific activities, which is a relatively small slice. On page 93 in the SAR, it is said that "in general, the higher education institution devotes on average 4-6% of the budget of the higher educational institution to scientific activity, depending on the amount of funding attracted in the respective year in projects." It is unclear if this refers to Riseba (and which years) or in general to higher institutions. There is also a table of "the percentage of funding", actually of the expenditure division, of the study field (table 2.5). According to it, in BA 0,8%, in MA 2,5% and doctoral programme 1,6% of the expenditure has been used for scientific activities. It is very little. Also it remains unclear, if the allocation for "scientific activities" includes artistic creation or is it funded fully by external funding.

The SAR does not reveal the tariffs nor the budgeting system, nor process, nor the Euros of the Arts study field that could be - for example - compared to similar educations in Europe to get a picture, if the financial support is "what is required for the implementation of the programmes". Some comparison would be useful, even taking into account the national standards and the fact that Riseba is a private university. However, during the expert visit (2-3.8.2023) and discussions with the Arts study field management it was expressed that the head of Arts study field/dean has always got the resources he has asked for. During the discussion it also became clear that the budgeting process is led by the head of finances. It is also expressed in the SAR (page 101) that at the beginning of the study year, each department shall be granted funding (budget) for scientific-research and artistic creation work and that the head of the department is responsible for the rational use of funding.

What was not explained in the SAR is the process of annual budgeting and on which principals (tariffs etc.) the study programmes are budgeted, how the normal annual costs and annual specific needs of the programmes are calculated, gathered and negotiated. The description of funding system lacks transparency as there is no description/visualisation of by what kind of a process the budget needs, calculations and negotiations are done, who are the partners that negotiate and who makes the decision of the funding at the end.

It seems that the university academic staff and students can easily use the university's good facilities and equipment for their research and artistic creation. But taking into account the number of BA students (200-309), it is a question how the premises/facilities are sufficient. Also, it remains unclear how funding for doing research and/ or artistic creation is arranged. The experts could not find out how funding is assured if the research or artistic creation needs for example performers, location rent or other facilities. The experts wonder, if it is always done by project money or is there also Riseba funding. Also, time is one of the main resources. Thus, it would be important to see if and how much the full-time academic staff has possibilities to allocate working time for research/creative work.

1.3.2

Riseba has significantly expanded its premises to enable the successful study process for the arts

programmes. The expert group visited Durbes street 4 H2O6 Architecture and Media Centre and saw that the premises are well-equipped, well-kept, and basically open for students and staff. Good facilities/resources were mentioned also as one of the reasons why some students preferred to study in Rīseba. Durbes Street building takes into account also the people with special needs. According to SAR (page 61) there are, for example, 18 study rooms (668 seats), 3 computer classes (85 seats), Copy Center, 9 classrooms (263 seats), 4 classrooms (video editing studio/computer classes) (71 sēdvietas), 2 video editing workrooms (5 seats), student government premises, meeting rooms, Creative Business Incubator, photo studio (30 seats), sound recording studio (10 seats), video studio (50-60 sēdvietas), mākslas studio (15 sēdvietas), aktiermeistarības zāle (30-40 sēdvietas and a Media laboratory (5 workstations), a lot of technical equipment and software. There is also a list of technical equipment written in the SAR (pages 63-67) that are available in LiepU for joint students. It is also possible to lease equipment from a company, if needed. It is mentioned in the Liepāja University web pages, that LiepU has an Art Research Lab with modern audio, video and sound recording and editing equipment, 3-D printers and media library. The experts realised that there is emphasis on visual equipment and less on audio equipment, which is logical in the sense that there is no specialisation for the audio studies. The students anyhow have a small sound studio at their disposal for individual creative work, which is intended for production and processing of audio recordings and arranged to enable the creation of surround sound compositions (surround, 5.1 and 7.1), as stated in the SAR (p. 64). The sound studio also offers equipment for the use outside the studio (e.g. for field recordings). In the future the audio provision could be increased. The expert group found out that the needs for the renewal of equipment/resources are checked once a year. Software versions, computer network antivirus software and firewall provision are regularly maintained and updated. The experts anyhow recommend that it might be good to consult more teachers and/or possibly leading companies of the industry in the selection and procurement of resources, software and equipment, if possible. The experts have some recommendations for provision in the future: The experts recommend establishing a post-production sound studio (if not available), where quality equipment will be available. It would also be good to have a dedicated projection hall with a quality sound system that supports film post-production. The experts also recommend purchasing software in the long run for sound and image processing. The experts recommend converting one of the empty studio rooms into a colour correction workplace, to make a full blackout room with a proper studio video projector (with affordable black level performance), plus screens, which would bring professional video compositions and colour corrections closer to the capabilities and experience of the real pro video studio.

1.3.3

According to the SAR (page 68), the expert visit and discussions, the library premises are available, and the resources are quite sufficient for the study field's needs. There are also modest specific bookshelves in the building H2O6 for the Arts field with specialised sources of literature in the audiovisual field. The library collection is designed and procured in accordance with the content of the study programmes, in cooperation with the directors of study programmes and academic staff. In the SAR (page 70) the process of procurement of library resources is well explained and visualised in an easy and open way. The students also proved in the meeting 3.8.2023 that it is easy to ask for new literary sources.

The expert group realised that the concept and the role of the library is somewhat outdated for the proper services especially for the audiovisual arts students and the staff. A contemporary library has attractive room/s for active but informal meetings, reading and watching videos/films etc.. The library has a lack of publications from the leading computer graphics industry news (like channel.com, cgpress.org, awn.com, vfxvoice.com, awn.com, etc.), as well as subscription of leading online movie platforms (like Netflix, Amazon Prime, Disney+, HBO Max, Paramount+, Apple, TET+,

1.3.4

A new study environment UNIMETIS (<https://my.riseba.lv>) has been introduced and is being improved, which allows academic staff to see lesson schedules, student lists in a group, etc., while students can see current class times, their own achievements, financial data, etc. UNIMETIS is also used to record student class attendance. Riseba provides a remote study process via Zoom (<https://zoom.us>).

Riseba has also acquired access to the Miro (<https://miro.com>) website, which allows faculty members to share a work surface that can be used to work together in the study process (SAR page 72). Also, the university has updated the minimum requirements for study courses in Moodle (<https://e.riseba.lv>) environment. During the visit the vice-rector for studies introduced the Moodle-system, where the specific course has a common platform which is also used for feedback means. The WiFi is provided on the university premises but the European EDUROAM wifi network is lacking. Riseba offers sufficient information and contemporary communication technology and the many solutions are appropriate for the study field according to the SAR and according to the observations during the experts' site visit. However, the efficiency of communication may suffer, as Riseba offers many platforms which might be even too many. The teachers and students might get mixed which platform to use. In the SWOT-analysis (SAR, page 21), it is also mentioned that Moodle's capabilities are underused because students use contemporary, more effective means of communication. Anyhow, it is important to present students clearly every platform's role in the study process and what it is going to be used for.

1.3.5

Riseba has prepared the Academic Personnel Policy and defined the goals, selection criteria and the quality evaluation system of the personnel and the remuneration policy according to the evaluation. (SAR page 76). Riseba has both full-time academic personnel and visiting teachers. The full-time academic staff is elected for a 6-year period to ensure quality. The university expects the academic/creative competencies to be continuously developed and the teachers must have outstanding teaching competencies which are proved by the students when they evaluate every course.

There are altogether 86 teachers involved in the implementation of the Arts study field, of which 15 are academic staff of Riseba and 61 visiting lecturers. Of the academic staff, 9 have a doctoral degree, which is 50% of the elected teaching staff. Also, of the freelance faculty, 6 are with a PhD. From the expenditure of the Arts study field (table 2.5) can be seen an interesting fact that the academic staff salaries are about half of the expenditure but the visiting teaching staff gets only 13% of the expenditure. In Riseba and the Arts study field the academic staff is elected in a public open competition according to the SAR (page 76) and later phases of the process is explained in brief: "In order to ensure independent expert-examination of the candidate, the Compliance Commission has been established in Riseba and the task of which is to give an independent conclusion on the suitability of applicants for the academic position. The proposals of the Compliance Commission regarding the eligibility of the applicant are submitted to the Senate of the University and are evaluated together with the proposal by the profiling department. The final decision is taken by the Riseba Senate by secret ball." The selection criteria itself is well documented. However, it seems that the selection process is not transparent enough. It remains unclear what is the relation between the Compliance Commission proposal and the proposal of the profiling department, how does the profiling department make its proposal and what are the steps in the process. During the expert visit meeting (3.8.2023) with the staff and management there occurred differing opinions on who is/are making the decision in the recruiting processes. The power structure between the compliance commission, head of department and the senate should be

cleared and the process described. In the SAR (page 76) it is said that "Attraction of academic staff and employment in Riseba is determined by the "Academic Staff Policy". The attraction is defined by determining how the academics/artists are attractive for the university. Instead, there are no means explained how Riseba is an attractive workplace for the potential academics and artists. During the meeting with the teachers (3.8.2023) it became clear that the remuneration in Riseba is better than in public universities which is certainly an attraction for local teachers. In the SWOT-analysis (SAR page 22) of the Arts study field it is expressed that one of the weaknesses of the Arts study field is a too large pay gap between the education system and the industry, making it difficult to attract highly educated and internationally competitive personnel which prefers to move to the capital and abroad. The experts recommend motivating the current and potential experts from the industry to teach - for instance - by creating attractive opportunities for benchmarking visits to world-class fairs, studios or similar programmes abroad as part of their work.

1.3.6

The university expects the academic/creative competencies to be continuous. Riseba has established the annual work quality evaluation system (DKIS) to motivate the teaching staff for self-education and good performance. Teaching staff is evaluated each year through three main perspectives: 1. scientific (creative) work; 2. pedagogical work and 3. organisational work. Students give feedback to the teaching staff regularly through Moodle, which is taken into account in the evaluation. The perspectives are evaluated in detail by using quantitative criteria. Evaluation of the results and discussion of plans and tasks for the next period is carried out in an annual discussion with the supervisor. During the discussions with the teaching staff (3.8.2023), they were aware of the system and no complaints occurred. According to the SAR (page 78) the faculty and visiting teaching staff can participate in qualification and self-improvement courses including didactic seminars organised by Riseba. Seminars are organised once a month (2 academic hours) in the first and second semesters. The seminars and content are listed in the SAR (table 2.8.). There are 16 academic hours a year offered for continuing education or self-development. For the faculty, it is mandatory to attend at least 50% of the methodological seminars. After attendance they get one extra point at the annual evaluation. It remains unclear if the self-development seminars are included in the working time of the Riseba teaching staff or are paid for visiting teaching staff. The teaching staff can develop themselves also by benchmarking other teachers, and the Erasmus+ programme provides all teaching staff the opportunity to visit universities abroad, attend classes of foreign teachers, learn new methods and share experience (SAR, page 83). According to the discussion with the teachers on 3.8.2023, the teachers however seldom use the possibilities for international exchange.

1.3.7

In the SAR (page 85) it is expressed that the workload of the teaching staff in the academic year is planned according to the plan of the study programmes. The work is planned and accounted in accordance with the principle - "payment for the work performed specifically". The academic workload consists of: delivering lectures, conducting internships, conducting tests, consultations, correction of works, management of study papers, supervision of bachelor's and master's theses, review of bachelor's and master's theses, work in study work and internship defence commissions. For each of the work types listed above, a specific fee is provided. The amount of scientific work of the elected academic staff in the academic year is accounted for and paid in accordance with the results of scientific work actually achieved. The remuneration system of teachers remains partly unclear for the experts. It seems that the scientific work is not included in the basic working hours but is only paid afterwards according to the performance. In the Academic personnel policy, it is described that the teachers must also attend all types of university celebrations and alike. It remains unclear if the participation in the pedagogical and other study courses, which were systematically

available, is obligatory or not. It also seems that the “self development” hours were not included in the working time. Also, it remains unclear if the teachers have possibilities for their own research/creative work during the working hours. During the discussions with the experts (3.8.2023), the teachers were not complaining about the workload nor the unbalance between academic, research/creative, pedagogic and administrative work. Anyhow, the experts got an impression that the full time academics get their salary mainly from their administrative job or teaching and that the research and creative works are done with external project funding. The experts understand that the salary is partly dependent on the performance, but it is not clear if there is a basic salary for a certain number of working hours, and on top some bonuses according to the performance. If not already there - it would be advisable to create a working hours planning system for teachers with specific hours dedicated to teaching, research/creative work, administrative and self development etc. - to define clearly the hours that are included in the salary. The experts recommend publishing the whole salary system of the academic staff for transparency reasons. The Riseba supports full-time teachers' wellbeing mainly by providing health insurance to them.

1.3.8

It is clear from the conversations and documentation in the SAR paragraph 2.3.8 that Riseba has various ways to support the students, which the students also confirmed in the meeting with the experts on 3.8.2023. In the SAR (page 88) it is expressed that for each year group a “group elder” is appointed. The group elder is responsible for transmitting relevant information to students and for taking care of the group cohesion. Also curators - like mentors - are nominated from the students. During the study process, Riseba has ensured career and psychological support.

Riseba has established a structural unit Career Growth Centre, where students can get help for career planning issues. Also the Creative Business Incubator is established for future entrepreneurs. Psychological support is available for students in different ways and it is well explained in the SAR “Structure of psychological support for students”(pages 89 and 90, figures 2.12. and 2.13). The students are also provided with a career consultant, who will help with career and development issues aimed at achieving goals. International students can get help in the process of visas, certificates, application, immigration, admission and throughout the study period (SAR, page 109 point no. 4). It seems that the study field has a good provision of psychological and practical support mechanisms and the services to support the needs of students in various ways and can be confirmed primarily from the documentation. However, it is questionable how the support system can reach all the 200-309 BA-students, 12 Riseba MA-students and 4 Riseba doctoral students admitted/enrolled.

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

Conclusions

The Riseba has mostly good resources and provision for the study field, but some further improvements can be made. Also the number of students enrolled in BA (which will be discussed later) is too many to ensure equal possibilities for every student to use the facilities. Riseba has established a system for determining and redistributing the financial support but the budgeting process and sharing of the funding but it is not as transparent as it should be. The logic of funding is not explained. There is no comparative information (in Euros or between similar size programmes) of the Arts study field funding in order to evaluate if the financial support is sufficient for the implementation of the programmes. The resources, material and technical support are mostly good, but some further recommendation or suggestions can be given for the enhancement of premises, equipment and the library. For example, there seems to be less audio equipment. The procurement process seems to work well, but some further consultations could be done with the industry people.

The information and communication technology solutions are sufficient, but even too many study/communication platforms are there to ensure efficiency of communication. The main attraction of Riseba for academic staff seems to be the better remuneration of the teachers compared to public universities as mentioned in a meeting with the teachers (3.8.2023). On the other hand, it seems that it may be also difficult to attract highly educated and internationally competitive personnel.

Riseba has created qualifications for how the university ensures qualified academic staff but actions to enhance Riseba's attractiveness in the eyes of the industry people nor artists has not been expressed in the SAR. Riseba has established means to enhance academic staff's professional and didactic development. The main one is the systematic self-development classes. The evaluation of the pedagogic, scientific and administrative skills/performance (like observations of classes) has been established and the system is used as part of the remuneration criteria.

The system for defining the workload of full-time teaching staff - how many working hours, how the working time is divided and remuneration - remains partly unclear. For instance, it remains unclear how much working time is dedicated to artistic/ research activities and to self-development courses and is it paid for.

Riseba has identified and established most of the support needed for students - only students with special needs have hardly been mentioned. Riseba has a good ERASMUS+ office , Career Growth Centre and psychological support system for students which seem to work efficiently.

Strengths:

- 1, Mostly good and open premises, facilities and equipment (together with LiepU) as such.
2. Riseba has defined Academic Personnel Policy.
3. The process of procurement of books is clear and the process is well visualised.
4. Pedagogic/didactic courses and alike are systematically available for the teaching staff.
5. Riseba has a good support system for the students.

Weaknesses:

1. The premises and provision are not sufficient considering the high intake of students into the BA-programme.
2. The audio equipment is not fully sufficient in the H2O6 premises.
3. The library has a lack of news publications from the leading multimedia industry.
4. Riseba offers even too many study/communication platforms, which may hamper the efficiency of communication.
5. The budgeting process is not explained in detail nor visualised.
6. The funding for research and artistic/creative work remains unclear.
7. The recruiting process of academic staff is not thoroughly described nor visualised.
8. The teaching staff seems not to have working hours dedicated to artistic/ research activities.
9. The whole salary system of the academic staff is not sufficiently transparent.

1.4. Scientific Research and Artistic Creation

Analysis

1.4.1

The BA-programme has been until now a professional, applied education for TV- and film professionals of which aim has been in educating especially technical skills, the creative practices -

equivalent to research - has not been in the very centre of the education. However, the education has been and is relevant for the tv- and film industry as such. As the digital transformation is evolving, the Arts study field is aiming at increasing the emphasis into academic and creative (research) practices to interconnect the BA-studies better to the development of the whole Arts study field. In the SAR (page 91) it is expressed that “the aim of the research and artistic creativity of the Arts direction is to develop research based on creative practices, which uses digital innovation and transformation, and which would be aimed at the inclusion of society, the development of creative industries and the promotion of changes in education, as well as virtual (VR), augmented reality (AR), mixed reality (MR and XR) and artificial intelligence (AI) prototyping.” The recently reformed joint MA- and especially joint doctoral programme correspond to the aforementioned development goals of the Arts study field. Thus, the core of studies in the BA-programme should also correspond more to the creative innovation and digital transformation and wider scope of the audiovisual industry.

Thus, the directions of research/artistic creation of the Arts study field arts mainly correspond to the development goal of Riseba to enhance creative industry and the Arts study field aims. The three programmes are relevant to the creative industry in different ways. The BA-programme is relevant for today’s tv- and film industry, but needs some reprofiling to correspond better the Arts study field objectives mentioned above and to connect to the MA- and doctoral programme profiles. There is a need of reprofiling from “filmmaking technical professions to wider, future digital professions/researchers”.

1.4.2

The 3-cycle Arts study field aims at providing study processes in all programme levels where theoretical and artistic/creative practice integrate in a contemporary way. The connection of artistic creation and research is integrated in the curriculum and the study process of the MA- and doctoral studies. Thus, the study process is logical and justified in them.

Instead, the BA-programme is based on education in a professional, technical sphere and is justified considering today’s professional needs but maybe not the future’s needs of the creative industry. The artistic creation nor the outcomes are not fully integrated in the study process. Instead there are practical exercises which are more technical in nature.

That is why the Arts study field seems to be aiming at increasing the academic/artistic creation of the BA-programme and shorten the programme to 3 years - to enhance the correspondence with the academic and artistic creation/creative activities. The experts consider this justified, if the curriculum is also revised towards creative activities connected to a wider scope of digital tools - in the same way as seem to be already included in MA- and doctoral programmes.

It is expressed in the SAR (page 97) that in the Arts study field “research activity is mainly aimed at conducting interdisciplinary research in the following areas - Introduction of artificial intelligence applications in the creation of new audiovisual media content, Volumetric filmmaking, Cine-VR film production, 360 Ambisonics sound research, XR, AR, AI prototyping. The most important advantages of the teaching staff of the Department of Audiovisual Media Arts are a high level of academic and scientific competence, practical experience and in the implementation of artistic creation projects”. Scientific research and artistic creation and the outcomes thereof are integrated in the study process in the MA- and doctoral level programmes. The connection of research and artistic creation of the study field with the study process is in the big picture logical and justified but more time for the staff and students for creative processes should be ensured.

1.4.3

In the Internationalisation Strategy of Riseba (SAR, link on page 105) goals are set mainly for attracting prospective students from abroad but there is also a set aim for international projects on page 2. The aim of the projects and procurement projects is to promote scientific research (and

probably as well creative activities) and to modernise and develop the studies. All study programmes should have a strong international focus according to the Internationalisation Strategy. By now, the Arts study field is however far from these aims. In the SAR (pages 97-98) some international cooperation projects are listed, but they are singular examples. Some projects are realised by the European funds. Two development projects mentioned are mainly for enhancing the implementation of the European Higher Education goals. Thus, international cooperation within research and artistic creation is limited but according to the discussions with the management and the SAR overall, the international cooperation is being developed purposefully in the Arts study field. The Arts study field aims at providing education based on so-called artistic or practice-based research. Artistic research or practice-based - and practice-led research - has become topical over the past 20 years in Europe. Many artists study at the doctoral level, use scientific approaches/theories and digital tools for their creations and/or audiovisual outcomes. Artistic research is an expanding form of research method/field in academia. As the Arts study field has similar objectives - to provide practice-based research - it is crucial to cooperate with the European similar type of arts universities/programmes to ensure the quality of research and creative outcomes.

The Arts study field aims to develop innovative education and research in the arts where academic theoretical knowledge and use of artistic digital tools are integrated. It has to be mentioned that a straight connection with the arts field/industry and creative practices is a prerequisite for research in the same way as in surgery/medicine. That is why the experts recommend that the teachers' and students' possibilities for practical artistic creation and exploration would be improved in all levels. The Arts study field has not yet fully ensured that research and/or artistic creation within the programmes would be possible.

It is expressed in the SAR (page 97) that research activity is mainly aimed at interdisciplinary research in the following areas: "Introduction of artificial intelligence applications in the creation of new audiovisual media content, Volumetric filmmaking, Cine-VR film production, 360 Ambisonics sound research, XR, AR, AI prototyping." There are few universities in the arts that are in the same field. That is also why it is important to find the relevant international partners in the future.

As it was also described in the SAR (page 92) through the practice-based research activities of the academic staff and the communication with the international field of scientific and artistic research collegium, the transfer of knowledge is moved to the university. As the joint doctoral programme is very young (launched in Feb. 2022) and the academic staff of Riseba/LiepU is very limited, it is clear that the small staff cannot be in charge of the whole knowledge transfer of practice-based/led research. That's why strong international collaboration is also a must in the Arts study field. The MA- and doctoral programmes' critical mass for research and artistic creation is very small so the international exchange and collaborative international projects are a must in the Arts study field. However, according to the Annex 2.1.6 (Statistics on incoming and outgoing mobility of academic staff of the Arts study field) during the last 6 years (2017-2022) there has been only 1 incoming international teacher. This is partly understandable because of Covid-times. The Arts study field is going to the right direction and has recruited recently some international academics to develop the education.

1.4.4

Riseba has been developing mechanisms for the involvement of the teaching staff in scientific and creative research. For example the academic staff of the Arts study field must participate twice a year in academic seminars organised by Riseba. The teachers' scientific conference travel expenses are funded by the university. There are new international collaboration projects planned and funding is searched. Academic seminars are relevant for many academics in Riseba as a whole, but for artists/researchers in the Arts study field there should be possibilities for the involvement of the

teaching staff in artistic creation but as well in scientific seminars of practice-based research. At the moment the teaching staff's possibilities seem to be limited for their own artistic creation according to the discussions with the teaching staff on 3.8.2023.

According to the SAR (page 97), the teaching staff of the study field has a high level of academic and scientific competence and practical experience in the implementation of artistic creation projects. However, most of the full-time teaching staff of the Arts study field are not from the core, from audiovisual area, who could actually do creative activities. Annex 2.12 lists the scientific and artistic creation activities of the teaching staff over the past six years. Annex 2.11 contains quantitative data about research and artistic activities according to which the last 6 years there has been:

175 publications, patents, artistic creation, 11 awards, 21 exhibitions, 34 conferences, plenary sessions and hackathons.

Reading the list of artistic works of the teaching staff (Annex 2.12), it must be commented that "artistic creations" and many of the creative works have been more like "technical work situations" as tv-director or operator or alike - which is understandable as the biggest programme (BA) is an applied programme with the emphasis on skills as an operator, director, producer etc. At the same time it means that creations where the teaching staff has been in charge of a new artistic/creative process or project with the use of innovative digital tools are scarce.

In order to enhance the situation, the aim of the Arts study field is to create a new audiovisual production workshop, which would ensure the involvement of both commercial orders and Riseba academic staff and students in creative production processes. The combination of commercial and academic work in the same premises might be challenging but worth trying. It would also enhance the communication between the students and the industry.

Riseba and Arts study field have not yet developed sufficient mechanisms for the involvement of the teaching staff in research or artistic creation. It has to be emphasised that in the Arts study field there are very few full-time artistically merited academics/researchers, which makes the whole target for involving teachers for research or creative activities somewhat difficult.

It is relevant to mention here, that according to the SAR (page 53) Riseba strategic plans and academic staff policies define that academic staff with a doctoral degree should reach 70% and that the programme directors need to attract more academic staff with a doctoral degree to the study programme implemented. It is written in the SWOT-analysis of the Arts field (SAR, page 21), that there is a following challenge: "The inadequacy of some professional teachers for academic work, mainly related to the lack of highly qualified local lecturers with a doctorate in audiovisual media."

The experts recommend that Riseba would take into account, that in the arts field, it is still challenging to find teachers with DA- or PhD-degree and practical experience, as the high merits usually are earned through practical work in the creative industry. Only during the last 30 years there have been more artists and creative sector professionals, who have also earned doctoral degrees but are still quite rare. As in the arts and creative sector the highly qualified experts usually own MA-degree plus are merited in the arts/creative field itself, the PhD-qualification ratio could be designed, by now as an exception, to 50% for the Arts study field.

1.4.5

There are mechanisms to involve students in applied research and artistic creation. All the students do academic papers and practical creative work during their studies as it is integrated in the curriculum. According to the SAR (page 94) in the Arts field, the involvement of students in research and artistic creation work is mainly carried out in four main directions: 1. development of study papers 2. participation in scientific conferences and especially at Riseba scientific research and artistic creation conference; 3. preparation of joint scientific publications in cooperation with teaching staff; 4. creation of joint audiovisual works in cooperation with teaching staff where students participate as listeners, assistants, and perform specific study work tasks.

In the SAR (page 95) it is said the topics of students' final research papers derive from the research direction formulated at the Faculty of Media and Creative Technologies and that in this way, the students of the faculty have the opportunity to contribute to the work of research and artistic creativity.

In the SAR (page 36) it is described that at the end of the studies the student develops, writes and defends the final thesis. In order to successfully complete the entire scope of the courses and obtain a bachelor's or master's degree, students must demonstrate in their final thesis both the academic knowledge, skills and competences acquired during the study process. The final thesis consists of two parts – theoretical (A) and practical (B). According to the seen theoretical final works, part A and B are seldom connected so that there would be a research question that would be tested in the practical part. The final practical parts were largely connected to expressing the basic standards of filmmaking but not so often to creative use of new audiovisual media. In the big picture, it seems that there are limited possibilities for the students for creative, practical works.

1.4.6

As an organisational innovation Riseba has established the Quality Centre and enhanced also online education possibilities. These two innovations are relevant.

The experts got an impression during the site visit (2-3.8.2023) and documents, that the methods used are quite standard ones like long lectures (long history lectures were mentioned by a student meeting on 3.8.2023), practical acting class, a lot of individual work, examinations both in writing and orally etc. The experts did not have possibilities to see any actual creative or practical classes, so it is difficult to say if and what kind of innovative methods or solutions are used in the education.

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

Conclusions:

The directions of scientific research and artistic creation of the study field arts mostly correspond to the development goals of Riseba and the Arts study field objectives. The direction of practice-based research and earlier mentioned objectives of the Arts study field are relevant for Riseba and the creative industry. The three-cycle study path and plans for a 3-year BA support the development of practice-based research and artistic creation as the Arts study field strives to connect theoretical and academic issues and artistic practices with new digital tools in a contemporary way, in all levels of study. However, the BA-programme needs reprofiling to correspond better the recent objectives of the Arts study field.

Scientific research and artistic creation and the outcomes thereof are integrated in the study process in MA- and doctoral level programmes better than in BA-programme, which is logical considering the history of the programme. The connection of research and artistic creation is integrated with the study process especially in the MA- and doctoral programme. The students final works are lacking some connection to development of research competencies. The A-part and B-part of the final thesis of BA- and MA-students are not interconnected the way that it would develop basis for practice-based research. International cooperation within research and artistic creation is very limited but according to the discussions with the management and the SAR overall, the international cooperation is being developed purposefully in the Arts study field. The research/creative activity of the academic staff and communication with international scientific research and creative fields is crucial, as the transfer of knowledge moves to the university through them. There is no critical mass of full-time researchers/teachers to do practice-based research and/or make artistic creations. It is understandable that the newly built doctoral programme and its small number of staff cannot take care of the entire transfer of knowledge in practice-based/guided research. There has not yet been sufficient effort and funding on teachers' and student' creative collaborations in international

projects. Also visiting international teachers are limited.

Strengths:

1. Motivated management with ambitious ideas for the development of practice-based research and artistic creation.
2. The recent application for European project funding for collaborations with international partners.

Weaknesses:

1. There is no critical mass of artists/researchers/teachers to do research and/or make artistic creations.
2. The funding and time is limited for artistic creation/research of the teaching staff.
3. Limited international connections and few international teaching staff.
4. Difficulties to find teachers with high merits in the field plus a high academic degree.

Assessment of the requirement [2]

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

The aims of MA- and doctoral level programmes comply well with contemporary scientific and artistic research/creation. Anyhow the critical mass of research/artistic staff is very small and the academic programmes are young, so the compliance is not yet sufficient with the European level of scientific research nor artistic creation even though there are singular high level artist-researchers involved. The compliance of research and artistic creation could be developed by inviting visiting international academic staff and enhancing the arts field teachers' possibilities for their own research and creative activities as well as for international exchange.

The students' final works' parts A and B should have a connection. The emphasis of the Arts study field could be more on the exploration with digital audiovisual tools in wider environments in all levels, in order to get an academic/creative path from BA to MA and to doctoral programmes.

The teachers' possibilities for research and artistic creation in international cooperation projects would help the Arts study field to develop scientific works and artistic creations and their interconnection.

1.5. Cooperation and Internationalisation

Analysis

1.5.1

The most prominent collaboration exists with Liepāja University (LiepU), which contains two joint programmes - MA- and doctoral - and an agreement for undertaking the Audiovisual Media Art BA-programme, in the event of programme discontinuity. Furthermore, the agreement from 2016, as it mentioned on List of Cooperation Agreements (Annex 2.13.), served to broaden the scope of collaboration across various areas, contributing to an overarching sense of partnership. The level of collaboration with the closest options - with the Latvian culture and arts universities - is not clearly defined. There could be more practical collaboration with institutions such as the Latvian Academy of Arts (LAA) and Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music (JVLAM) and Latvian Academy of Culture

(LAC).

Presently, Riseba has specific agreements in place. These agreements encompass the following:

1. Collaboration with the Latvian Academy of Culture (LAC) involves the undertaking of MA-programme in cases of programme discontinuity. Additionally, there is an arrangement for the undertaking of the BA-programme from LAC in the event of programme discontinuity. Notably, the bilateral agreement encompassing academic, research, and creative collaboration with LAC finished in 2018 and there is no information about its extension.
2. An agreement with the LAA pertains to a promotion council dedicated to Riseba joint Doctoral study programme and an agreement for the undertaking of Doctoral programme from Riseba in the event of programme discontinuity.

The nature of the collaboration with Riga Stradins University (RSU) lacks clarity, as there is no existing agreement between the two institutions. It appears that the mentioned professors in the SAR involve individuals within a working group, rather than representing a formal institutional cooperation.

The approach to exchanging information and cooperation in creative projects with LAA, LAC, RSU, and JVLAM is not clearly outlined, as it is only briefly mentioned in the SAR (pages 107-108).

The experts found out that the local employers participate in the teaching process, serve as consultants for study programme councils and also offer student internships and training. During the meeting with employers 2.-3.08.2023, it was highlighted that students are actively engaged in various professional activities, including commercial shootings, roles within the production department, and photography work. Their dedication and hardworking nature have been particularly commendable, showcasing a comprehensive range of essential skills. Additionally, employers emphasized a notable distinction between students with practical experience and those without. However the experts suggest that the Arts study field could attract even more local experts from the industry to teach.

The only municipality engaged in cooperation with Riseba is Liepāja Municipality, which has partnered with LiepU. The experts suggest to widen and deepen the collaborations with the local arts universities, especially with LAC and possibly remake the agreement about collaboration. If there is discontinuity of the BA-programme the option of LAC to undertake the BA-programme could be also considered as the LAC is situated in Riga. The experts however understand the relevance of an ongoing agreement with LiepU.

1.5.2

Cooperation with foreign institutions is regulated by the Internationalisation Strategy of the Riseba (link in the SAR page 105). The primary collaboration with international higher education institutions is through the ERASMUS+ programme. Additionally, efforts to expand cooperation with other cultural organisations are currently in progress. The SAR (pages 105-106) also includes a list of international organisations. However, it does not clarify the extent of cooperation between these organisations and the Arts study field implementation.

Based on the number of travels of the head of the faculty in 2022 (Annex 2.1.6), the Arts study field is actively searching for international partners. It is advisable to select the international partner universities strategically and the collaboration with the selected ones could include projects. This is already in process as some European funding has been applied in collaboration with foreign universities.

From the information provided in SAR (pages 108-109), the lack of details about collaboration between Riseba and international institutions serves as a reason for experts not to be able to effectively evaluate these partnerships. It's necessary to highlight that the English version of the SAR does acknowledge the existence of bilateral agreements involving Riseba; However, there is absence of accessible documentation with these agreements. Also, these bilateral agreements are not mentioned in the Latvian version of the SAR. Thus, the experts cannot evaluate them.

1.5.3

The primary strategic directions of internationalisation as it is mentioned on SAR (page 109) is predominantly centred on attracting incoming international students, previously Russian-speaking students (from Russia, Ukraine, Belarus). Currently there has been a change in tactics to attract English-speaking students: to attract students from post-Soviet bloc countries and additionally attract people from the European Union. While Riseba is open for professors from abroad, only a limited number of local academic staff members are participating in outgoing mobilities. Additionally, there is a lack of regular participation of local visiting teachers in international mobilities.

The ERASMUS+ programme for student mobility in the Arts study field is functioning effectively. Instead the teaching staff mobility is rare according to the Annex 2.16. During the 6 years there have been 6 members of the academic staff going abroad and only 1 incoming teaching staff. The head of department has made most of the travels abroad, which is understandable because of administrative work to create the connections.

While the Riseba Erasmus+ Programme Mobility Organisation Procedure (PR0033 Erasmus+ Programme Mobility Organisation Procedure.pdf) stipulates that ERASMUS+ mobility is exclusively available for full-time students, there is conflicting information on the Riseba web pages under the section "ERASMUS+ OPPORTUNITIES - STILL WIDE AND ACCESSIBLE . " It suggests that part-time students can also participate. It is essential to ensure the inclusion of all Riseba students in the ERASMUS+ programme.

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

Conclusions:

The most notable collaboration of the Arts study field is with LiepU, which encompasses joint MA- and doctoral programmes, which the experts support. The collaboration with local Latvian culture and arts universities lacks clarity. There are specific undertaking agreements with LAC for MA- and BA-programmes. Similar arrangements exist with LAA for the doctoral programme. The nature of collaboration with RSU remains unclear. Practical collaboration with the arts universities seems to be limited.

Local employers actively engage in teaching, advising study programme councils, and offering a lot of internships, praising students' dedication and skills. However, some more industry experts from wider audiovisual and media art areas could be attracted to teach.

Cooperation with foreign institutions is primarily through ERASMUS+. During the expert visit it became clear that Riseba has an efficient and welcoming Erasmus+-office and Riseba wants to enhance internationalisation. To enhance international collaboration, expanding ERASMUS+ networks, and involving teachers in exchanges is insufficient, especially outgoing faculty mobility - which is on the other hand understandable as there are few full time teachers for core studies. There's a need for consistent information regarding ERASMUS+ eligibility. The internationalisation strategy seeks to transform from attracting Russian-speaking students to English-speaking ones and attract more foreign students.

Strengths:

1. Active work going on for enhancing international collaboration with similar types of universities.
2. Collaboration with LiepU.
3. Local employers participate in teaching processes and provide a lot of internships for students.
4. Efficient and well-serving Erasmus+ office.

Weaknesses:

1. Insufficient practical collaboration with the local arts universities.
2. Lack of clarity in cooperation with universities and organisations.
3. The outgoing mobility of the teaching staff is insufficient.
4. Limited municipality engagement.
5. Emphasis on incoming students, while there are gaps in outgoing mobilities.

Assessment of the requirement [3]

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Riseba has signed some agreements with Latvian universities and has two joint programmes with Liepaja University. These are very good steps. University also collaborates with some international universities, but the scope of which could be widened and strategically and practically deepened with the selected one/s. There is only a limited number of local academic staff members who participate in outgoing mobilities. Even short exchange or shadowing visits are suggested for teachers. There should be more collaboration with the business sector of creative industry to find partners for innovative exploration, relevant research topics, and also teachers.

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

Analysis

The Arts study field was accredited on May 24, 2013. In its final report, the accreditation commission of the study field had as the main recommendation to activate the scientific research and artistic creation activities of the academic staff, involving also students. There were 3 recommendations for Undergraduate, 10 for Master's and 9 for Doctoral programs. The actions implemented by the Arts study field are very clearly expressed in the Annex 2.17.

Undergraduate programme level (Recommendations of the licensing expert commission of the Bachelor study program "Audiovisual media art" 43213 for the reporting period) :

Recommendations: To activate the scientific research and artistic creative activities of the academic staff by involving them in it.

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant.

Justification: The activation of scientific and artistic creative activities of the academic staff has been implemented but it is not sufficient and should continue.

Recommendations: Until the admission of students to the study program, in order to avoid possible misunderstandings when making changes to the parameters of the bachelor's study program, advertising materials should use the wording: "Languages of the study program implementation - Latvian, English

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant. The requirement has been satisfied and accepted by AIC decision 2020/33-1.

Recommendations: To correct info regarding BA study programme language and programme descriptions in the titles of the course plan and division by semester.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant. The requirement has been satisfied and accepted by AIC decision 2020/33-1.

Master's programme level (Implementation of the recommendations of the licensing expert commission of the joint (RISEBA/LiepU) academic master's study program "New media and audiovisual art" 45213 since 25.10.2017):

Recommendations: Encouraging the lecturers to supplement the module descriptions with the latest literature and to promote the acquisition of the latest literature by the libraries of both universities.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant. Justification: The supplementation of the latest literature has been implemented.

Recommendations: Develop recommendations for the cooperation of instructors within the modules, thereby promoting the mutual content integration of the courses included in the module and the unity of the achievable results and compliance with the goals and objectives of the program.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant. Justification: Action has been done to enhance cooperation.

Recommendations: The requirements for starting studies are included in the module descriptions.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant. Justification: The requirements have been included in the descriptions of the modules, see. Appendix No. 3.2.7.

Recommendations: Clarify the conditions for developing master's theses and promote cooperation between the two universities in the process of defending master's theses, organising it as a single process regardless of the student's chosen specialisation and the responsible university.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant. A unified process for defending master's theses has been developed.

Recommendations: Review and improve the content of the "Creative Industries" module, more focusing on strengthening production, marketing and business competencies, the name of the module should also be clarified accordingly.

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant.

Justification: The module name has not been changed but joint projects with faculty and students of the Faculty of Business and Economics are extended to involve larger participation in the module. The central focus of the module is the promotion of entrepreneurial competence in the creative industries. Experts suggest further improving the content of the "Creative Industries" module, not only promoting the entrepreneurial competencies, but paying more attention to the creative sector, like production, marketing and show business companies with video, light and sound, post-production and content production.

Recommendations: In the future, consider the possibility of balancing the requirements of the program depending on the previous education - the professional bachelor's program implemented by Riseba, which students study for 4 years, and the academic programs of LiepU, which students study for 3 years, also consider the possibility of organising an additional module for those students of the program who obtained their bachelor's education with new media and audiovisual arts in non-related programs.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant. Justification: There are plans to shorten the BA into 3-years and have more academic content, which better integrates the two bachelor programmes.

Recommendations: Clarifying the distance learning study options mentioned in the description and which are planned to be implemented in the future.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant. Justification: 1. Using the possibilities provided by Riseba's digital platforms (Moodle, Zoom), lessons can be held remotely, sharing materials, creating working groups, etc. 2. Opportunities for improving distance learning with new tools and digital programs are currently being planned.

Recommendations: To increase the capacity of research activities and the effectiveness of cooperation, form research groups, including lecturers from both universities in the study program. A wider involvement of LiepU teaching staff in the work of the editorial board of the Riseba magazine "ADAM Art" is recommended.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant. Justification: Established 2 research groups: 1. In the field of immersive media (360° video and narrative, interactive 3D environments, immersive sound) 2. The LiepU teaching staff's involvement in ADAM art is ensured.

Recommendations: Until the accreditation of the Arts study field in both universities, 1. conduct research on the employment prospects of program graduates and 2. ensure wider involvement of employers in the development of the study program.

Executed: 1. Partially executed as researched information on creative industry companies in Latvia and a graduate questionnaire has been conducted, but an in-depth analysis of employment prospects and an action plan will be developed by the end of the 2022/2023 academic year, consulting on the methodology together with the Faculty of Business and Economics, the Faculty of Management and Social Sciences of LiepU, and the newly established Council of LiepU.

Executed 2. Practising artists, producers, curators involved in the programme, who regularly offer guest lectures, discussions, creative workshops in their fields (for example, workshops).

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant.

Justification: 1. Partially executed because only a study has been conducted on the employment prospects of graduates of the programme, but an in-depth analysis of employment prospects will be done later. 2. Completed - some practising artists, producers, curators are involved in the programme. They regularly offer guest lectures, discussions and creative workshops in their fields. In the SAR (page 115) it is also said that "A study has been conducted on the employment prospects of graduates of the programme."

Recommendations: When determining the admission requirements for both universities, clarify the requirements of the entrance exams of the study programme regarding the portfolio of creative activity. Licensing documents stipulate that 3 realised new media artworks or projects must be demonstrated, but taking into account the specifics of the study programme, works or projects in audiovisual media can also be envisaged.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant. Justification: The admission requirements have been updated.

Doctoral programme level (Implementation of the recommendations of the licensing expert commission of the joint (RISEBA/LiepU) academic doctoral study program "Media art and creative technologies" 51213 since the evaluation 12.03.2021):

Recommendations: Develop a long-term plan for attracting the target audience of foreign students in order to promote the growth of student dynamics.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant. Justification: A plan for attracting foreign students has been created.

Recommendations: Promote close cooperation with employers and industry representatives among students in order to identify current research objects and follow current trends in the labour market.

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant.

Justification: Only one project has been mentioned. The experts recommend expanding the range of industries to identify research objects and for enhancing the socio-economic importance of research with the direction towards the business field of audiovisual arts.

Recommendations: To settle the right of awarding (promotion) of the scientific degree of doctor, referring to the Law on Scientific Activity.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant. Justification: In the field of visual arts and architecture, there is a contract with the Academy of Arts. Therefore, degree applicants are not denied the opportunity to defend themselves during the transition period. The task is to increase the number of selected researchers/teaching staff in the field of study "Art" with the status of LZP expert. Time of execution – 2027. The solution is in process.

Recommendations: Create a document in which the scope of the council's activities and responsibilities for ensuring the quality of the joint study program would be more precisely defined.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant. Justification: A document has been created that sets out the scope of the council's activities. Two councils have been established: programme council and science council.

Recommendations: Improving the qualifications of teaching staff (to promote English language skills of teaching staff up to levels C1 and C2).

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant. Justification: Several of the teaching staff involved in the direction and programme in the LiepU project "Raising the qualifications of teaching staff in the project "Development of the academic staff of the University of Liepāja in the areas of strategic specialisation - natural sciences, mathematics and information technologies, art, social sciences, commercial studies and law" received a C1 English language proficiency certificate, and other activities. The experts noted during the meeting with the teachers that not everyone is able to communicate in English at a sufficient conversational level.

Recommendations: Diversify sources of funding by getting involved in national or international level scientific programmes, thus promoting the activity of students in the national or international level scientific environment.

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant. Justification: Study programme researchers and doctoral students have participated in at least 1 international and 1 national level scientific programme. The funding and activities are not yet sufficient even though there have been relevant steps and good plans.

Recommendations: Create a unified, specialised library collection, the selection of information resources of which would focus directly on the specifics of the given study program.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant. Justification: An up-to-date information base for conducting innovative research has been created.

Recommendations: To develop basic prior knowledge of IT, new media and/or art competences, which would be a basic basket in order to be able to successfully implement the study programme for its corresponding goals.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant. Justification: The list of prerequisite competencies has been developed in cooperation with the head of the direction who has been working in the project "Competence approach to learning content".

Recommendations: To supplement the composition of the teaching staff with lecturers from the branches of natural sciences and technology for a wider expansion of the sector.

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant. Justification: Teaching staff from the fields of natural sciences and technology are involved. Experts however suggest supplementing the teacher forces from the new media industry, according to the requirements of the wider labour market and future trends.

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

Conclusions:

According to SAR (SAR Pdf_1883_EN_v2_modified.pdf) with annexes and information collected during the visit, it is clear that Riseba has taken into account most of the previous assessment recommendations. From 22 recommendations 16 are fully compliant and 6 are partly compliant but in process to be implemented. It is necessary to implement the previous recommendations to improve the Arts study field as they are also in line with the current experts' recommendations.

Strengths:

1. Riseba responded and answered all the recommendations received in the previous evaluation procedures. A good list of recommendations and their implementation has been done.
2. The partly compliant recommendations are all in process.

Weaknesses:

1. Not all recommendations are yet fully compliant.

Assessment of the requirement [4]

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Riseba has eliminated most of the deficiencies identified in the previous assessment and implemented recommendations or is in process to implement the rest of the recommendations. The experts trust that all the ongoing developments will be implemented. The experts understand that the long term recommendations take time to implement.

1.7. Recommendations for the Study Field

Short-term recommendations

- | |
|--|
| 1. The experts recommend creating good visualisation/s of the organisational chart, with the directors (with titles) in the faculty/programme level and with the main collegial decision making bodies (with different colours for example). |
| 2. The experts recommend Riseba web pages to be up-dated and to have information also about the coming changes, to include information of the programmes, admission criteria and entry steps and how the joint MA- and doctoral programmes are realised in practice. |
| 3. The experts recommend adding actions into the Development plan. |
| 4. The experts recommend enhancing the teachers mobility, even short term benchmarking visits and shadowing. |

5. The experts recommend creating identical admission criteria for the joint programmes of both Riseba and LiepU.
6. The experts recommend subscribing to publications, newspapers or magazines from the leading multimedia industry, news info sources, as well as subscribing to leading online movie platforms and also developing the library into an attractive place for active but informal meetings, reading and watching videos/films etc.
7. The experts recommend presenting to students every digital platform's role in the study process and what it is going to be used for.
8. The experts recommend continuing to fulfill the previous recommendations.
9. The experts recommend that qualitative methods would be added to the student assessment system. Group/student discussions and self-assessment methods could be increased especially when assessing the artistic/creative works of students.
10. The experts recommend that principles for the use of AI, Chat GBT and alike in the studies could be created.
11. The experts recommend encouraging students to participate annual feedback surveys.
12. The experts recommend consulting teachers and/or possibly leading companies of the industry in the selection and procurement of resources, software and equipment.
13. The experts recommend establishing a post-production sound studio and a projection hall with a quality sound system, purchasing software for sound and image processing in the future, converting one of the empty studio rooms into a colour correction workplace.
14. The experts recommend motivating the current and potential experts from the industry to teach in Arts study field - for instance - by creating attractive opportunities for benchmarking visits to world-class fairs, studios or similar programmes abroad as part of their work.
15. The experts recommend providing EDUROAM network in the H2O6 premises.
16. The experts recommend that Riseba takes into account that in the arts sector, as the highly qualified experts usually own MA-degree plus are merited in the arts/creative field itself, the PhD-qualification ratio could be designed, by now as an exception, to 50% for the Arts study field.

Long-term recommendations

1. The experts recommend continuing to further profile the programmes and the study field.
2. The experts recommend that the Quality Assurance System's tools will be added with core process descriptions (visual and written) and that especially the budgeting and recruiting processes will be described step by step and visualised.
3. The experts recommend creating a mechanism how the improvements according to the feedback are informed to the students and stakeholders.
4. The experts recommend creating a working hours planning system for teachers with specific hours dedicated to teaching, research/creative work, administrative and self development and publishing the whole salary system of the academic staff for transparency reasons.

5. The experts recommend uniforming the joint programmes and the information in the web pages of Riseba and LiepU.
6. The experts recommend deepening the collaboration with the LiepU and Latvian Academy of Culture and other arts universities in Latvia for example by projects.
7. The experts recommend that full-time teachers' working time/funding for research and creative activities will be increased, which means that also more teachers with a degree in the arts should be recruited. Also, the experts recommend that the Riseba changes the demanded PhD-qualification ratio little lower for the Arts study field (if not statutory) as there are few qualified artists with PhD and high level creative skills are still mainly earned in the arts field.
8. The experts recommend increasing international collaboration projects and attracting international visiting teachers.

II - "Audiovisual Media Arts" ASSESSMENT

II - "Audiovisual Media Arts" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1

The Audiovisual Media Arts BA programme complies quite well with Riseba's strategic goal for enhancing creative industry and partly with the Arts study field objective to educate wide-profile specialists.

At the moment, the BA-programme provides a BA-level professional (skills-based) education in the area of audiovisual media art. The objectives of the BA-programme is expressed in the SAR (page 14) in the following: "to prepare... wide-profile specialists in the audiovisual field for work in public and private mass media, television, cinema, radio, video and cinema post-production and visual special effects companies, sound recording and sound effects creation studios, as well as internet social networks, a new type of creative consultants for business, companies, and other departments that are attributed to the creative industries in the current global market and to prepare a new type of audiovisual media entrepreneurs who would effectively manage the creative industries of international scale."

It seems that there has been recent changes in the programme as according to the Riseba web pages (in July/August 2023 <https://riseba.lv/en/home/programme/introductions>) the programme is designed on four professional tv- and film-specialisations : television and film directors, cameramen, producers and scriptwriters. Instead, the current study plan (Annex 3.1.6) informs four specialisations: Film Director, Film Cinematographer, Film Producer and Audiovisual Journalist.

It seems that film is currently being emphasised. Possibly film is emphasised because of its attractiveness for young people. Also, the Arts study field has developed a new specialisation - audiovisual journalism, instead of scriptwriters - the reason of which is explained in the SAR. The new specialisation is developed to create and promote media literacy for the development of resilience of the society against manipulations in the information space. This is basically very important in Latvia and in Europe, but the specialisation's relevance in Riseba/Arts study field is questioned by the experts as there is no academic journalism programme nor research in journalism provided in Riseba and as the specialisation has very little journalism content.

Instead of wide-profile specialists, the BA specialisations and the curriculum give an impression of an education that is concentrated providing students with basic skills in quite narrow professions, previously mainly for the tv- and - it seems -now for film-industry. The 43 final works of graduates

from several years seen by the experts on 3.8.2023 and online, shows that about half (48%) of the works are documentary, narrative or dance films and the rest are: 5 documentations of performances, 3 music videos, 2 commercials and 2 animations. About 5 could be considered as artistic/art projects and only 3 used new media tools like VR. The content of the practical works support the impression of a relatively traditional "film-school" education. Also the students met (site visit 3.8.2023) by the experts informed that they wanted to study in a "film-school".

The experts think that it is important to educate also specialists that are in demand in the new media industry of the future and to use the niche most relevant to the Riseba. The specialisations in film professions are partly overlapping with the film programme specialisations of the Latvian Academy of Culture.

The notion of audiovisual is far wider than narrative film- or video making professions' sphere. As far as the experts understand, the Arts study field management is also aiming to reprofile the BA-programme, which the experts support.

In experts' opinion, the emphasis of the BA-programme is not fully corresponding the earlier mentioned objectives of the Arts study field as the scope of exploration in the studies of audio- , visual- and emerging digital sphere is limited to certain film professions.

2.1.2

The title and code of the study programme indicate its subject area and level and the BA-degree is relevant for the programme. The title of the BA audiovisual media arts programme suggests that the programme includes audio- and visual content. According to the SAR, annexes and the expert visit, the content of the studies are mainly headed to the visual sphere and to professional competencies needed in the video/film making. Based on the practical student works seen by the expert group a major part of the works are narrative and based relatively much on film making traditions. Also, most of the students referred to the programme as a "film school" in the meeting with the experts on 3.8.2023. It would be advisable to tailor the specialisations more according to the title and already mentioned (paragraph 2.1.1) objectives of the BA-programme and the emphasis in the curriculum could be designed accordingly. It would be advisable to focus also on audio - sound design and knowledge about sound, as sound is more than half of the perception of visual performance. Sound - like speech, text, narration, sound effects, sound background, sound realities and spaces and music - co-shapes more than 80% of the emotional perception of the visual image. The degree and professional qualification of the study programme, aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated and work mainly together to ensure that the study programme is effective. However, the curriculum is very fragmented which may decrease the effectiveness of the studies.

The aims and objectives of the programme are designed according to the European Qualifications Framework standards to achieve the learning outcomes, which are the knowledge, skills, and competencies that students are expected to acquire during their studies. The learning outcomes are as expected by the European standards and the admission requirements are basically designed to ensure that students have the necessary background and qualifications to succeed in the programme and achieve the intended learning outcomes. However, the huge intake of students and big drop-out rates in the BA-programme suggest that a stricter selection process should be created. The students abilities to succeed in the field should be taken better into account.

The programme is currently designed to be completed in four years of full-time study which is in line with the standard duration of professional bachelor's programmes in Latvia. The Arts study field aims to academicise and shorten the BA-studies to 3 years in order to fit to the European system better and to give students economically lighter education. The experts support the change.

The programme is also designed to be implemented in different study programme forms, including full-time and part-time and are provided in Latvian and English language. This allows students to choose the option that best suits their needs and circumstances. The study programme code (213-

Audiovisual arts and media arts) and degree to be obtained are fit to this study field.

It is relevant to provide the programme in two languages to attract international students and to ensure the continuation possibilities for Latvian students to Riseba MA- and doctoral programmes, which are provided only in English.

2.1.3

The Arts study field has analysed the programme's previous assessment and made a good table (Annex 2.1.7) about actions done. The major recommendation for the long-term was to activate the scientific research and artistic creation activities of academic staff, involving also students. The experts understand that this is a very challenging task as the basis for the BA-programme is a professional education where providing the basic skills for the tv/film/video/making specialisations has been the core of studies and also - the academic staff in the Arts study field is very small. Anyhow, the Arts study field is continuing the work to increase the possibilities for the staff to do research and make artistic creations. One of the main decisions to activate the aforementioned recommendation, the Arts study field aims to academicise and shorten the studies to 3 years. The idea of 3+2 BA-MA path is justified and supported by the experts. The academic/theoretical and practical artistic content will be intertwined in the education. It is said in the SAR (Annex 2.17) that the expected "an in-depth analysis of employment prospects and an action plan will be developed by the end of the 2022/2023 academic year, consulting on the methodology together with the Faculty of Business and Economics, the Faculty of Management and Social Sciences of LiepU, and the newly established Council of LiepU." In experts' opinion, a further analysis has to be done about the number of students taken in. It is impossible to offer for 200-300 hundred students relevant artistic, creative or research-led activities with the very few full time teachers. Also an analysis of employment figures of the graduates, as well as an analysis why many students stop the studies by their own will should be done.

The programme's parameters are well and honestly analysed in their self-assessment - SWOT - analysis (SAR, page 21, table 2.1.) which includes many common perceptions with the current expert group.

2.1.4

There is a social justification for the programme from the point of view of employment as it is said in the SAR (page 15) that graduates of the BA- programme have obtained stable jobs in all major Latvian television companies - LTV1, LTV7, TV3, TV24. Several of them work in the film industry and some have established their own production companies. When conducting a survey on the employment of graduates of the BA-programme, results were obtained confirming that already in the first two years after graduation from this program, 65% of respondents have found a job in the audiovisual industry (SAR, page 171). However, the survey about employment indicators of the graduates are not included in the SAR. Dynamics of the number of students taken in causes concern about the social justification among the experts. According to the statistics about the number of students in the BA-programme "Audiovisual Media Art " over the period from the 2016/2017 academic year to the 2021/2022 academic year (Annex 3.1.2), there are a huge number of admitted students - altogether 309. However, the number of students enrolled in all the 4 (+ a 5th half year) study years is 196 students, when counted from the statistics. The experts assume that the rest of the students (113) are those who have not graduated on time. The experts wonder, where the rest are and if they must pay the fee in case they have courses to finish later. Also, from the aforementioned statistics it can be seen that 39 students have stopped studying by their own will - from all the 44 students who have dropped-out. It would be very important to analyse what are the reasons in those cases. It also causes concern that only about 10% of the students graduate per year. It also means that organising of the studies during the coming years may be difficult when the

study leave/dropped out students from previous years appear to study at same time with the new ones. It affects the quality of education.

The Arts study field management is aware of the large number of students, as it is revealed in the SWOT-analysis (SAR page 22) that one of the threats is the “overproduction of young specialists in Latvia due to the large number of students to be admitted”. This should be considered for the future as in that case, the BA-programme's social justification is low. The experts understand that the number of students is crucial for the private university, but it should be taken into account that the student/teacher ratio and premises should be realistically sufficient for the number of students admitted to the programme. The optimum number of intake for quality/profitability-ratio should be found out for ensuring both the quality of studies and profitability. The university must market the education efficiently but also give a realistic image of the studies in order to attract the most motivated students to the programme and ensure quality studies to the admitted students. According to the Riseba web pages (<https://riseba.lv/en/contact/riseba-production/>) there is a commercial Studio "Riseba Production which employs both experienced professionals and students of the BA-programme, accepts commercial orders for the production of audiovisual works: video film, music video, television and advertising projects, virtual reality photo/video tours, as well as provides video live broadcast process with audiovisual equipment.” The experts assume that the Riseba Production uses the same resources and equipment as the study programmes. There are advantages with the fact: Some students get acquainted with the real customers' needs and with the working process. On the other hand, the experts are concerned how the premises and equipment are available for students' use, if there are 200-300 students enrolled at the same time and also commercial orders. According to the Statistics (Annex 2.1.4) there are a stable number of international students, approximately 22-24 every year in the BA-programme.

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

Conclusions:

The Audiovisual Media Arts BA programme complies basically well with Riseba's strategic goal for enhancing creative industry but partly with the Arts study field objective to educate wide-profile specialists. The profiling and the specialisations are not fully matching the recent objectives nor the title of the programme. Now, the BA-programme ensures mainly practice-based, professional-kind of education for specific film/tv professionals. The programme can be justified for the current tv- and film industry. However, the history of the professional education can still be seen in the BA-programme. The programme needs reprofiling towards wider spheres of audio- and visual and media arts and some academization. The programme seems to be developing with the new management of the faculty. The length of the studies are planned to be shortened to 3 years, which the experts support if the design of the curriculum is renewed as well.

The social justification might be questionable as there are absolutely too many students admitted in and a big drop-out rate which may make the study process quality and student quality to sway and the employment possibilities of the students weaker. The social justification might be questionable also if the big intake of students is interpreted as a “cash cow” of Riseba, which is not good for the reputation of a university. On the experts' opinion the major problem of the BA-programme is the excess number of students admitted to the studies, which may not ensure the quality of the studies as the full-time teachers/student -ratio also becomes weak and the premises - even good - cannot be equally available for all students. The experts suggest taking this into account in order to keep the reputation of the Arts study field and to ensure at the same time that the teachers' and administrators' workload is reasonable.

Strengths

1. Possibility to develop a niche in the audio and visual media art in the Latvian context.
2. Development plans of the programme.

Weaknesses

1. The profiling and the specialisations are not fully matching the recent objectives nor the title of the programme.
2. Too many students are taken in compared to the facilities and number of audiovisual full-time teachers.
3. A big drop-out rate.
4. The big intake of students might be interpreted as a “cash cow” of Riseba.
5. The BA-programme is too profession-centred and needs reprofiling towards wider spheres of audio-, visual and media arts.
6. The experts support shortening the studies to 3 years if the design of the curriculum is renewed as well.
7. The full-time teachers/student -ratio is weak.

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1

The content of the BA-programme suggests that it is a traditional, professional "tv/film-school". Considering the programme's title and current objectives there could be even a wider scope of content in the audio and visual media sphere. Now, the courses are mainly ensuring the students get narrative film/video making and producing professional skills which is understandable taking into account the history of the programme. Considering the situation, it is important to note that while some aspects of the study programme's content are up-to-date, there is a significant issue with its programme's profiling, which is the reason to evaluate the programme as partly topical. Some profiling is recommended in the long run so that the content would correspond to the current objectives of the programme described in the SAR (page 14). Experts partly lack information to assess how effectively the courses within the programme complement each other. However, the expert realised that the curriculum of the BA-programme (Annex 3.1.7) is very fragmented and the study points are usually only few per course, which suggest that the interconnection and complementation of the courses is not optimal.

It is expressed in the SAR (page 97) that Riseba in cooperation with LiepU have been implementing a project financed by the European Social Fund: “Reducing Fragmentation of Study Programmes and Strengthening Resource Sharing in LiepU”. The project has been going on for 3 years. Possibly the learnings from the project could influence the BA-programme curriculum development as well. The lessons learned from the project could be utilized in the future, when designing the curriculum. Based on the meeting with academic staff (3.8.2023), it has been observed that certain workshops share connections, such as the integration of the "Directing for Television and Film" class with the "Cinematography" class. Overall, the courses should have more study points. Curriculum should ensure that the course contents are focused on working processes, interconnected and complement each other. Because of the fragmentation there is no focus on the core processes in order to become a capable professional of media composition in diverse areas of the industry. The curriculum seems to lack media composition - like composition for image, composition for sound, composition for the whole artistic outcome. Compositional skills - and use of composition software - is one of the most essential parts of any audio-visual author work. Also, there is a lack of audio content in the curriculum and there is no specialisation for audio sphere. According to the study plan (Annex 3.1.6), there are only two courses with sound content and with very few contact hours. The

study plan encompasses courses on sound directing and sound recording techniques. Content about fundamental principles of live sound capture and its processing with various software tools seems to be lacking. Courses about the basic laws of acoustics and physics of sound are lacking as well. The experts were pondering that Riseba could become even a game changer in audio sphere if developed. The experts are especially concerned about the students' limited possibilities for artistic/creative collaborative projects, where knowledge of the process of creating digital audiovisual products, the tools and the working methods in the digital media composition - and in computer graphics and visual effects - are missing. It means that the general working process in the audiovisual industry, starting from the very beginning - from idea/concept or script creation to the composition and design, to creation of master material - to final work is not properly integrated into the studies. It also means that communication skills and team work cannot be enhanced optimally during the studies. Also, the post-production basics seem to be lacking from the curriculum.

It seems that there is limited exploration with new media tools in the curriculum. The use of new media tools might widen the employment possibilities and enhance the path to Riseba MA-studies. In the industry, new media is emerging and the employers are short of young and talented workers. At the moment, there are two ways to get new employees - to entice them from competitors or to train themselves. Therefore, there is a niche in the new media for the BA, and also in the audio. Taking all of this into account, incorporating these aspects into the programme would better align it with the demands of the industry, labour market, and prevailing scientific trends.

Until the accreditation, Riseba BA-programme was a professional study programme designed on the basis of several professional standards awarding qualifications as television producer, television operator television and cinematography producer and screenwriter. The general structure of the programme is a combination of general courses, elective courses, practice, final examination and thesis defence. About two thirds of the courses are compulsory, others are elective and give students the opportunity to shape their course of studies according to personal interests and employment plans. A bachelor thesis is required for graduation. Professional study programme volume is 240 ECTS credit points. Study programme parameters were in accordance with regulation of Cabinet of Ministers rules no. 305. Programme structure and number of contact hours complies with Cabinet Regulations no.240. The BA- (academic) programme's volume is 120CP of which 82CP are mandatory part, 24 CP are for limited elective study courses, 4CP for the free elective part and 10CP are devoted to Bachelor thesis. For foreign students the mandatory part is 84CP as it includes an additional mandatory 2CP course of Latvian language.

2.2.3

As highlighted in the SAR (page 177), the primary teaching methods used include traditional approaches such as lectures, seminars, discussions, tests, practical exercises, independent assignments, research activities, as well as creative and project-based works. The programme's methods seem to be reasonably traditional according to the discussion with the students (3.8.2023). It also seems that the studies are largely designed for individual studies. Accordingly, the students wished for more collaborative methods, even between other "diverse year students" and even between programmes. The teachers have possibilities for example observing others' classes and visiting international teachers' classes, which possibly means that the teachers are developing their methods.

The university aims at students centred learning (SAR, page 4, Riseba Mission). According to the expert visit (3.8.2023), the students unanimously expressed that the teachers are always very supportive and the methods mainly contribute to the achievement of the aims. Considering the big number of students taken in for the BA-programme, it creates concerns how the student centred learning can be properly realised. There has also been a big drop-out-rate, which indicates that some students would have needed more contact hours or attention. It is also clear that if the first study year includes 79 students it is impossible to create for example "common projects" for the

study year students. The number of students indicates very individual learning methods during the studies, which is not very typical in the arts field.

2.2.4

The incorporation of student internships (Annex 3.1.8 "Academic undergraduate study programmes "Audiovisual Media Arts" internship requirements.") is systematically organised, with 80 academic hours (around 3 ECTS) allocated annually for full-time students. For those engaged in part-time studies, a corresponding structure is followed: 80 academic hours in the first year and 160 academic hours in the third year. This arrangement is designed to encourage students to proactively plan and execute their internship experiences, contributing to a well-rounded learning process. The internship activities and associated tasks have proven their effectiveness in achieving the intended goals. In the old professional programme internship was provided for 30 ECTS and after the change, the academic BA will still have 9ECTS of internship" and the analysis is meant for both variations before and after accreditation. Both students and employers have expressed contentment with the current internship opportunities that have been extended. During the meeting with experts (3.8.2023) the students confirmed that the institution provides a diverse array of internship possibilities. In a meeting (3.8.2023) the employers affirmed that Riseba's students are well-equipped for real-world work situations - but that it also depends a lot on an individual. In the SAR (page 180), several companies where students have pursued internships are mentioned. These include Latvian Television, TV3 Latvia, as well as film production companies such as Mistrus Media, Ego Media, Baltic Pine Films, and VFS. The current list of Cooperation Agreements at Riseba (Annex 2.13) underscores the existence of practical internship agreements with entities like Latvian Television, Riga's Business Channel 1-BC, The Takes.com, Inc., Giraffe Visualization Group, TV3 Latvia, Dailies Theatre, Fotonoma, and TELIA Latvia. The comprehensive compilation encompasses a selection of credible industry-based providers for internships.

Based on the feedback gathered from graduates at the meeting (3.8.2023), it has been highlighted that additional practical experience, particularly through internships, greatly enhances their readiness to tackle real-world scenarios. They have expressed a strong desire for more involvement with genuine film production studios, encompassing extensive filming sets and related environments.

The assigned tasks during the internship are directly aligned with the achievable learning outcomes, for example, specialised knowledge characteristic to the specialisation, knowing of technical and creative aspects of audiovisual production, and demonstrating understanding of professional ethics, responsibility and sustainable development, taking into account the ethical and public benefit principles of the audiovisual industry. Following comprehensive discussions with employers and students on the meeting 3.8.2023, experts have discerned potential challenges pertaining to internships for students pursuing their studies in English. Notably, the availability of internships conducted in English within Latvia appears to be limited. A viable resolution entails Riseba forging local collaborations with enterprises that exhibit a pronounced international focus, thereby proactively advancing the cause of enhancing internship prospects. Additionally, a strategic emphasis on promoting the ERASMUS+ initiative's array of international internship options could further enrich the paths available to students.

2.2.6

The programme offers a diverse range of options for students' final practical work (SAR, page 182), spanning various formats within the realm of audiovisual media and film production. These formats include feature films, short films, documentaries, TV series episodes, music videos, animations, and more. Throughout the reported period however, students predominantly chose to focus on creating

short films, documentaries and music videos. The students' final works' theoretical component covers a broad spectrum of contemporary topics in audiovisual media art, from the integration of new technologies in visual content creation to explorations of various themes within cinema. While the scope of the research section in these theses is relatively narrow, students have delved into specific facets of the audiovisual realm, such as comparative analyses of film adaptations or examinations of choreographic elements in motion pictures. Some topics extend beyond the immediate relevant scope of the programme, exploring trends in Japanese animation or addressing pertinent issues like the impact of online production during the COVID-19 pandemic. The final works correspond to the current curriculum's content. It was however realised by the experts that the practical and theoretical parts of the final works are rarely interconnected. The connection between the practical and theoretical part of the final thesis should be demanded in the curriculum in order to create interconnection between the practice and theory and to increase the relevance for the industry and as well boost the development of artistic or practice-based research.

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

Conclusion:

The content of the BA-programme seems to be a relatively traditional "tv/film-school", considering the programme's title and objectives which suggests wider scope of content covering also new media tools. It also overlaps with the Audiovisual programme in Latvian Academy of Culture. The title of the BA audiovisual media arts programme suggests that the programme includes audio- and visual content. According to the SAR, annexes and the expert visit, the content of the studies are mainly headed to the visual sphere and to professional competencies needed in the video/film making, which is logical taking into account the history of the programme. The audio content is however too limited.

The curriculum is very fragmented with many small courses, which do not enable longer processes of creative activities and do not ensure the interconnection of the courses. The students should be encouraged for more experimental works and wider use of digital technology, also in other locations like museums, projections outside, performances etc. already in the BA-level. Now, the curriculum structure does not support it.

The programme's methods seem to be reasonably traditional also according to the discussion with the students (3.8.2023). It also seems that the studies are largely designed for individual studies. Accordingly, the students wished for more collaborative methods, even between other "year class students" and even programmes. The curriculum that is arranged according to specific film professions lack possibilities for developing compositional and team working skills.

The creative final works of the students are largely narrative or documentary. The final works' practical and theoretical parts are not sufficiently interconnected. The limited audio content in the curriculum directs the creations mainly to the visualisation itself, understanding moving images, narration and documentary but not the crucial element of audio work. Feedback from both students and employers highlights a positive reception of the internship opportunities facilitated by Riseba. Experts identified potential challenges related to internships for students studying in English.

Strengths:

1. Stable history in educating professionals especially for the tv-industry.
2. Good internship opportunities.
3. There is a niche open for the BA in the audio and new media sphere.

Weaknesses:

1. Fragmented curriculum and course descriptions per profession, which may restrict the interconnection of the courses and exploration.
2. Limited audio/sound design and compositional content in the curriculum.
3. Possibilities for artistic creation and compositions are limited.
4. Limited collaboration between the students.
5. In the final works of the students the theoretical and practical parts are not interconnected.

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1

The BA-programme is carried out in three buildings in Riga - Meža Street 3, Meža Street 1/6 and Durbes Street 4 (H2O6 Riseba Architecture and Media Center), which is also adapted for students with special needs. The expert group visited H2O6 Architecture and Media Centre and the Library 2-3.8.2023 and saw that the premises are well-equipped, well kept and basically open for students and staff. It is also indicated in the SAR (page 146) that classes can be held outside Riseba, for example in a specific studio or audiovisual company depending on the study needs. The H2O6 also has a lot of computer equipment. According to SAR (page 146) Riseba provides 344 computers with the Windows operating system installed, of which 75 are laptops and 92 are Apple computers. Computers are based on Intel Core processors with MS Windows and MS Office software or Apple MacOS X software installed. All Riseba computers are also connected to the university's local computer network and the Internet. Wireless Internet access (WiFi) is provided in the premises of the university but not the common european network EDUROAM. The expert group found out that the needs for the renewal of equipment/resources are also checked once a year. Software versions, computer network antivirus software and firewall provision are regularly maintained and updated. Limited provisions seem to exist mainly for field recording, music recording and post-production sound mixing equipment. The students have a small sound studio at their disposal for individual creative work, which is intended for production and processing of audio recordings. It is also possible to lease equipment from a company. Experts recommend implementing semi-professional and professional software for sound and image processing, to offer opportunities for artistic expression and design, along with experimentation and the creation of new audio and visual content, for example, programmes like Avid ProTools (sound), Reaper (sound), Adobe Audition (sound), for film editing keep continue to use Adobe Premiere Pro and DaVinci Resolve (also for colour correction), for film graphics Fusion Studio, Adobe After Effects, Red Giant (Trapcode, Magic Bullet, Universe and VFX), COREL VideoStudio Ultimate (for stop-motion and motion tracking). The experts suggest converting one of the empty studio rooms into a colour correction workplace, as it seems to be missing at the moment. A full blackout room should be provided, with a proper studio video projector with affordable black level performance, plus screens, which would bring professional video compositions and colour corrections closer to the capabilities and experience of the real pro

video studio. According to the SAR (page 68) and the expert visit (2.-3.8.2023) discussions, the library premises are available and the resources are quite sufficient for the programme's needs. There is also a modest specific library/book shelves in the building H2O6 for the Arts direction with specialised sources of literature in the audiovisual field. The library collection is designed in accordance with the content of the study programmes, in cooperation with the directors of study programmes and academic staff. In the SAR (page 70) the process of procurement of library resources is well explained and visualised. The students also proved that it is easy to ask for new literary sources. The expert group recommends expanding the concept and role of the library. There could be a small specific library in H2O, a cosy meeting point for students with screening possibilities for online movies platforms. The library could subscribe to publications, newspapers or magazines for the students' and staff 's use from the leading multimedia industry, news info sources, as well as subscribing to leading online movie platforms (like Netflix, Amazon Prime, Disney+, HBO Max, Paramount+, Apple, TET+). According to the SAR (p. 184-189) and site visit Riseba provides mainly good premises, conditions and informative provision for the implementation of the study programme for the current curriculum - if the big student intake is not taken into account. It seems that there is little funding for creative activities of the students as only 0,8 % is allocated to "scientific activities" (SAR page 61) and it is not known, if the percentage includes creative activities. Otherwise the experts did not get very much details about financial provision allocated to the BA-programme.

2.3.3

As outlined in the SAR (page 188), over 70-80% of university revenues stem from tuition fees. The criteria for the minimum student enrollment necessary to sustain a programme is very well realised as there are according to the Annex 3.1.2 even 309 students altogether admitted in the programme. As the tuition fee revenues go to the university level and not specific figures are seen about how the BA-programme is funded, it is difficult to say how well the funding facilitates the programme implementation. The number of students is certainly affirming the programme's profitability for the Riseba and lack of financial vulnerabilities as such. During the expert visit (2-3.8.2023) it became clear that funding is budgeted to the programme according to tariffs etc. but the experts did not find out by what kind of tariffs, principles and process the study programmes are budgeted, how the normal annual costs and annual specific needs of the programmes are calculated. It remains partly unclear how the teachers' artistic and creative activities and students' creative coursework and final projects are funded.

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

Conclusions:

According to the SAR (page 68) and the expert visit (2.-3.8.2023) discussions, the H2O6 and library premises are well available and the resources are quite sufficient for the BA-programme's needs, but there are some deficiencies that the experts recommend to be provided in the future (in case not there already) - according to the needs of future profile and specialisations. For example, it seems that there could be more audio equipment and special studios. It would also be good to include EDUROAM network. The recommendation is provided in the study field section. There is a sufficient number of students for profitability but the student intake is huge compared to European equivalent programmes and to the premises and facilities. Therefore the experts have also concerns about the sufficiency of the facilities and funding as the intake of students is too big.

Strengths:

1. Mostly well equipped facilities for the implementation of the programme.
2. Easy access to small library shelves in H206
3. Wireless internet access

Weaknesses:

1. Lack of EDUROAM access. (Already mentioned in the study field section.).
2. Limited audio equipment and no specialised studios, e.g. equipped sound mixing room, colour correction room. (Already mentioned in the study field section).
3. Lack of funding for creative activities of the students.
4. Limited library role.

Assessment of the requirement [6]

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

The resources, facilities and premises are basically good and sufficient as such except that the provision of audio equipment is limited. Considering the big student intake, the premises and equipment are probably not sufficient. There are no details about what is the funding logic of the programme nor the use of the funding at the programme level. Transparency in budgeting is vital for building trust and accountability within the university community. If financial decisions are not transparent, it can lead to misunderstandings and concerns about resource allocation in the university.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1

According to the SAR (page 191, tables 3.1 and 3.2), a total of 63 teaching staff are involved in the implementation of the BA-programme. 13 of them are academic staff of Riseba and 50 are visiting lecturers. However, the names in the SAR differ from the Annex 2.7. The reason for that seems to be (SAR, page 198) that the teaching staff of the programme has been supplemented with new lecturers, taking into account the fact that from September 2020, the English language education was also opened in the BA- programme. After reading the SAR and Annexis, it remains unclear who of the elected programme level staff are working full-time. The BA-programme has been executed by 18 doctoral level teachers as well as 37 master level teachers. In experts' opinion, it is however alarming that from the elected Riseba staff 4 had a degree from psychology, 3 from economics, 1 from administration, 1 from legal sciences etc. According to table 3.1 only 3 of elected Riseba teachers have a degree in the Arts. This means that the programme's core studies are mainly provided by visiting teachers, who can't take as much responsibility for the students nor about the development of the programme as the full time teachers. Also BA-programme's the elected staff salaries take 48,6% of the funding and visiting teachers only 13,3%. As the experts also got an impression that some of the full-time staff are paid mainly on their administrative work, it remains a puzzle how the programme enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and ensures quality education for the intaken 309 students. The teaching staff

(SAR pages 191-198) has excellent competences for example in the following areas: lighting, camera work, especially for TV, philosophy, film history, general basics of film production and accounting, documentary cinema, basics of film direction and psychology. The experts found out that there is limited expertise for the use of practical video composition applications. Knowledgeable teachers could be added in the practical use of applications in computer graphics courses that are informed in the curriculum (Annex 3.1.6.). The composition of academic staff could better represent the field of new media and audiovisual art with relevant specialisation and education related to visually perceptible media. The experts also found out that there is a limited expertise in sound design. It would be crucial for the future development to hire full-time teachers for the core of studies and for wider scope of areas in the audio and visual media arts. Teaching staff must have a degree in the Arts field or a respectable career in the audiovisual media arts field plus an academic degree, to ensure quality education.

The accounting of the working time of the teaching staff of study programmes in the Arts study field has been developed taking into account Section 4, Paragraph three, Clause four, Section 5, Paragraph two (prim) Clause 2 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

2.4.2

The Riseba and Arts study field have taken overall measures to ensure that the composition of the teaching staff complies regulations and has a good effect on study quality. According to the SAR (page 41) to maintain the quality of academic staff, an academic position is opened after 6 years for an open competition. Re-election of academic staff to academic positions takes place in accordance with the Law on Higher Education Institutions and other Laws and regulations, as well as Riseba "Regulations on Elections in Academic Positions" and "Academic staff policy". The competition mechanism certainly ensures possibilities for renewal. The election system of academic staff is motivating the academic staff to maintain high performance in order to be re-elected, renewal of academic staff and attracting new teaching staff. The mechanism would make it possible to ensure that the composition of the elected staff of the programme represents the core of studies in the future.

The academic staff is evaluated annually (SAR pages 10-11), in which the achievements of scientific, academic and organisational work are examined. Based on the results of the evaluation, four categories of remuneration have been created for the academic staff. Director of the study programme evaluates the qualifications and education of the teaching staff present in the study programme.

It is mentioned in the SAR (page 21), in the SWOT-analysis of the Arts field that there is a following challenge: "The inadequacy of some professional teachers for academic work, mainly related to the lack of highly qualified local lecturers with a doctorate in audiovisual media." The experts recommend that Riseba would take into account, that in the arts field and especially in a practice-based education, it is challenging to find teachers with a DA- or PhD-degree, as the highest merits usually are earned through artistic/ creative practices on the arts field/industry. It is expressed also in the SAR (page 76) that the Riseba personnel competence model has been developed. In order to verify the potential academic candidates' quality, there is not only the analysis of candidates' documents and face-to-face interview but also the assessment of pedagogical qualifications in an open lecture and evaluation of candidates in the recruiting departments. Also in order to ensure independent expert-examination of the candidate, the Compliance Commission has been established in Riseba. The task of the commission is to give an independent opinion on the suitability of applicants for the academic position. All the mechanisms created are good steps forward.

2.4.4

The teaching staff involved in the implementation of the BA-programme are reflected in SAR (pages

190-198). Riseba has altogether 13 elected academic staff. According to Annex 2.12 and Annex 2.8. (faculty CV:s), the staff is qualified with publications and different types of artistic achievements during the last 6 years and a long working experience in the field. Some teachers have published many articles, also in international publications, some have both publications and several creative projects, some have mainly artistic projects in their cv. Some teachers are qualified especially by working more than 5 years in education or in the professional field. According to the Annex 2.12, there are more theoretical and study programme implementation-related works than practical creative activity. In addition, a large part of the listed "artistic works" have little to do with actual creative activity, but are more technical in nature, like technical tasks in projects. The qualification of teaching staff members however complies with the requirements for the implementation of the BA-programme and with the requirements of Law on Higher Educations.

2.4.5

During the experts' site visit and meetings with the teaching staff (3.8.2023), there were opinions that the mutual cooperation of the teaching staff in the implementation of the study programme could be better. According to all the discussions (2-3.8.2023) the experts got an impression that the whole faculty could have more mutual cooperation, discussions and decisions could be made more based on mutual discussions. Better cooperative mechanisms with both full-time academic staff and visiting teachers would ensure the achievement of the goals of the BA-programme and the linking of study courses better within the BA-programme.

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

Conclusions:

The qualification of teaching staff members basically complies with the requirements for the implementation of the BA-programme, which are determined by the regulations (criterias 2.2.1). According to the documentation only 3 of elected Riseba teachers have a degree in the arts. The core audiovisual studies are mainly produced by visiting teaching staff, who can't take as much responsibility for the students as the full time teaching staff. As the experts also got an impression, that many of the full time staff are paid mainly on their administrative work, not actually teaching/research, it remains a puzzle how the programme enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and could ensure quality education for the admitted 309 students. The Audiovisual Media Arts teaching staff profiles introduced in the SAR (pages 192-198) and annex 2.8. (CVs), suggests that the majority of the (visiting) teachers' experience is based on traditional audiovisual media and filmmaking, with less emphasis on experience in digital composition, visual effects (VFX) or computer graphics (CG). This is justified by the current film specialisations of the BA-programme. The current composition of teachers is limited in the expertise of audio and visual for the fields of performing arts, show multimedia, motion graphics (film, tv, web), post-production, animation and multimedia for advertising. The experts point out that there is a lack of qualified teacher/s for sound, who could cover engineering, sound design work and theory of sound. The Riseba and arts study field have however taken several measures and created university level mechanisms to ensure the quality of the personnel.

Strengths

1. The university has created several university level mechanisms to ensure the quality of the teaching staff.
2. Motivated teachers that were met by the experts.

3. Teaching staff has a lot of professional work experience in the industry, which allows them to share their work experiences and conclusions as well.

Weaknesses:

1. Lack of full-time academic staff with a high degree in the core of studies.
2. Not sufficient expertise in video digital composition, VFX or related field, post-production and sound design.
3. The high proportion of visiting lecturers in core studies in relation to Riseba elected academic staff.
4. Low full-time teacher/students ratio, especially full-time teachers with a degree in the Arts/students ratio.

Assessment of the requirement [7]

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

The qualification of teaching staff members complies with the requirements. All teaching staff comply with the requirements specified in the regulatory enactments of the Republic of Latvia. According to the SAR (page 191, tables 3.1 and 3.2), a total of 63 teaching staff are involved in the implementation of the BA-programme. 13 of them are elected academic staff of Riseba and 50 are visiting lecturers. Only 3 of the elected Riseba staff have an academic degree in the Arts. The full time teachers ratio in respect to the students taken in or enrolled is weak. The programme is very dependent on visiting teachers.

2.5. Assessment of the Compliance

Requirements

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

According to study course descriptions, full-time bachelor curriculum has at least 40% contact hours from the total volume of the study programme. Riseba meets the requirements set in Cabinet of Ministers no. 240. regulations. The programme structure includes obligatory, restricted elective and free elective parts. The mandatory part of the study programme and the restricted elective part includes the guidelines, principles, structure and methodology of the relevant science sector of visual arts, the history of development of the science sector of visual arts and current problems as well as the characterisation of the science sector of visual arts and problems in the cross-sectoral dimension. The BA-programme volume is 120CP of which 82CP are mandatory part, 24 CP are for limited elective study courses, 4CP for the free elective part and 10CP are devoted to Bachelor thesis. For foreign students the mandatory part is 84CP as it includes an additional mandatory 2CP course of Latvian language. Programme structure and number of contact hours complies with Cabinet Regulations no.240. Study programme has 4 specialisations with 20CP amount of study courses.

The programme includes obligatory study courses about environmental protection (Social and Applied Ecology 2CP) and civil protection (Civil protection 1CP). Acquirable degree is in compliance with classification in regulatory enactments. Options for postgraduate education have been fulfilled.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Study course descriptions and study materials are prepared in Latvian and English languages, and they satisfy requirements set in Law on Higher Education Institutions. During a moodle presentation and interviews on visit it was confirmed that materials are published in both languages for respective study groups. Study course literature (mandatory and suggested) is somewhat up to date with younger books/articles in English from recent years.

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

The diploma issued partially complies with the state legislature and "Procedures by which documents certifying higher Education recognised by the State shall be issued" (Cabinet of Ministers No. 202). Sample of diploma (page 3) does not correspond with legislation, it is written partly in Latvian and partly in English

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

There are at least 5 associate professors or professors involved in the study programme implementation together. It is confirmed by Rector's attestation. The compulsory part of the study programme is carried out by 3 professors and 2 associate professors.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The academic staff has sufficient Latvian and English language knowledge for implementing study courses. This is confirmed by a signed Rector's attestation. This attestation is applied only to the Latvian faculty members.

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

The academic staff has mainly sufficient foreign language knowledge for implementing study courses (at least B2). This is confirmed by a signed Rector's attestation and applies to foreign and local faculty members. It was mostly confirmed during on site visit. Not all teachers spoke English.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Riseba has a cooperation agreement with Liepāja University confirming that in case the implementation of BA-programme is terminated, students will be able to continue studies in Liepāja University study programme "New Media Arts", which belongs to the same study field and provides equal degree to be awarded.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

University has a rector's signed attestation that confirms it will compensate losses to students if the study programme is not accredited or loses its licence and the student does not wish to continue studies in another study programme, which is provided by mutual cooperation

agreements with Liepāja University (for bachelors), Culture Academy of Latvia (for masters) or Art Academy of Latvia (for doctoral students).

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Assessment of the requirement [8]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

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

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

Conclusions:

Study programme mostly complies with the requirements set in different laws, and all of the deficiencies regarding fulfilling legal criteria could be eliminated in the short-term period. The title of the BA-programme does not fully comply with the current, written objectives of the programme. The programme needs reprofiling which seems to be in a process. The length of the studies will be shortened to 3-years and academised, which the experts support if the design of the curriculum and specialisations are renewed as well. The curriculum and the course descriptions per profession are very fragmented which does not ensure the interconnection of the courses nor the students' compositional and team work skills to develop. The Arts study field has analysed the programme's previous assessment and actions have been done. The previous expert recommendation which should be done as soon as possible is an in-depth analysis of employment prospects and how the graduates have got employment. This is very important because in experts' opinion the major problem of the BA-programme is the excess number of students admitted to the studies, which may not ensure the quality nor the employment. The full-time teachers/student -ratio is weak and the premises - even good - can't be equally available for all students. The experts suggest putting more emphasis into the exploration with new media tools in the curriculum in order to enhance employment possibilities and the path to the Riseba MA- and doctoral studies. There is a lack of full-time teachers with a degree in the Arts and some expertise is lacking - like expertise of audio and wider visual areas and composition. More full time teachers are needed with a respectable career in the audiovisual media arts field plus a degree, to ensure quality education.

Strengths:

1. Basically good premises, facilities and equipment and the base for the programme.

2. Ambitious goals of the management to develop the BA-programme on.
3. Stable history of the programme.

Weaknesses:

1. The profiling of the BA-programme is not fully complying with the title and the objectives of the programme mentioned in the SAR.
2. Narrow education by specific professions and limited use of audio and new media tools, as well as limited content of the studies in sound design, computer graphics, compositional work and creative, collaborative projects.
3. Excess number of students taken in.
4. Fragmented curriculum and too individual working methods.
5. Very few full-time teachers with a degree in the Arts and a large number of visiting teachers.
6. Little cooperation between the teachers.

Evaluation of the study programme "Audiovisual Media Arts"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Average

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Audiovisual Media Arts"

Short-term recommendations

1. The experts recommend ensuring that Riseba web pages are updated with the current specialisations and also with the coming changes.
2. The experts recommend the dean and programme director arranging strategic discussions with the teachers about the future profile and content of the programme and in order to enhance cooperation and interconnection of the studies.
3. The experts recommend creating stricter admission process for the BA and admit less students.
4. The experts recommend encouraging students for more exploration and wider use of audiovisual and digital technology in other locations like museums, projections outside and performances.
5. The experts recommend demanding interconnection between the practical and theoretical part of the final works in the curriculum.

Long-term recommendations

1. The experts recommend reprofiling the emphasis of the BA-programme and the specialisations according to the objectives of the BA-programme and widen the scope of exploration into both audio and visual and new media sphere.
2. The experts recommend reprofiling the curriculum in order to reduce fragmentation, designing modules with more study points and including compositional and teamwork content, putting more emphasis in new media tools and audio, and ensuring that the courses are focused on core working processes, are interconnected and complement each other.

3. The experts recommend widening the scope of possibilities for artistic/creative collaborative projects, where students can learn the work process and team work - also with other students from diverse study years.

4. The experts recommend hiring full-time teachers for the core of studies and for wider scope of areas in the audio and visual media. Teachers must have a degree in the Arts field or a very respectful career in the audiovisual media arts field plus an academic degree, to ensure quality education.

5. The experts recommend the university providing financial support for teachers' artistic and research activities and students' coursework and final projects.

II - "New Media and Audiovisual Art" ASSESSMENT

II - "New Media and Audiovisual Art" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1

The Riseba/LiepU joint MA-programme New Media and Audiovisual Arts complies well with the Arts study field objectives. According to SAR (page 15) the programme aims to educate qualified specialists for competitive activities in the public and private media sector, internet, social networks and films, cultural and art event production companies in Latvia, as well as abroad. It is expressed that "The programme is built not only on the principle of traditional film schools, but also incorporating the latest training trends of the development of digital technology." The latest research on study processes, traditions and working methods in audiovisual industries and educational institutions have been also taken into account in the development of the programme. According to the SAR (page 14) the MA-programme offers in-depth research, based on artistic creation under the guidance of international and local teaching staff. Students have, according to the Riseba web pages (<https://www.riseba.lv/en/students/postgraduate-studies/new-media-and-audiovisual-art>), possibilities to use more innovative forms, such as extended and virtual reality, 360-degree video, performances and culture analytics. In the SAR (page 121) the programme's goal is introduced accordingly: "Prepare competent specialists of the audiovisual sector for work in mass media, television, film, radio, video and cinema post-production and visual special effects organisations, new types of creative consultants in business, companies, and other structural units in the creative industries, as well as competitive, research-oriented professionals – artists who have versatile knowledge of new technologies and digital technologies' cultural processes, and the skills to apply them in the implementation of creative projects and scientific research." Compared to BA-programme, the joint MA-programme gives a wider, more academic and topical view of the audiovisual field with two specialisations mentioned on the web pages of Riseba (<https://www.riseba.lv/en/students/postgraduate-studies/new-media-and-audiovisual-art>) : Audiovisual Media Art and Multimedia Stage Art.

2.1.2

The title "New Media and Audiovisual Arts" refers to all forms of contemporary art made or transmitted using new forms of digital media, like internet art, virtual art or works done with robotics, video games etc. The title is fit for the programme. The title and code (213- Audiovisual arts and media arts) of the programme indicate its subject area and level, while the degree indicates

the level of education it will receive upon completion of the programme (Cabinet of Ministers rules no.322). The aims and objectives of the programme are designed to achieve the learning outcomes, according to the EQF-competence descriptions - knowledge, skills and competencies - that students are expected to acquire during their studies. The admission requirements are well introduced in the SAR (pages 128-129) and they ensure the applicants' demanded background and qualifications. The admission requirements are designed to ensure that students have the necessary background and qualifications to succeed in the programme and achieve the intended learning outcomes. All of these elements are interconnected and work together to ensure that the study programme is effective in achieving its goals and preparing students for their future careers. The programme is designed to be completed in 2 years of full-time study, which is in line with the standard duration of academic master programmes in Latvia. The study programme code and degree to be obtained are fit to this study field. The programme is implemented in English to correspond to Riseba's strategy to provide a path to an international career, in the context of the global audiovisual industry.

2.1.3

The previous assessment of the Arts study field and MA-programme are analysed in the Annex 2.17. The recommendations have been analysed and corrections according to most of the recommendations are done. The experts consider the recommendation number 9 the most important: "To increase the capacity of research activities and the efficiency of cooperation, to form research groups by including lecturers of both universities in the study programme. Wider involvement of LiepU teaching staff in the work of riseba magazine "ADAM Art" editorial board is recommended."

As a respond, the Arts study field has set an own target to establish 2 research groups, one for immersive media (360° video and narrative, interactive 3D. environments, immersive sound) and one for audiovisual media arts. The target has not yet been fulfilled, but some smaller actions have been done, like research group leaders promote the motivation of students and colleagues to publish in internationally recognized collections of articles on journals. According to SAR (page) 117) the previous expert commission has recommended to promote research and to enhance the socio-economic importance of research in the field, which is put into action for example by creating 2 specific projects - one with the Liepaja municipality around sustainability theme. For the experts it also seems that a good step towards the recommendation has been the renewing of the curriculum content towards practice-based research. In the SAR (page 117) the previous experts of the joint MA-programme (licence issued on October 25, 2017) have encouraged Riseba and LiepU to become even more closely involved in the implementation of MA- programme and research, as well as to cooperate more with the industry, to identify the needs of employers and to organise wider involvement of employers in the development of the programme. According to the SAR (page 117) the Riseba and LiepU have "organised creative workshops together with representatives of creative industry companies so that students get to know the techniques used, approaches, stimulate interest and establish contacts." During the reported period, mutual cooperation between higher educational institutions has also become closer. Anyhow, during the expert visit it was found out that collaboration between the teachers in Riseba and LiepU, could still be increased. The reason for that is certainly the fact that there is no critical mass in the audiovisual media arts staff in Riseba. It is impossible to create deep collaboration without full-time teachers/researchers in the core area. With the change of management of the Arts study field and also the change of the directors of the joint programmes of the Riseba in 2022, a more in-depth study and development for strengthening cooperation with the creative industry business will be launched. It is also planned to create inter-university research groups for more intensive involvement in scientific programmes at international and national level. The current experts support the corrections made and plans to be made. The experts recommend further deepening the collaboration with LiepU and increasing the collaboration

with the creative industry and business world to enhance to practice-based research already in the MA-level.

2.1.4

The experts consider that the MA-programme is socially justified as it brings an academic/artistic pathway to doctoral studies and ensures the possible development of new media innovations and applications for the industry and society as a whole. According to the SAR (page 127) the MA-programme supports Riseba's wish to enhance "Business Meets Art" in the university and it is one of the most important aspects of the programme. However, the experts realised that the scope of teachers and contacts with the industry is somewhat narrow. The experts recommend enhancing the contact with the industry and business world to raise the socio-economic justification of the studies. The economic justification has been at stake as there have been difficulties attracting students to the MA programme. It has been also mentioned in the SWOT-analysis in SAR (page 21, table 2.1) that there has been a decrease in the number of Latvian students in the Study field, which, in turn, threatens the overall budget of the Riseba. According to the statistics - which are difficult to interpret, only 7 students enrolled in 2022/23 and altogether there are 17 (14?) students in Riseba or in Riseba/LiepU. The number could be somewhat bigger. The experts pondered that probably for a long time there has been an emphasis on the 4-year professional BA-programme, which is attractive to students as a "film school" - as heard during the meeting (3.8.2023). The reformulation of the BA-programme to 3-year studies could possibly help the MA-programme to attract more students if the marketing efforts are also increased. By now, there is also social justification for the programme as graduates have found work as in the SAR (pages 15-16), it is expressed that "Current graduates of the Master's programme work in a wide variety of fields, from the classic film industry in Hollywood to advertising and PR agencies, as well as companies in other disciplines where the audiovisual component is part of the production chain ..." and in page 129 that "currently, graduates of the study program are already working as self-employed artists, educators, teaching staff at other universities, or in the field of entrepreneurship, creating exhibition works, or compositions, but choose to continue studying for a master's degree in order to supplement their competences and provide added value to their companies." However, there are no employment indicators (numbers) of the graduates available to the experts. It has to be taken into account - as is also said in the SAR (pages 129-130) - that the future labour market predicts a high demand for professionals in augmented and virtual reality systems. Also, the Latvian Ministry of Culture shows that the number of enterprises in the creative industries sector is growing steadily. These prospects justify the programme.

2.1.5

The joint MA-programme was created on the already existing programmes in 2016 by combining the master's programme "New Media Art" of LiepU and the master's programme "Audiovisual Media Art" at Riseba (SAR page 132). The first students enrolled 2018/2019. The development of the joint MA-programme New Media Art and Audiovisual Arts is justified and a good step to combine resources of the two universities, to diminish possible overlapping of programmes and to ensure the quality of the study process but also to ensure the practice-based research development. The implementation of the joint MA is also justified as it follows the Riseba BA-programme and also provides a study path to doctoral programmes. The joint MA-programme makes the two universities take advantage of synergies and use the premises and equipment more efficiently. However, it seems that the students are mainly studying on their own university's premises. The number of students in the MA-programme has been a concern, which is mentioned in the previous chapter above. However, it seems that the profile of the MA-programme has been recently updated and the curriculum modernised and the programme is now on a new track with LiepU, which may attract more students.

It is written in the SAR (page 133) that as a result of the studies, a higher education diploma – a master's diploma, an academic degree – a master's degree in audiovisual arts and media arts – is obtained and is identical (Annex 3.2.1.) for both schools with the exception of its design. However, at the moment the web pages of the universities (<https://www.riseba.lv/en/students/postgraduate-studies/new-media-and-audiovisual-art>, and <https://www.liepu.lv/en/52/new-media-and-audiovisual-art>,) give an impression that the joint programme's contents in Riseba and LiepU are not well conformed. The introductions of the joint MA-programme on aforementioned web pages differ. It is proved anyhow in the Annex 3.2.3. that the conformity of the joint study programme complies mostly with the requirements of the Law on Higher Education Institutions. It remains a bit unclear if the joint MA-programme unifies the content so that "the parts of the joint study programme together form a single and successive joint study programme" as the specialisations seem to differ between the two universities. There are four specialisations in the MA-programme - "1. Audiovisual media" and "2. Multimedia performing arts" take place in Riga and these directions are administered by Riseba, and the other 2 specialisations - 3. "Digital art" and 4. "Sound art and electronic music" are administered by LiepU. As there are differing specialisations in the two universities, it remains unclear if a student of Riseba can choose a specialisation provided by LiepU. The experts also question if the indicator "Higher education institution/college and partner institutions have jointly established a quality assurance system for the joint study programme" has been fully implemented. During the visit (2.8.2023), in the interview with Riseba Quality Centre representatives it was concluded that they do not work directly / on a daily basis with LiepU Quality Centre, therefore there could be differences how issues are dealt on each partner's side. Objectives like observation procedures of classes, implementation of methodological seminars for teaching staff, monitoring of study breaks and performance of preventative actions to reduce termination of studies still might happen very independently for each institution.

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

Conclusions:

The current objectives of the MA-programme New Media Art and Audiovisual Arts are justified as the programme is incorporating the latest training trends of the development of digital technology in audiovisual and media fields and supports Riseba's wish to enhance a place where "business meets art". The MA-programme complies well with the Arts study field, being a link between BA and doctoral programmes. The title Joint New Media Art and Audiovisual Arts MA refers to all forms of contemporary art made or transmitted using new forms of digital media, like internet art, virtual art or works done with robotics, video games etc. The title is fit for the programme. The MA-programme is provided in English, which is justified as it aims to attract international students and provide students international working competencies. The previous assessment of the Arts study field and MA-programme are analysed and corrections are made, but actions should continue, especially to connect the studies with the creative industry and business. Also cooperation with LiepU should be intensified. There is a clear social justification for the MA-programme as it creates a continuation from BA-programme on and basis for continuation to doctoral programme after. The number of students in the MA-programme has been an economic concern for the Arts study field as there has been too few students. The efforts to attract foreign and local students should be continued. The new management and track and the modern curriculum may help to attract the students. The marketing of the programme should be updated and the notions related to the programme should be explained and also the practical issues how the joint programme is working. The information on the web pages of the two universities should be identical. Further conforming the joint MA-programme with LiepU and unifying the quality assurance tools to ensure a quality study process is

needed.

Strengths

1. A justified 2-year continuation for students, who want to deepen their studies and explore innovatively the audiovisual and new media sphere and at the same time get a more theoretical understanding of the field.
2. New module based curriculum.

Weaknesses

1. There are too few students in the joint MA-programme.
2. The joint MA-programme seem not to be fully conformed, as there are differing specialisations for the students in each university.
3. The joint quality assurance for studies seems to be partly lacking.
- 4.. Information about the MA-programme in Riseba's and LiepU's web pages differ.

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1

The experts analyse that the profile of the MA-programme is in a transition period to educate specialists to new, topical areas of latest audiovisual technologies without taking into account the current need of experts in tv- and film-industry. In the SAR (page 121) it is explained that the MA-programme's objective is to prepare competent specialists of the audiovisual sector for work in mass media, television, film, radio, video and cinema post-production and visual special effects organisations, new types of creative consultants in business, companies, and other structural units in the creative industries, as well as competitive, research-oriented professionals – artists who have versatile knowledge of new technologies and digital technologies cultural processes, and the skills to apply them in the implementation of creative projects and scientific research. On the other hand, according to the SAR (page 122, Tasks of the study programme) the programme's task number 1 is: "To implement the acquisition of the latest technologies in the industry, so that digital technologies are used both in the creation of more traditional works of audiovisual art (documentaries, television programs, video scenography, multimedia performances, digital art installations), in the search for new art forms (augmented/virtual reality, 360- degree video, interactive narratology, immersive environment and game design), and in the development of practice-based research and digitisation of cultural processes (cultural analytics, data visualisation, archiving, etc." Only task number 5 of the programme is pointing: to develop an analytical and integrated understanding of television, cinema, animation, visual special effects, theatre, and design issues, which will allow students to become effective and strategic managers, professionals, artists. The content complies with the objectives of the MA-programme and ensures the achievement of learning outcomes. However, the experts interpret that there are some ambiguities about what is the core of the content of the studies - what is the relationship between 1. the education in traditions of video-, tv- and filmmaking and 2. in the latest technologies and exploration with the new tools within the industry and business. The same question can be asked content wise, if the core of the studies is in educating artists or managers or new media business developers. The experts understand that the MA-programme is developing and can educate them all depending on a student. The experts ponder that it is good to continue profiling the core of the MA- programme. In the experts' opinion the 2-year MA-programme could concentrate mostly on the emerging technologies and new media sphere to clarify the profile.

The experts suggest profiling the curriculum towards relevant, current interests and trends of the new media business world (artificial intelligence platform development, content creation in aspects of artificial intelligence. etc.) According to the SAR (page 127) the MA-programme's curriculum is implemented in a module-based system, which the experts thank as the content of the study courses/modules are better interconnected and complementary. The study plan includes 80 study points, which consists of integrated (part A) modules in the amount of 40 study points, specialisation (part B) modules with 4 directions in which one can take 20 study points, and master's thesis 20 study points. The specialisations are divided between the two universities. Two specialisations - "Audiovisual media" and "Multimedia performing arts" take place in Riga and these specialisations are administered by Riseba, and the other 2 specialisations - "Digital art" and "Sound art and electronic music" are administered by LiepU. It remains unclear for the experts, if a student of Riseba can choose the LiepU specialisation or vice versa. The curriculum of the studies is well written (Annex 3.2.6). According to the study plan the studies include audiovisual and new media art and theoretical studies, as well as competencies for research work. According to the meeting with the Riseba teachers (3.8.2023), practical and theoretical studies are always integrated. Also, in the SAR (page 20) it is well expressed that "Art study programmes are at the same time implementing the cooperation between art and science in practice and demonstrating the creative and innovation potential that it encourages...". The curriculum of the MA-programme includes compact modules accordingly: PART A: Conceptual Thinking and Practice Based Research, Audio Culture, Visual Culture and New Media Aesthetics, Creative Industries, Interactive Art and Multimedia Performances Media Theory and Research Methods. In part B are the specialisations: 1. Audiovisual Media Art, 2. Multimedia Performing Arts, 3. Digital Art, 4. Sound Art and Electronic Music. The experts realised that the obligatory part C is missing from the MA-curriculum, therefore the programme structure does not fully comply with Law of Higher Education institutions and Cabinet of Ministers rules no.240. The content of the studies described in the curriculum=study plan (Annex 3.2.6.) is topical and the aims meets the needs of scientific trends and industries. According to the SAR (page 127) - the joint MA-programme focuses on research, based on creative practices and the transformative potential of digital technologies. Looking closer at the curriculum of the MA-programme (Annex 3.2.6) and the description of study modules (Annex 3.2.7) and the programme description on the web

pages (<https://www.riseba.lv/lv/studentiem/magistra-programmas/jaunie-mediji-un-audiovizuala-maksa>), video image composition (Essentials of Composition or Motion Graphics and Design in Cinema 4D and After Effects post production) is provided only in the last year. As composition and use of composition software is one of the most essential parts of any audio-visual professional author in the industry, the experts suggest adding content on digital composition earlier. The curriculum includes production and business courses (modules Creative Industries (A4) and Audiovisual Media Arts (B1) which correspond to the goals and mission of the university: "The path to an international career and business meets art". In one case, the learning outcome of a course seems to emerge without previous content, background and connection to new media - or at least it seems so: the "acquiring somatics and body awareness, methods and techniques of butoh dance". The module is in the multimedia performing arts specialisation. None of the teachers of the course mentioned has to do with the Japanese butoh dance nor with somatic methods. As such it is relevant to include embodied content in the curriculum in order to provide students to understand the multi-sensory nature of perception.

2.2.2

The MA-programme is mainly based on relevant research in creative practices in the field of digital technologies. It offers in-depth studies in the use of digital technologies in new media environments and audiovisual arts. In addition to more traditional art and media production practices, the use of innovative forms such as augmented and virtual reality, 360- degree cinema, cultural analytics, data

visualisation, etc., is being facilitated. (SAR, 127) As expressed previously, the Arts study field aims at providing education where practice and research are intertwined, which is very topical in Europe. The MA-programmes awards the degree based on findings of practice based research in the new media and audiovisual sphere. In SAR (p. 140) is mentioned "The master's thesis in the MA-programme is an independent study of art, which is supplemented by an original artwork/project or design object/project developed by the student, thematically related to the theoretical part. [...] "...the author demonstrates the ability to use academic knowledge in the development of research, as well as the ability to combine his creative work with theory and reflect on it using various theories of art and media, as well as demonstrating a broader knowledge of the artistic context and the work of other artists (working in a similar field)".

2.2.3

The MA- programme has a blended teaching approach, using both traditional and interactive teaching methods. According to the SAR (page 141) the methods used include lectures, seminars, discussions, tests, practical works, research, creative projects, and independent work collectively shape the educational experience. These methods are further supplemented by group activities, discussions, problem-oriented studies, and the utilisation of multimedia tools and online platforms. The study process also includes two annual festivals – the annual international new media week "Update" in November in Liepaja in cooperation with RIXC Art and Science Festival and "Sound Days" in May/June in Liepaja (SAR, page 128). The evaluation process contains a variety of assessment methods dependent on each course's specifics. This involves both formal and collegial assessments, summative evaluation and feedback. By employing current methods, the achievement of objectives and learning outcomes of the study courses and the study programme can be realised. The language of the programme is English, as indicated on SAR (page 123). Throughout expert meetings with MA-students, no concerns were raised regarding the programme's delivery in English. As a collaborative effort between Riseba and LiepU, the joint program employs various online and multimedia tools to facilitate the study process effectively. The MA-programme studies are conducted in English on weekday evenings and weekends. International guest lecturers teach intensives throughout the week with the end result. The reason for evening studies is not explained in the SAR. Evening studies could be one reason why it is not easy to attract students as it is very difficult to do "two full-time jobs in one day". On the other hand, it may be assumed that the evening studies make it easier to combine day work with the studies. A survey could be done about the situation. Riseba aims at students centred learning (SAR, page 4, Riseba Mission). According to the expert site visit (2-3.8.2023), the students unanimously expressed that the teachers are always very supportive and the methods contribute to the achievement of the aims. In the context of joint programme in collaboration with LiepU, as discussed in the students' meeting, a noticeable separation of LiepU and Riseba students seems to persist. From the experts' perspective, it appears that each university prioritises maintaining a closer connection within their own students, rather than actively fostering a more integrated collaboration between them. The students, also MA-students, wished for possibilities to collaborate with students from different years and from both sides of the joint programme to further develop an integrated environment for studies and to improve the quality. The experts recommend creating more collaborative methods between the Riseba and LiepU students. Thinking of the student-centred learning, it is important to take into account that there are reasonable and realistic teacher/student ratio in order to provide a quality education. The Arts study field management has observed (SAR, p. 131) that - especially BA- but possibly also - MA-degree students have had a rather noticeable drop-out-rate during their studies. The reason given is the wide range of previously acquired education and professional experience of the students, as well as considerably different expectations of expected study results. It is understandable that students with less experience needed for the audiovisual field, have to put a lot of independent work into the study process itself - and this with a relatively small number of

personal contact hours. Therefore, the experts agree with the institution's conclusion that the solution can be found in the flexible approach to each student but it should be ensured that the teacher/student ratio is realistic in the future. Experts also recommend further updating the course descriptions with the latest literature and other sources, because this brings the most contemporary views and methods into the learning process. Experts suggest that practice-based interdisciplinary art projects would be a valuable addition to the programme content, as a general understanding of multimedia composition is required. Experts also suggest that the curriculum could be oriented more towards the relevant, current interests of the new media business world (artificial intelligence platform development, content creation and aspects of artificial intelligence, etc.) and collaboration with the creative industry. Experts recommend that the master's programme should be oriented towards new media technology and its use in both artistic and business contexts.

2.2.4

There is no regulated internship in the MA-programme.

2.2.6

The MA-programme encourages students not only to invent innovative technical solutions but also to apply them meaningfully in practical content creation. This emphasis on finding purposeful applications for emerging technologies aligns with the programme's intent and underscores its role in fostering research, experimentation and creativity within the realm of "New Media and Audiovisual Arts" at Riseba and LiepU. The MA-programme offers an array of possibilities for students' final practical (Part B) work (SAR p. 144-145), reflecting the dynamic and diverse landscape of audiovisual media arts. The options span a wide range of formats, including feature films, short films, documentaries, experimental films, music videos, video installations, animated films, internet media projects, 360-degree videos, film scripts, multimedia performances, and innovative 3D/AI audiovisual creations. Experts perceive that the list of suggested directions for final work is quite extensive and lacks a clear focus on the programme's intended tasks, specialisations and objectives. In the SAR (page 144) it is written the requirements for the final theses. The research topics (Part A) are directed into cutting-edge developments in the audiovisual field such as: 3D Cinema and its Trends, 360-degree Video Visualisation, Application of Multimedia Technologies in Latvian Culture and Performance Events, The Structure of Cinema in the New Media. However, a significant portion of the seen topics (SAR, page 144), such as Auteur Cinema, Avant-garde Cinema, Cinematic Narratology, Film Adaptation, and Global Cinema Distribution, correspond more to traditional film-school programmes. This observation leads experts to believe that the list lacks a concentrated alignment with the core objectives of the MA-programme, which centre around "implementing the acquisition of the latest technologies in the industry." These technologies are intended to be used in the exploration of innovative art forms such as augmented/virtual reality, 360-degree video, interactive narratology, immersive environments and game design. According to the final works seen, there was mostly a lack of substantial connection between the A and B part, or there was even no part B at all. The practical and theoretical part of the final works should be corrected in the future as it is crucial to integrate the practice and the theoretical aspects. To illustrate this point, it was evident that in the theoretical segments of these MA-theses, students frequently lack personal reflections on the discoveries they made during the creation of the practical part. The experts recommend establishing interlinking A and B parts of the final theses in order to successfully execute practice-based research in the arts.

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

Conclusions:

The content of the MA-programme is topical and justified as the programme's task number 1 is: "To implement the acquisition of the latest technologies in the industry." and the Arts study field management is seemingly developing the programme towards it. The 4 specialisations of the programme are divided between the two universities. 1. Audiovisual Media Art, 2. Multimedia Performing Arts, 3. Digital Art, 4. Sound Art and Electronic Music. The specialisations are divided between the two universities. It however remains unclear if a student of Riseba can choose the LiepU specialisation.

The MA-programme is mainly based on relevant research in creative practices in the field of digital technologies. The MA-programme aims at providing academic education where practice and research are intertwined in the manner of so-called artistic research, which has been evolving in Europe for 30 years. It has to be pointed out that because of the very limited staff in the Arts field, it is challenging to ensure the degree on the achievements and findings of the relevant field of science or artistic creation without strong international connections and projects. The experts suggest profiling the curriculum towards relevant, current interests and trends of the new media business world (artificial intelligence platform development, content creation in aspects of artificial intelligence. etc.).

The MA-programme has a blended teaching approach, using both traditional and interactive teaching methods. The methods used include lectures, seminars, discussions, tests, practical works, research, creative projects, and independent work collectively shape the educational experience. As was discussed at the students' meeting 03.08.2023, there is a noticeable separation between LiepU and Riseba students. The MA-students wished for possibilities to collaborate with students from different years and from both sides of the joint programme to further develop an integrated environment for studies and to improve the quality. Riseba aims at students centred learning (SAR, page 4). The MA-programme curriculum is implemented in a modern module-based system, which the experts thank as the content of the study courses / modules are better interconnected and complementary. Experts perceive that the list for final work possibilities is quite extensive and lacks a clear focus on the programme's intended tasks, specialisations and objectives. According to the final works seen, there was a lack of substantial connection between the A and B part, the practical and theoretical part of the final works, which should be corrected in the future as it is crucial to integrate the practice and the theoretical aspects.

Strengths:

1. New compact curriculum.
2. The use of innovative technology.
3. Aims to develop practice-based research in Latvia.

Weaknesses:

1. Insufficient cooperation between students of Riseba and LiepU.
2. Late (in 2nd semester) introduction of focused Part B (specialisation).
3. Lack of substantial connection between the Theoretical part (Part A) and Practical part (Part B) in the final works.
4. Insufficient compositional skills and use composition software, integration of technology and engineering skills in the content.

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

The content of the MA-programme is topical and justified as the programme's task number 1 is: "To implement the acquisition of the latest technologies in the industry." The MA-programme has recently updated the curriculum which may attract new students combined with the change of shortening the BA to 3 years. The curriculum also needs some "polishing" according to the feedback from experts. As composition and use of composition software is one of the most essential parts of any audio-visual professional author in the industry, the experts suggest adding content on digital compositional skills. According to the final works seen, there was a lack of substantial connection between the A and B part, the practical and theoretical part.

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1

The expert group visited Durbes street 4 H2O6 Architecture and Media Centre (2-3-8.2023) and saw that the premises are well-equipped, well-kept and open for students and staff as such. The same resources are available to MA-students as for BA-students and the whole study field. The experts realised that there is emphasis on visual equipment and less on audio equipment, which is logical in the sense that there is no specialisation for the audio studies not in BA- nor in the MA-programme. Instead, there is a specialisation for audio - sound art and electronic music - in LiepU. The students anyhow have a small sound studio at their disposal in H2O6 for individual creative work, which is intended for production and processing of audio recordings and arranged to enable the creation of surround sound compositions (surround, 5.1 and 7.1), as stated in the SAR (page 64). The programme falls short in specialised equipment for sound and specific workstations which can be in need also in the MA-programme. Analysing informative provision, the expert group understands that library resources and databases are available to students and meet the needs of the MA-programme. During the meeting with MA-programme students (3.8.2023) it was expressed that providing equipment for visual production is a well-organised and there is practical support for their academic needs. Students highlighted the potential benefits of increased funding, as the current expectation for MA-programme students is to independently look for financial funding for their creative projects. Asked about support for scientific conferences, students drew attention to the fact that while some conferences have received funding, there appears to be a decrease in active participation in international conferences after Covid-pandemic. It seems that there is limited funding for students' creative projects. As MA-programme is directed to exploration, research and creation of innovative art forms, it becomes important to consider the acquisition of supplementary equipment. The extension of equipment could strengthen the MA-programme's capacity to go deeper into discoverable artistic territories. For instance, additional equipment could be 3D-printing and scanning tools, biometric sensors, advanced audio production gear, Motion Capture systems, and AI-Driven tools. The MA-programme offers LiepU students access to Riseba resources as well, and vice versa. At LiepU Art Research Laboratory (SAR, page 150), there are photo and video studios, photo equipment and lighting, video equipment and lighting, stands, computer equipment, sound studio for the lecture work, which is designed to perform and process sound recording and creation of surround sound compositions (surround, 5.1 and 7.1). However, during discussions with students (3.8.2023), experts discovered that the considerable distance of 200 km between Riseba and LiepU, coupled with the distinct focus and specialisations of each institution (Riseba - visual art, LiepU - audio design), plays a significant role in the limited utilisation of resources of LiepU. According to the SAR (p. 146-153) and site visit (2-3.8.2023) Riseba provides good premises for the

implementation of the MA-programme.

2.3.3

As outlined in the SAR (p. 151), 70-80% of Riseba revenues stem from tuition fees. Experts have also found financial calculations in the SAR, for determining the minimum student enrollment necessary to sustain a programme: "The minimum number for opening the joint study programme in the group of the part-time evening department is 10 students from both universities together (SAR, p. 152-153)".

According to the Annex (2.15) there are altogether 14 students in the joint MA-programme, 7 in Riseba and 7 in LiepU. The cooperation agreement with LiepU stipulates that the cooperation partners pay for the training of their students at the partner university. Since most of the study process of the joint MA-programme is implemented at Riseba, it receives additional revenue from the training of LiepU students. According to the agreement, it seems that 75% of mandatory Part A is provided by and in Riseba and 25% by LiepU. It remains unclear if the 25% are only the LiepU specialisations' part of the curriculum. As the specialisations in Riseba and LiepU are separate, it remains a question if the Riseba students have any need to visit LiepU (digital music/ sound art) facilities at all.

Considering the concrete data from the "Statistics on students enrolled in the joint study program 'New Media and Audiovisual Art'" (refer to Annex 3.2.2.), which indicates an approximate actual 10-15 students in total, it becomes evident that the funding allocated to the joint MA-programme is nearly at the minimal threshold required to sustain its operations.

It is necessary to secure additional funding sources. Diversifying funding sources can be achieved through active participation in research projects, engaging in fundraising efforts for creative initiatives, and embracing opportunities presented by ERASMUS+ funded projects. During the expert visit (2-3.8.2023) it became clear that funding is budgeted to the MA-programme according to tariffs etc. but the experts did not find out by what kind of tariffs, principles and process it is budgeted, how the normal annual costs and annual specific needs of the programme is calculated. It remains partly unclear how the teachers' artistic and creative activities and students' creative coursework and final projects are funded. According to the students, there is anyhow lack of funding for the creative projects. The experts lack clarity on how funding is allocated and managed in Riseba.

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

Conclusions:

The expert group found out that the premises and facilities are well-equipped, well-kept and open for students and staff as such. Taking into account that the same premises and resources are available both for MA-students from Riseba and LiepU and for the huge number of BA-students, there are some doubts how the premises are equally available to all. The synergy benefits don't seem remarkable in the sense of premises considering the fact that the specialisations in Riseba and LiepU are separate in the MA-programme. It remains a question if the Riseba students have any need to visit LiepU (digital music/ sound art) facilities at all." Also, the expert group saw that library resources and databases are available to students and meet the needs of the study field. However, the role of the library could be developed as described in BA-programme part. There is a minimum number of students if the LiepU students are counted with. The efforts to attract international students should continue. Budgeting and resource utilisation processes need transparency. There is a need for financial support for students' creative projects. The university's heavy reliance on tuition fees requires strategic considerations for diversifying funding.

Strengths:

1. Good premises at Riseba for traditional visual production.

Weaknesses:

1. Limited funding for students' creative projects.
2. Some deficiencies of audio equipment/software and special workstations.
3. Uneven use of the two universities premises and facilities, as it remains a question if the Riseba students have any need to visit LiepU (digital music/ sound art) facilities at all.

Assessment of the requirement [6]

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Given the strengths in facilities, accessibility and collaboration with LiepU, Riseba's MA-programme is making progress. However, the programme falls short in areas such as specialised equipment for sound and specific workstations which can be in need also in the MA-programme. The Riseba students probably don't use the LiepU facilities very much. There is lack of funding for students creative projects. Therefore, considering both the strengths and the areas for improvement, it is reasonable to characterise the programme as partially compliant with the specified standards.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1

According to the Annex 3.2.8. the academic staff of the RISEBA/LiepU joint MA-programme complies with the requirements laid down in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause three of the Law on Higher Education Institutions. According to SAR (pages 153) a total of 21 teaching staff are involved in the implementation of the MA-programme, 6 of them are academic staff of Riseba and 15 are visiting lecturers. There are 10 doctors of science working in the study programme. Of these, 6 are professors. There are also 10 faculty members with Mg.Art and M.F.A. degrees in the study programme according to the SAR (page 153). The number of the teaching staff with a degree in the Arts is good. However, the experts have got no information of which of the aforementioned teachers are full-time or elected Riseba teachers. It seems that there are very few full-time teachers and that the Riseba academic staff has at the same time other roles than a teacher/researcher. There are two foreign qualified teachers elected recently but it remains unclear how much of their time is dedicated to the MA-programme and how long they can stay in Latvia yearly. It has to be also mentioned that the interim dean is at the same time listed as one of the faculty members/assistant professors (Annex 2.7), as the director of the joint MA-programme, as the administrative director of the joint doctoral programme (Information on the schedule of the expert site visit 2-3.8.2023) and at the same time as a doctoral student in LiepU (SAR, page 214) - probably in the same joint doctoral programme that he himself is partly in charge. In the experts' opinion it is certainly too much work and power gathered to one person. It is not good governance, if one person studies in the same joint programme that a person himself is leading - if this is the case. The Arts study field invites several lecturers/experts to teach courses in order to enhance quality of studies. Taking into account the international orientation of the MA-programme as well as the specifics of MA-studies, both academic

theorists and specialists are attracted to the implementation of the programme, as written in the SAR (page 153). These specialists have extensive practical experience and international authority in the field of audiovisual media from the USA, Europe and Latvia. At the same time, the Arts study field management has admitted as a challenge that there is a rather high proportion of guest lecturers in relation to the total elected academic staff of the Arts study field. This is due to the volume of the Latvian audiovisual industry and the lack of academically educated specialists who have at least a master's, or preferably a doctoral degree.

In general, the efforts of the management to find an ideal balance between theory and practice can be seen. There is a fairly wide selection of teaching staff, and many are well-known and very successful in their professional careers. According to Annex 2.12 and Annex 2.8. (faculty CV), at least 8 faculty members have a strong theoretical and research focus. About 12 persons of the teaching staff have an emphasis on practical work. To some extent, the teaching staff is also represented geographically, as there are 4 international teacher/researchers. For Latvia, that has sometimes suffered from a certain provincialism, it is significant and important to broaden one's horizons, as partly already done in the Arts study field. The teaching staff includes a couple of particularly successful industry leaders, such as one of the best-known Latvian screenwriters, Lauris Gundars, or the well-known theatre multimedia author Artis Dzērve. Rasa Šmite's great competence in the field of contemporary art installations leaves no doubt. The experts found out that the faculty profiles largely focus on narrow niches, thus there is a lack of video/multimedia design specialists, who would provide skills that would better comply with the interests of the mainstream industry. The experts realised that there is limited expertise in the use of practical video/multimedia composition applications among the teachers (SAR pages 154-156). The experts point out that the role of design and composition skills are very important in the MA-programme. There could be more expertise in the practical use of applications in new media, audiovisual art design and computer graphics. To increase the vision of Riseba as a place where "business meets art" the experts suggest increasing contacts with the creative industry to find future needs of the industry for research, collaboration and also teachers.

2.4.2

In the Annex 3.2.8., there is a statement that the academic staff of the Riseba/LiepU joint academic master's study programme complies with the requirements laid down in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause three of the Law on Higher Education Institutions. According to the SAR (page 157), during the reporting period, there have been no significant changes in the composition of the teaching staff of the MA-programme. After evaluating the quality of the work of the academic staff and the results of student surveys, it has been decided to basically maintain the existing academic composition for the 2022nd/2023rd year of studies. Minor changes could be related to attracting new guest lecturers and increasing the volume of elected faculty members in the Department of Audiovisual Media Arts. It seems that there is not enough volume of elected full time academic staff for the implementation of MA-programme. It is crucial that there is a critical mass of teachers/researchers who together take responsibility for the programme. Regarding increasing the quality of studies, the management of Arts study field is in the process of searching for new teaching staff outside of Latvia. In the local Latvian teaching staff market, there is an acute shortage of specialists who are competent in their profession, with practical experience and at the same time with academic education. This is very typical also in Europe as in the arts field the merits are collected from the field, and not so much from the university. The situation is anyhow changing with the development of artistic research. The experts recommend recruiting teachers who have both a strong practical or artistic career and a degree, preferably in the Arts, to fulfill the objectives to enhance practice-based research in the MA_programme.

2.4.4

According to the Annex 2.12 and the Annex 2.8. (faculty CVs), all the elected academic staff members fulfil the demanded qualifications and have either publications, artistic achievements or five years of practical experience. Taking into account that the MA-programme wants to integrate practice-based research where artistic and theoretical parts are integrated, it can be seen that the emphasis of the teachers expertise is more on a theoretical level and there is limited expertise of teachers who have a creative or practical career (and a degree). A large part of the works listed as creative, artistic works are more technical in nature.

2.4.5

During the meeting with the teaching staff (2-3.08.2023), the experts found out that there is weak mutual cooperation between the teaching staff at Riseba. It also became clear that there is insufficient cooperation between the Riseba and LiepU staff. There is no organised cooperation and communication between the teachers of the master's program in Riga and Liepāja, they seem to work separately. However, the Arts study field writes in the SAR (114) that active cooperation of the teaching staff within the framework of the modules takes place continuously within the framework of projects and mutual communication. The experts recommend enhancing further the cooperation between academic staff in LiepU and Riseba and discussing issues of developing the study content and financial needs of the MA-programme.

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

Conclusions:

According the SAR (page 157), during the reporting period, there have been no significant changes in the composition of the teaching staff of the MA-programme. After evaluating the quality of the work of the academic staff and the results of student surveys, it has been decided to basically maintain the existing academic composition for the 2022nd/2023rd year of studies. Minor changes could be related to attracting new guest lecturers and increasing the volume of elected faculty members in the Department of Audiovisual Media Arts. Now, there are 10 faculty members with Mg.Art and M.F.A. degrees in the MA-programme according to the SAR (page 153). The number of the teaching staff with a degree in the Arts is relevant, but there is insufficient number of full-time academic staff who have a degree in the Arts and/or strong practical, artistic or industry career to fulfil the aims for developing artistic research and a place where “business meets art”. The faculty profiles largely focus on narrow niches, thus there is a lack of video design specialists, who would provide skills that would better comply with the interests of the mainstream industry. The experts realised that there is limited expertise in the use of practical video composition applications among the teachers. The experts point out that the role of design and composition skills are very important in the MA-programme. There could be more expertise in the practical use of applications in new media, audiovisual art design and computer graphics. To increase the vision of Riseba as a place where “business meets art” the experts suggest increasing contacts with the creative industry to find future needs of the industry for research, collaboration and also teachers. Cooperation between teaching staff in Riseba and between Riseba and LiepU is insufficient.

Strengths

1. There are 10 faculty members with Mg.Art and M.F.A. degrees in the study programme.

Weaknesses:

1. Insufficient number of full-time academic staff who have a degree in the Arts and/or strong practical, artistic or industry career.
2. Insufficient expertise in the use of practical multimedia composition applications, as well as in video design, audiovisual computer graphics and post-production.
3. Insufficient cooperation between academic staff in Riseba and between Riseba and LiepU.

Assessment of the requirement [7]

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The academic staff qualifications comply with the regulatory enactments. The qualification of the teaching staff for the implementation of the study programme is relevant in the sense that there are sufficient number of academics with a degree in the Arts.

2.5. Assessment of the Compliance

Requirements

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

The MA-programme "New Media and Audiovisual Arts" volume is 80CP of which 10CP are courses covering the theoretical knowledge of the chosen sub-sector, 30 CP are for courses for approbation of theoretical knowledge in the aspect of current problems of the chosen sub-sector, 20CP are dedicated for the specific specialisation and 20CP are devoted to Master's thesis. For foreign students the mandatory part is 2CP larger as it includes an additional mandatory 2CP course of Latvian language. Number of contact hours complies with Cabinet Regulations no.240. Study programme structure could be partially compliant with Law on Higher Education Institutions, as it could be argued, that by not providing a C-part, academic freedom could be limited. The programme includes obligatory study courses about environmental and civil protection (Labour, Civil and Environmental Protection 2CP) for students who did not have these study courses in Bachelor level. Acquirable degree is in compliance with classification in regulatory enactments as well as knowledge, skills and competencies are in accordance with EQF level 7. Options for students to continue education have been fulfilled.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Study course descriptions and study materials are prepared in English language, and they

satisfy requirements set in Law on Higher Education Institutions. Study course literature (mandatory and suggested) in some courses could be renewed.

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

The diploma issued partially complies with the state legislature and "Procedures by which documents certifying higher Education recognised by the State shall be issued" (Cabinet of Ministers No. 202). Sample of diploma (page 3) does not correspond with legislation, it is written partly in Latvian and partly in English.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

There are at least 5 associate professors or professors involved in the study programme implementation together. It is confirmed by Rector's attestation. The compulsory part of the MA-programme is carried out by 5 professors and 1 associate professor. The experts point out that if we look at the core content, new media and audiovisual arts, there are not sufficiently qualified professors of practice-based research.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The academic staff has sufficient Latvian and English language knowledge for implementing study courses. This is confirmed by a signed Rector's attestation. This attestation is applied only to the Latvian faculty members.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The academic staff has sufficient foreign language knowledge for implementing study courses

(at least B2). This is confirmed by a signed Rector's attestation and applies to foreign and local faculty members. It also was mostly confirmed during on site visit.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Riseba and Liepāja University has a cooperation agreement with Latvian Academy of Culture confirming that in case the implementation of Master study programme is terminated, students will be able to continue studies in Latvian Academy of Culture study programme "Audiovisual Arts", which belongs to the same study field and provides equal degree to be awarded.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

University has a rector's signed attestation that confirms it will compensate losses to students if the study programme is not accredited or loses its licence and the student does not wish to continue studies in another study programme, which is provided by mutual cooperation agreements with Liepāja University (for bachelors), Culture Academy of Latvia (for masters) or Art Academy of Latvia (for doctoral students).

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

Riseba implements this MA-programme with Liepāja University (LiepU) and has an agreement for implementing a joint programme. Study programme parts consist on the same level (EQF 7). Most of the MA-programme is implemented by Riseba, however LiepU implements more than 1/10 of the programme. There are technically unified requirements for a degree to be obtained and both parts form a single and consecutive study programme, however this information differs on Riseba and LiepU webpages (LiepU had irrelevant/incorrect information) and quality assurance is not yet implemented in a joint way, as Riseba and LiepU Quality assurance centres work separately and the procedures could differ. Both partners provide equal opportunities for Erasmus exchange. Also the specialisations differ in Riseba and LiepU.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Assessment of the requirement [8]

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

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

However, C part should be introduced in the study programme to provide more academic freedom and the information regarding unified degree to be awarded should be fixed on partner's website.

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

Conclusions:

The experts consider that the MA-programme is socially justified as it brings an academic/artistic pathway to the doctoral studies and ensures the potential development of new media innovations and applications for the industry and society as a whole. The economic justification has been in the edge as the number of applicants has been low. It will be seen if the situation will get better in the future as the marketing efforts will be increased. The development of the joint MA-programme with LiepU is a good step to combine resources of the two universities, to diminish possible overlapping of programmes and to ensure the quality of the study process but also to ensure the practice-based research development. Riseba has basically good premises and facilities for the MA-programme, but there are some deficiencies in the audio sphere and some working studios. Funding is lacking for the students creative projects. However at the moment it seems that the joint MA-programme is not fully integrated as the specialisations differ and the information in the web pages of the partners differ. The quality assurance is not yet implemented in a joint way, as Riseba and LiepU Quality assurance centres work separately and the procedures could differ. The qualification of the teaching staff for the implementation of the study programme is relevant in the sense that there are sufficient number of academics with a degree in the Arts. It remains unclear who of the teachers/academics are fully concentrating on teaching students and research of the field. The composition of the academics has insufficient expertise in the practical part of the "New Media and Audiovisual Arts" field. The connections to the largest and most influential sectors of the industry pie could be increased to also attract teachers from the sector. There is shortage of expertise in video composition and computer graphics teaching staff which prevents the achievement of ambitious goals in today's dynamic competition. Both partners provide equal opportunities for Erasmus+ exchange. The implementation of the joint MA-programme seems partly undeveloped also as there is not enough collaboration between the teachers of LiepU and Riseba nor between the students. The recently updated and modernised curriculum is a good step as well in the sense that it is based on modules which better ensures the interconnection of the studies and provides bigger learning entities and processes. The content of the programme is mainly up-to-date but has some deficiencies in video composition and the use of composition applications, computer graphics etc. Overall the experts feel that there should be more connections to the competitive creative industry field, both arts and business to reach the mission as a place where "business meets art". The C-part

is missing from the curriculum and should be introduced in the MA-programme to provide more academic freedom and the information regarding unified degree to be awarded should be fixed on partner's website. Considering the potential development of new media innovations and applications for the industry, the staff of the programme should be increased with full-time practice-based researchers/teachers with a degree in the Arts and/or industry experts with a strong practical career plus an academic degree. Now, it is unclear if the academic staff is working full time. The transparency of the budgeting processes for the programme could be

Strengths:

1. Joint programme as a step for synergy benefits.
2. New compact curriculum.

Weaknesses:

1. Insufficient practice-based researcher/teachers who are working full time.
2. Curriculum has no C part.
3. Insufficient connections with the competitive creative industry.

Evaluation of the study programme "New Media and Audiovisual Art"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Average

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "New Media and Audiovisual Art"

Short-term recommendations

1. The experts recommend further conforming the joint MA-programme with LiepU and to unify the quality assurance tools to ensure a quality study process.
2. Experts recommend providing financial support for students' coursework and final projects.
3. The experts recommend including the C-part in the curriculum/study plan.
4. The experts recommend establishing interlinking the A and B parts of the final theses in order to successfully execute and enhance practice-based research in the arts.
5. The experts recommend further ensuring the most contemporary literature to be included in the study descriptions.
6. The experts recommend enhancing the cooperation between academic staff of Riseba and LiepU and discussing issues of developing the study content and financial needs of the programme."
7. The experts recommend making together with LiepU an action/marketing plan to attract more both Latvian and international students to joint MA-programme
8. The experts recommend to launch a survey to the students and possibly potential students about the attractiveness of the evening studies.

Long-term recommendations

1. The experts recommend increasing the collaboration with the creative industry and business world to raise the socio-economic justification of the studies and Riseba's goal for a place where "business meets art".
2. The experts recommend profiling the MA-programme towards new media technology and its use both for artistic and business contexts and adding more content on multimedia composition.
3. The experts recommend increasing elected full-time academic staff for the implementation of MA-programme, for enhancing research activities and for dividing the workload of the management.
4. The experts recommend recruiting teachers who have both a strong practical/ artistic career and a degree, preferably in the Arts, to fulfil the objectives to enhance practice-based research.
5. The experts recommend further deepening the collaboration between Riseba and LiepU teachers and students to create a study environment and a base for a research environment.
6. The experts recommend providing more special workstations/studios, and sound equipment - as Riseba could become a game changer in sound design.

II - "Media Art and Creative Technologies" ASSESSMENT

II - "Media Art and Creative Technologies" ASSESSMENT

2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

Analysis

2.1.1

According to SAR (page 48-49) the joint doctoral programme Media Arts and Creative Technologies is formed on the basis of the doctoral programme New Media Art implemented originally by LiepU. As Riseba had made a strategic decision to develop a high-quality doctoral level study programme, the two universities started to collaborate in order to further develop scientific research in accordance with the modern interdisciplinary requirements, to provide full-cycle media arts education and to combine the highest quality resources and not to overlap with each other. The joint doctoral programme complies well with the Arts study field. It is a relevant and needed continuation of Riseba's BA- and MA-programmes of the same field. It offers in-depth and innovative studies in the area of arts, new media and technology and creates a full-cycle study path for students. Joint doctoral programme was launched in February 2022 (SAR page 16). The doctoral programme offers an academic doctoral degree (PhD) in digital arts and audiovisual media rooted in practice-based and practice-led approach that reflects cutting edge contemporary artistic investigations, critical analytical research methods and technological innovation. Thus, it is the most advanced programme and open to personal research interests of the students in the field of study. The aim of the doctoral programme expressed in the Riseba web pages (July 2023, doctoral programme introduction) is to train "research-oriented professionals who display a wide range of expertise in new technologies, audiovisual arts and digital cultural processes, who have acquired specific skills in creating works of art and innovative media products, and who are competitive in the labour market of arts, innovation technologies and creative industries, but in more traditional art and media production practices, cultural analytics, data visualisation, or augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), Extended Reality (XR), artificial intelligence, and Volumetrics." The aims of the young doctoral programme are relevant and ambitious.

2.1.2

The title and code (213- Audiovisual arts and media arts) of the joint doctoral programme indicate well its subject area and level, while the degree indicates the level of education it will receive upon completion of the programme (Cabinet of Ministers rules no.322). The aims and objectives of the joint doctoral programme are designed to achieve the learning outcomes, according to the EQF level 8 -competence descriptions - knowledge, skills and competencies - that students are expected to acquire during their studies. According to Regulations regarding Scientific sector groups, Science sectors and Sub-sectors of Latvia this joint doctoral programme is under the scientific sector group of Humanities and Art Sciences which is in the same classification as this study field and study content of this doctoral programme. The admission requirements are designed to ensure the students have the necessary background and qualifications to succeed in the programme and achieve the intended learning outcomes. All of these elements are interconnected and work together to ensure that the doctoral programme is effective in achieving its goals and preparing students for their future careers. The joint doctoral programme is designed to be completed in 3 years of full-time study, which is in line with the usual duration of doctoral programmes in Latvia. The doctoral programme's code and degree to be obtained are fit to this study field.

2.1.3

The previous assessment's main recommendation (Annex 2.17) was to develop a long-term plan for attracting potential foreign students to promote the growth of student numbers. According to the Annex 2.17, the Arts study field/doctoral programme has created a plan to attract more students from abroad and has activated it by creating exhibitions, workshops, discussions together with LiepU and online, disseminating information about them, and attracting participants from the industry abroad, promoting Riseba and informing about the possibilities of studying in English. The efforts to attract the students should continue. It would be also informative to explain the notions of "media art" and "creative technologies" better in the marketing material and the objectives should be expressed in the same way for both Riseba and LiepU audiences to attract students. In the SAR (page 117, Annex 2.1.7) the previous experts have encouraged the joint doctoral programme to promote close cooperation with employers and industry representatives in order to identify current research objects and follow current labour market trends in order to enhance the socio-economic importance of research. According to the SAR (page 117) the Riseba and LiepU have "organised creative workshops together with representatives of creative industry companies so that students get to know the techniques used, approaches, stimulate interest and establish contacts." The experts support the further efforts to establish cooperation with the relevant creative industry companies.

2.1.4

The joint doctoral programme's development builds upon the joint MA-programme "New Media and Audiovisual Arts." The positive experience gained from this MA-programme serves as a foundation for the design of the doctoral programme. This continuity ensures a coherent academic pathway for students, while also capitalising on the strengths of the existing MA- programme. With the doctoral programme the collaboration between Riseba and LiepU is strengthened. The students enrolled in the 2022/2023 study year are altogether 9, of which 4 in Riseba, which is one less that counted for economic justification in the Riseba. The programme was launched in February 2022. According to the Annex 3.3.2 there are two students in the second year and one student in the third year already, which is a bit strange, as the launch of the programme was in February 2022. The economic justification of the programme is quite weak. As the programme is very young it is understandable that the education is not internationally well known yet. There is social justification for the joint doctoral programme as Latvia needs the strengthening of research in the field of culture and creative sector to increase innovation capacity, develop creative industry and its economic potential

and to increase international competitiveness. Latvia faces a shortage of doctoral degree holders, particularly in disciplines that foster innovation and research in the Arts and creative industry. It is pointed out in the SAR (page 212) that the number of doctoral degree holders in Latvia is 2 to 2.5 times less than is necessary for the revival of researchers, moreover, the largest number of doctorates is in the age group over 70 years, many of whom are no longer active in science; as reflected in the survey of the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) "Further career of doctors of science". This is also the justification for the Arts field to develop the doctoral programme. For the justification of a doctoral programme and research there should be enough critical mass of university researchers and students to ensure high level research and education environment of the field. This will be a challenge in the joint doctoral programme of Riseba/LiepU. It will need a big effort to attract both qualified staff and students into the doctoral programme to create the proper critical mass.

2.1.5

According to the SAR (page 49) the doctoral programme was developed by a working group of the teaching staff of both universities with the support of the experts involved, who were selected to reflect the specifics of both audiovisual media and new creative technologies and media arts. The working group and experts compiled the content and programme plan in accordance with the documents and regulations of LiepU and nationally significant roofing documents, the purpose of the programme and their own expertise. The joint Doctoral study programme Media Arts and Creative Technologies of Riseba and LiepU was developed within the framework of the SAM 8.2.1.0/18/A/010 project Reducing Fragmentation of Study Programmes and Strengthening Resource Sharing in LiepU. The curriculum and content is seemingly well built on the modern module system, which ensures the interconnection of the content. The development and implementation of the joint study programme is justified and basically ensures a quality study process.

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

Conclusions:

The joint doctoral programme complies well with the Arts study field. The doctoral programme offers an academic doctoral degree (PhD) in digital arts and audiovisual media rooted in practice-based and practice-led approach that reflects cutting edge contemporary artistic investigations, critical analytical research methods and technological innovation. The programme is provided in English. The title and code of the study programme indicate its subject area and level, while the degree indicates the level of education it will receive upon completion of the programme and the admission requirements are designed to ensure that students have the necessary background and qualifications to succeed in the program and achieve the intended learning outcomes. The previous recommendations have been taken into account but further development has to be done. The challenge is the newly launched programme that is internationally unknown to attract paying students. There is 9 students at the moment, but it is a question how is it possible that there are students already in the third year. By now there is limited number of international students in the doctoral programme and it will be a challenge to attract the students as the recognition of Riseba and the new doctoral programme will take time and efforts. However, there is social justification for the doctoral programme as Latvia needs the strengthening of research in the field of culture and creative sector to increase innovation capacity. It is pointed out in the SAR (page 212) that the number of doctoral degree holders in Latvia is 2 to 2.5 times less than is necessary for the revival of researchers, moreover, the largest number of doctorates is in the age group over 70 years, many of whom are no longer active in science; as reflected in the survey of the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) "Further career of doctors of science". Given the current shortage of professors

holding doctoral degrees in media arts or creative technologies within the Latvian labour market, the significance of this programme's graduates becomes even more pronounced. These graduates possess the potential to bridge the gap effectively, assuming pivotal roles as essential researchers in the realm of science. The challenge here is the small critical mass - small academic research community - in the Arts study field at the moment to nurture the development. That is why international collaboration is crucial for the development for the joint doctoral programme.

Strengths

1. The doctoral programme logically follows the BA and MA-programmes.
2. The curriculum is based on the module system.
3. The ambitious goals to develop the doctoral programme and practice-based research.

Weaknesses

1. Limited research/professors community in the faculty even together with LiepU.
2. International recognition of Riseba and the joint doctoral programme is yet weak to attract international students.

2.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

Analysis

2.2.1

The joint doctoral programme aims at providing academic education where practice and research are intertwined in the manner of so-called artistic or practice-based research, which has been evolving in Europe for more than 30 years. The objective of the doctoral programme (SAR, 203) is to prepare competitive, research-oriented professionals who are proficient in multifaceted knowledge of new technologies, audiovisual arts and digital cultural processes, who have acquired specific skills in the creation of works of art and innovative media products, scientific research and the implementation of creative projects, and who are competitive in the field of art, innovation technologies and creative industry in the labour market. In the SAR (page 211) the core content of the joint doctoral programme is described to focus on creative practice-based art research and the transformative potential of digital technologies. In particular, the new doctoral programme offers academically in-depth studies in the use of digital technologies in various media environments, in audiovisual arts and the use of innovative technologies such as augmented and virtual reality, 360° cinema, cultural analytics, data visualisation, and artificial intelligence (AI). Upon analysing the information presented in SAR (pages 217-221), it becomes evident that the doctoral programme is indeed topical and relevant.

The curriculum and content is built on the module system, which ensures the interconnection of the content. The curriculum corresponds to the objectives of the programme and seems to ensure the achievement of learning outcomes. The study modules have been thoughtfully crafted to establish meaningful interconnections, effectively linking courses to the development of students' doctoral theses. Notably, the structure of modules appears to be strategically designed, ensuring their complementarity. Some modules span multiple semesters, which demonstrates a holistic approach to curriculum planning. This approach facilitates a more in-depth exploration of topics, allowing students to delve deeper into their research over an extended period of time. The doctoral programme's curriculum and learning outcomes are well written and emphasise the development of advanced knowledge, independent research skills, effective communication, leadership abilities, and

the capability to contribute to scientific projects and innovative solutions. According to the SAR (page 211), the main educational goal of the doctoral programme is research – art is also studied, but the main approach is to consider art as a method of research. In the context of media art and creative technologies, this means that the artist is not only the creator of a work of art, but also the creator of new tools, media, technologies, processes of society, scientific discoveries, and a researcher. In addition, new knowledge is created in these research processes. In experts opinion, it will be important to develop cooperation and collaboration with business sector of the creative industry, to find relevant research topics and financial partners for innovative research and exploration. Often in the business sector, there is a need for specific, highly profiled skills, which the doctoral programme could offer with high quality, thus enhancing competitiveness. In the SAR (page 217) it is briefly mentioned that: "The international aspect is very important in the study programme – artists-researchers who have graduated from this programme will orient themselves in the international media art environment and circulation [...]". However, the doctoral programme information in the SAR lacks specific details regarding existing international partnerships, exchange programmes or collaborative projects. To strengthen international aspect and provide potential students with a picture of the programme's global reach, the doctoral programme could outline plans for future partnerships with institutions abroad.

2.2.2

As we can read in the SAR (page 221-223) the programme's focus is directed towards exploring significant questions related to media arts and creative technologies. These inquiries guide the programme's content and research directions to following spheres: The programme examines the potential roles of media arts and creative technologies in shaping and envisioning future paradigms for cultural economies, creative entrepreneurship, cross-sectoral concepts, practice models, and their hierarchical values. The programme also explores the development of tools and technologies to support these roles. The programme investigates how media art, through the creation of high-quality artistic works, can contribute to the development of collective intelligence, cultural identity, individual freedom, self-management, creative expression, imagination, and inspiration. The impact of media arts and creative technologies on interdisciplinary development is explored, particularly in areas such as science, natural resources, environment, climate, policy issues, business model development, and administrative systems. The experts interpret that the research topic can be guided towards these questions but is also dependent on the doctoral student's own interests or possibly dependent on the business partner interests. The awarding of a degree is based on the achievements and findings within the relevant field of science or artistic creation. These research questions are ambitious and relevant. However, it is difficult to see how the content and education in the doctoral programme can tackle these topics and find specific expertise, international and business cooperation and project funding as the programme is so young with few researchers. Since there have been no graduates from this programme yet, there are no relevant empirical cases to reference. There are a lot of ambitious plans to realise, which is respectable. It has to be mentioned that the study descriptions could be updated with some recent sources. For example, the course "Progression Assessment of Artistic Inquiry " has the youngest source in the list of literature for research methods from 2014 (i.e. 9 years).

2.2.3

The university aims at student-centred learning. In the doctoral level it is expected that a large part of it is individual work as the research questions may differ very much. According to the expert meeting with students (3.8.2023.), the students unanimously expressed that the teachers are always very supportive and the methods contribute to the achievement of the aims. The programme's structure, how it is explained in SAR (page 223-226), with regular face-to-face colloquiums, bring a strong community among the few doctoral students while promoting

independent research and critical reflection. The trimester-based approach ensures steady progress and offers guidance through feedback-rich colloquiums. By focusing on module-based study plan and external partnerships, the doctoral programme equips students with skills and support for success. This holistic approach prepares graduates to excel as artist-researchers, contributing to the advancement of knowledge in their fields. Overall, the doctoral programme embodies Arts study field's dedication to fostering innovation and creativity in research in the arts and creative technologies. In July/August the web pages of the universities (<https://riseba.lv/programma/mediju-maks-la-un-radosas-tehnologijas/> , and <https://www.liepu.lv/lv/846/mediju-maks-la-un-radosas-tehnologijas> ,) gave an impression that the joint doctoral programme's contents in Riseba and LiePU are not well conformed. The introductions of the programmes on aforementioned web pages differ (July/August 2023) had a different degree to be awarded and tuition cost per year. However in the SAR, page 216) it is said that the tuition fee approved by the Board of the Joint Study Programme for full-time education in both institutions is the same. Possibly the information is just outdated. If so, the web pages should be updated as soon as possible. The experts assume that it is expected that the obtained doctoral diploma is identical (Annex 3.2.1.) for both universities.

However, the Annex 3.2.3. shows that the conformity of the joint study programme complies mostly with the requirements of the Law on Higher Education Institutions. The experts question if the indicator "Higher education institution/college and partner institutions have jointly established a quality assurance system for the joint study programme" has been fully implemented. During the visit (2.8.2023), in the interview with Riseba Quality centre representatives it was concluded that they do not work directly / on a daily basis with LiePU Quality Centre, therefore there could be differences in how issues are dealt on each partner's side. Objectives like observation procedures of classes, implementation of methodological seminars for teaching staff, monitoring of study breaks and performance of preventative actions to reduce termination of studies still might happen very independently for each institution.

2.2.5

According to the Annex 2.1.7 Riseba and LiePU do not have their own joint doctoral council in music, visual arts and architecture, but there is a contract with the Latvian Academy of Arts to defend their thesis there. So, degree applicants are not denied opportunities to defend during the transition period. The task is to increase the number of elected researchers/teaching staff in the field of study direction "Arts" with the status of an expert of the Latvian Council of Science. Lead time - 2027. The cooperation agreement provides for the provision of the assessment of doctoral theses by students of the joint doctoral study programme Media Art and Creative Technologies in the doctoral thesis council of the Latvian Academy of Arts. (Annex 4.1. RISEBA/Liepājas Universitātes un Latvijas Mākslas Akadēmijas Sadarbības līgums par promocijas darba vērtēšanas nodrošināšanu).

2.2.6

The topics of the doctoral theses are topical and original in the Latvian context. According to the SAR (page 228), most of the research is devoted to immersive media - VR, XR, 360° narrative research. These theses also have potential for commercialization and applicability not only in the arts, but also in the entertainment industry, medicine, etc. Interdisciplinary research, such as the study of contemporary art - including media art residences - in a regional small town and their links to practices for the preservation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage may also have great regional importance. Since there have been no graduates from this programme, there are no relevant cases to refer.

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

Conclusion:

The doctoral programme is topical. The curriculum is modern and learning outcomes are well written and emphasise the development of advanced knowledge, independent research skills, effective communication, leadership abilities, and the capability to contribute to scientific projects and innovative solutions. The programme's structure, with regular face-to-face colloquiums, brings a strong community among the few doctoral students while promoting independent research and critical reflection. The trimester-based approach ensures steady progress and offers guidance through feedback-rich colloquiums. The core of the joint doctoral programme is described to focus on creative practice-based art research and the transformative potential of digital technologies. The doctoral programme's thematic focus centres around critical questions pertaining to media arts and creative technologies. These inquiries guide the doctoral programme's research directions, investigating roles of media arts, contributions to cultural identity, and impacts on interdisciplinary development. The awarding of a degree is grounded in achievements and findings within the relevant field of science or artistic creation. Despite the absence of graduates thus far, the doctoral programme's potential is evidenced by its alignment with industry needs, its thematic relevance, and its commitment to fostering artistic and technological innovation. The doctoral programme's relevance is increased by the lack of professors with doctoral degrees in media arts or creative technologies within the Latvian labour market. Graduates of this programme hold the potential to address this gap and take on essential roles as pivotal researchers in the field of science. The main challenge for the programme is, how to attract proper critical mass of qualified and international researchers and students. The Arts study field should also take care that the two universities marketing, information and quality assurance of the joint programme are conformed.

Strengths:

1. Student-centred, modern curriculum and individual study process.
2. Structure of colloquiums.
3. Relevant studies and research subjects in the sphere of innovative technologies.
4. Focus on artistic approach and research process.

Weaknesses:

1. Internationalisation of the doctoral programme and approach is limited by far.
2. The programme information lacks specific details regarding existing international partnerships, exchange programmes and/or cooperation projects.
3. There is no critical mass of artists/researchers.
4. There is no common quality assurance of Riseba/LiepU for the programme.

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

The study programme is based on the achievement and findings of the respective field in Latvia. The focus of the research-practice-based research in the Arts - is relevant in and topical in Europe. The scope of academic and artistic creation/research of the teaching staff is quite

limited. The critical mass of artists/researchers is lacking and the history of the research in the area is short and international connections for practice-based research are still limited.

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

Analysis

2.3.1

The premises and equipment together with LiepU create good preconditions for the doctoral programme and achieving learning and research outcomes. One of the goals of the joint doctoral programme has been to combine the resources of Riseba and LiepU so that students have access to more diverse resources in both universities. Part of the study process at Riseba is implemented in one of the largest and most modern university audiovisual media centres in the Baltics. The doctoral programme uses the same premises, facilities and informative provision as BA- and MA-programmes as previously explained. The premises and facilities in Riseba are good and meet the conditions for the implementation of the joint doctoral programme. In addition, in December 2021, Riseba opened a modern and comfortable two-story (71.6 m² first floor, 48.6 m² second floor) laboratory for doctoral students, equipped with stationary computers and a lot of software. For doctoral programme in LiepU, in MPLab there are rooms for students, teachers and researchers available daily, around the clock, including weekends. About 20-40 people stay in the premises daily. In MPLab, all audiences are equipped with audiovisual presentation equipment – video projector or screen, computer, speakers for presentations. LiepU premises have 100% wireless internet coverage (20 Mbps). LiepU also has equipment for creating digital music and sound art. There are sufficient premises and informative provision available for doctoral studies, material and digital provision of both Riseba and LiepU universities, including exhibition premises in Riseba and RIXC Art Gallery. The SAR (p. 238-239) does not provide sufficient details regarding Riseba's financial provisions in compliance with the study programme. This makes a significant challenge for experts attempting to evaluate the programme's financial viability.

The conditions for the implementation of the doctoral programme are good and meet the conditions for the implementation of the doctoral study programme. The provision creates good preconditions for achieving learning and research outcomes. The environment allows a student to practise an active artistic/creative process, critical reflections on it, and the resulting new theory and knowledge, all this takes place in a socially dynamic environment.

2.3.2

Study and science provision together with LiepU gives a good basis for developing the joint doctoral programme and further cooperation with other scientific institutions and higher education institutions. As previously explained, also the Riseba library provides students and academic staff with the necessary information services for the doctoral programme. Since June 17, 2016, Riseba library has been accredited by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia and has acquired the status of a library of local significance. The library premises at Meža Street 3 occupy 453 m². It has a spacious reading room with 32 jobs, as well as a computer room with 6 computerised workplaces. The library provides databases subscribed by the university: Ebsco, WOS, Emerald, Leta.lv, Nozare.lv, as well as pilot databases Scopus, Ebrary, Passport GMID, ScienceDirect, RUBRICON, ProQuest, EBSCO eBook, etc. As previously expressed the role of the library could be widened.

According to the Annex 2.17 the replenishment of the library's resources for the doctoral programme is coordinated by the director of the study process. A wider addition to the library's resources is planned for the 2022/2023 academic year, including literature requested by doctoral students and recommended by scientific leaders. Every year, databases EBSCO Academic Search Complete (full-text publications in humanities and social sciences), Web of Science (full-text publications in natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, arts, etc.), Greenleaf Publishing PRMEC,

Leta.lv, Nozare.lv, which are also available remotely, for use outside the university premises are subscribed to and used to support a quality study process. Riseba's initiatives, as outlined in Annex 2.17, demonstrate a clear effort to create favorable conditions for achieving academic success through well-curated library resources and database subscriptions. Since 2018, free trials of Taylor&Francis Group eBooks have been provided. In Riseba there is no EDUROAM network, which could be added to enhance the international students' and visiting teachers' access to Wifi.

2.3.3

As previously explained, all the programmes in Riseba are dependent on student fees. The dependency on fees is why starting from the 2023/2024 academic year, a decision has been made to increase the tuition fee for existing students. Thus, in coordination with the management of LiepU and approved by the Senate of LiepU, the study fee for Latvian students of the study program "Media Arts and Creative Technologies" 2023/2024 will be 4700.00 euros (3800.00 euros in 2022/2023 year), and for students from outside the European Union - 5900 euros. There are altogether 9 students in the joint doctoral programme, of which 4 in Riseba. The doctoral programme has a little less than the minimum number of students to ensure the profitability of the programme even though the Arts study field considers the number reasonable for the young programme. It seems that there is scarce funding for scientific research as only 1,6 % is allocated to "scientific activities" (SAR page 61) of the expenditure. It is not known, if the percentage includes creative activities and research and if it is allocated for academic staff's and/or students' activities. Otherwise, the experts did not get very much details about financial provision allocated to the doctoral programme. The experts have the same conclusion as the previous experts that it is important to diversify funding sources by engaging in national or international level scientific programmes/projects, thus promoting student activity in the scientific circulation of international level.

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

Conclusions:

The doctoral students have access to diverse and sufficient resources of both universities, and part of the study process is implemented in one of the largest and most modern university audiovisual media centres in the Baltics. The joint doctoral programme uses the same basically good premises, facilities and informative provision as BA- and MA-programmes which have been previously explained in this report. In addition, Riseba has opened a modern and comfortable two-story (71.6 m2 first floor, 48.6 m2 second floor) laboratory for doctoral students, equipped with stationary computers and a lot of software. The expert think that additionally the role of the library could be enhanced to better serve also doctoral students and academic staff and the EDUROAM network could be provided in the premises. The conditions for the implementation of the joint doctoral programme are good, except that it remains unclear if there is Riseba funding for doctoral students creative projects or scientific, practice-based research. The environment itself allows a student to practice an active artistic/creative process and critical reflections on it. The creative activities and resulting new theory and knowledge takes place in a small but socially dynamic environment. The doctoral programme's few students can use both of the universities' premises and facilities and information services. However, it seems that there is scarce funding for actual practice-based research and artistic creation. To ensure financial stability and reduce dependence on tuition fees, it is crucial for the institution to diversify its funding sources. Engaging in national and international scientific programmes, as recommended by experts, can provide an avenue for alternative funding. Furthermore, seeking project funding opportunities for international artistic and research collaborations, including conferences, can contribute to financial sustainability while fostering

student engagement in international scientific circles.

Strengths:

1. Good premises, facilities and information provision available of the two partner universities.
2. Small but dynamic, ambitious doctoral study/research environment.

Weaknesses:

1. Heavy dependence on student fees.
5. Lack of diversified funding sources in national or international level scientific programmes.
2. Missing EDUROAM network in the premises.
3. The role of the library could be enhanced.

Assessment of the requirement [6]

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

The premises, facilities and equipment and information provision of the two partner universities are sufficient and give a good base for the joint doctoral programme. The programme is dependent on student fees and allocation of funds of the university, of which the experts did not get much details. Funding for scientific research and creative activities seem to be limited.

2.4. Teaching Staff

Analysis

2.4.1

In total, there are 17 academics involved in the teaching of the doctoral programme, of which 15 have a doctoral level degree. According to the Latvian Law on Higher Education Institutions, all the lecturers should have a doctoral degree. In the area of the Arts it is anyhow understandable that there may be few experienced, high level practitioners who do not have a doctoral degree but usually MA-level degree, as already previously explained. 6 of the lecturers have a doctoral degree in the arts or in the audiovisual media which is relatively good. Also, 6 of the lecturers are experts of the Latvian Council of Science (SAR pages 243-244). Since the doctoral programme has started in the 2020/21 academic year (in LiepU?), no changes have taken place. The teaching staff has appropriate degrees related to the courses taught and the teaching staff is mainly complying the law. The teaching staff (SAR pages 243-244) has excellent competences in the following areas: narrative systems in new media art, directing, interactive media, philosophy, history, general basics of film production and accounting, documentary cinema, basics of film direction, academic research, knowledges of methodologies and methods, academic writing, etc. In general, the teachers are qualified according to the doctoral programme and mapping. According to the information in the SAR (pages 244-251), there is a satisfactory number and quality of publications and creative works of the selected teaching staff, which allows an assumption of competency relevance to the objectives. The experts anyhow realised that specifically business industry-oriented practical competencies of the teaching staff are limited.

2.4.2

The experts have not identified gaps in the composition of the teaching staff from the perspective of legal requirements, except that two of the mentioned lecturers do not have a doctoral degree. The qualifications of the teaching staff are adequate. According to the SAR (annex 2.8.) and based on the Riseba visit 2-3.08.2023, the English language skills of teaching staff is sufficient.

The diversity of the staff is quite wide and the composition of the academic staff is quite satisfactory in the sense that more than 50% of the teaching staff has a practical background linked with curriculum and learning outcomes (CVs on Annex 2.8.). The faculty profile is mainly adequate but there is a lack of the practical expertise of the industry as only 6 out of 17 teaching staff of the doctoral programme have significant experience of professional practical work in the creative industry.

The profile of the rest of the teaching staff could teach in almost any field. The doctoral programme has a practice-based research approach so there should be even more academic staff with practical experience in the industry or strong artistic experience. It would be advisable to increase teaching staff from the field of media arts and the new technology industry - which is a challenge as the practitioners not very often have PhD. Thus, regarding increasing the quality of studies, the management of the Arts study field is in the process of searching for new teaching staff outside of Latvia. In the local Latvian teaching staff market, there is an acute shortage of specialists who are competent in their profession, with practical experience and at the same time with academic doctoral education.

2.4.3

The scientific publications and the involvement in research-related projects of the 17 academic staff involved in the implementation of the doctoral study programmes have been listed in the SAR (pages 244-251). Examining the scientific publications and the involvement in research-related projects of the academic staff, the experts conclude that only 8 out of 17 of the teaching staff have an activity related to Media Art and Creative Technologies or at least close to it. The activity profiles of the others do not contribute to the core of implementation of a high-quality doctoral programme in media arts and creative technology.

2.4.4

According to the SAR (page 243, table 3.33) all the elected academic staff members fulfill the demanded qualifications and have either publications, artistic achievements or five years of practical experience. The teaching staff is involved in scientific research and/or artistic activities. Many of the lecturers are carrying out or have carried out research projects during the last 3 years (SAR pages 244-251). Experts highlight a couple of faculty studies that are directly applicable to the doctoral programme of Media Art and Creative Technologies:

C.Hales - 4 related publications, a couple of descriptive titles here: "Experimental Film Meets Artificial Intelligence", "Interactive Stories for the Brain: Interaction and Response in Brainwave-Influenced Non-linear Films", "Interactive Digital Storytelling aspects", " Designing Brainwave-responsive Films in "Graphic Design: traditions and innovations".

Raivo Kelomees - has 6 publications during a 6 year period: "The Meaning of Creativity in the Age", "Bridges and conflicts on the East-West art axis, the Audience in Confrontation with the Researchbased and Hybrid Artworks", others with humanistic and digital communication related topics.

Inta Klason - The research carried out by other teaching staff is too universal in nature to be applied to the field of Media Art and Creative Technologies.

Ellen Pearlman - has 12 publications during a 6 year period, a couple of descriptive titles here: "AI Comes of Age", "AIBO: An Emotionally Intelligent, Artificial Intelligent Brain Opera - Proof of

Concept", "OUTPUT: Translating Robots and Human Movers Across Platforms in a Sequentially Improvised Performance", "A Co-Lab On Developing Cyborg Arts – Interdisciplinary Collaborations and Practice Based Solutions, in Journal of Problem Based Learning in Education".

Aigars Ceplītis - 5 related publications, a few descriptive titles here: "Call to action: rhizomatic network perception in Cine-VR 3D", "Curious aspects of audionarratology in stereoscopic cinematography in VR", "The paradox of the embodiment and narrative scheme in 360 degrees spherical cinema".

Rasa Šmite and Raitis Šmits - has 3 Media Art and Creative Technologies related editions, all about Scientific collection of articles "Open Fields, Acoustic Space".

2.4.5

During the interviews and the meetings with the teaching staff (2-3.08.2023), the teachers concluded that there could be better mutual cooperation between the teaching staff at Riseba and between the two universities. According to the SAR (page 252) the cooperation of teaching staff is facilitated by regular meetings - three times a year - during intensive working weeks (colloquiums). The teaching staff employed in the doctoral programme actively cooperates in order to support, each within the framework of its own expertise, the work of doctoral students and the progress of the research. The cooperation is directly promoted and ensured by the work of the head of colloquia, Christopher Hales, inviting the teaching staff to participate in discussion presentations organised by students, conferences, etc. Communication between teaching staff is also carried out remotely (mostly in e-mails).

As a conclusion, however there are 17 teachers involved in the doctoral programme, it seems that there are very few full time academics and most of the lecturers are visiting or are having a lot of administrative tasks. The experts do not have facts, but it seems that because of part time, visiting and online academic staff, it is hard to create a very close research team with weekly or even monthly communication. Anyhow, the small staff and the interviewed students seemed to form an enthusiastic environment for studies even they do not meet very often.

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

Conclusions:

According to the information in the SAR, there is a satisfactory number of teachers with PhD degrees and proper qualifications and backgrounds, even two of the lecturers do not have a PhD. The quality of publications and creative works of the selected teaching staff allows an assumption of competency relevance to the objectives. The experts note some lacks specifically in business- and industry-oriented practical competencies in the faculty. As the current emphasis in the faculty is on the arts and practice-based research, the practical link with the business aspects of the new media and technology field is not yet fully developed. Only 6 out of 17 teaching staff of the doctoral programme have significant experience of professional practical work in the creative industry and the rest of the faculty could teach in almost any field. As the doctoral programme has a practice-based research approach, there should be even more elected, full-time academic staff with practical experience in the industry or strong artistic experience. As the main objective of the doctoral programme is to prepare competitive, research-oriented professionals who are proficient in multifaceted knowledge of new technologies, audiovisual arts and digital cultural processes, who have acquired specific skills in the creation of works of art and innovative media products, scientific research and the implementation of creative projects, and who are competitive in the field of art, innovation technologies and creative industry in the labour market (SAR, page 207) the faculty with the practical expertise in the industry should be increased. The number of teaching staff is 17 for the 9 students in the doctoral programme, which is a good ratio as such. However, the teachers are not

fully committed to the programme and Arts study field. The question is the same as for the other programmes: Which of the teachers are full-time academics and how much do they actually have time allocated to supervise or teach the doctoral students. The facts remain unclear but it seems that there are only few full-time academics. It is important to have more full-time faculty that can take responsibility for the doctoral programme students and research. The collaboration between the faculty could be increased also to share administrative workload and power.

Strengths

1. Qualified teaching staff in theoretical aspects of the field.
2. Satisfactory number of teachers and proper qualifications and backgrounds.

Weaknesses:

1. Full time faculty with practical experience in the industry or strong artistic experience is limited. Only 6 out of 17 teaching staff of the doctoral programme have significant experience of professional practical work in the creative industry.
2. Too few fully committed researcher/teachers to create critical mass for research and teaching.

Assessment of the requirement [7]

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

There is a satisfactory number of teachers with PhD degrees taking into account the curriculum and they have proper qualifications and backgrounds, except that two lecturers do not have PhD. The quality of publications and creative works of the selected teaching staff mainly allows an assumption of competency relevance to the objectives of the programmes. The experts note some weaknesses specifically in business industry-oriented practical competencies. Overall, there is a lack of full time academics with practical experience in the arts or industry who could create a research/teacher team and allocate time for teaching and research.

2.5. Assessment of the Compliance

Requirements

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

The diploma issued partially complies with the state legislature and "Procedures by which documents certifying higher Education recognised by the State shall be issued" (Cabinet of Ministers No. 202). Sample of diploma (page 3) does not correspond with legislation, it is written partly in Latvian and partly in English.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

There are at least 5 associate professors or professors involved in the study programme implementation together. It is confirmed by Rector's attestation. Study programme is carried out by 15 professors and assistant professors of whom 5 are from Riseba, 5 are from LiepU and 5 are from either other Latvian or foreign universities. Six of these experts have expert rights granted by Latvian Council of Science.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

There are at least 5 professors or professors involved in the study programme implementation together. It is confirmed by Rector's attestation. Study programme is carried out by 15 professors and assistant professors of whom 5 are from Riseba, 5 are from LiepU and 5 are from either other Latvian or foreign universities. Six of these professors have expert rights granted by Latvian Council of Science; 4 professors are from LiepU and Riseba, 1 from Riga Stradiņš University and one from University of Latvia.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The academic staff has sufficient Latvian and English language knowledge for implementing study courses. This is confirmed by a signed Rector's attestation. This attestation is applied only to the Latvian faculty members.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

The academic staff has sufficient foreign language knowledge for implementing study courses (at least B2). This is confirmed by a signed Rector's attestation and applies to foreign and local faculty members. It also was mostly confirmed during on site visit.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

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

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

Riseba and Liepāja University has a cooperation agreement with Art Academy of Latvia confirming that in case the implementation of Master study programme is terminated, students will be able to continue studies in Art Academy of Latvia study programme "Arts", which belongs to the same study field and provides equal degree to be awarded.

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

Assessment of compliance: Fully compliant

University has a rector's signed attestation that confirms it will compensate losses to students if the study programme is not accredited or loses its licence and the student does not wish to continue studies in another study programme, which is provided by mutual cooperation agreements with Liepāja University (for bachelors), Culture Academy of Latvia (for masters) or Art Academy of Latvia (for doctoral students).

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

RISEBA implements this study programme with Liepāja University (LiepU) and has an agreement

for implementing a joint programme. Study programme parts consist on the same level (EQF 8). Study programme is implemented equally by RISEBA (55%) and LiepU (45%). There technically are unified requirements for a degree to be obtained and both parts form a single and consecutive study programme, however this information differs on RISEBA and LiepU webpages (LiepU had irrelevant/incorrect information); additionally LiepU webpage had different cost per year than RISEBA, which could potentially mislead students. Quality assurance is not yet implemented in a joint way, as RISEBA and LiepU Quality assurance centres work separately and the procedures could differ.

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

Assessment of compliance: Not relevant

Assessment of the requirement [8]

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

Assessment of compliance: Partially compliant

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

However, the information regarding unified degree to be awarded and study cost per year should be fixed on partner's website, as it could potentially mislead any potential students.

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

Conclusions:

The joint doctoral programme mostly complies with requirements set in different laws, and all of the deficiencies regarding fulfilling legal criteria could be eliminated in the short-term period. The joint doctoral programme complies with the Riseba strategy and Art study field objectives and is logical as it provides the third step after BA- ja MA-programmes in the spheres of audiovisual, new media arts and technologies. The aim to build a contemporary doctoral education in the Arts and develop artistic research where practice and theory intertwine are ambitious. The internationalisation, business aspect and cooperation with the industry needs also efforts in the development of the programme. The joint study environment and premises allows a student to practice an active artistic/creative process, critical reflections on it and the resulting new theory and knowledge and all this takes place in a socially dynamic environment. It offers the few students a pioneering environment to study in a doctoral level and a possibility to attain PhD from the individual, student centered point of interest. The excitement and enthusiasm of the doctoral students could be felt in the meeting (3.8.2023) with them. The academic staff of the doctoral programme ensures mostly the implementation of the studies. However, the doctoral programme has a practice-based research approach so there should be even more academic staff with practical experience in the industry or strong artistic experience. The research/teacher collegium is small and the teachers are mainly part time or visiting teachers. It would be crucial to increase the number of full-time researcher/teachers that have strong practical or artistic career in the industry and a doctoral degree. It is important to create critical mass for the collaboration and also in order to share workload and power. Funding of

the doctoral programme is dependent on student fees so it would be important to diversify the funding sources. The international cooperation is still modest but going to the right direction. For example, two international teachers have been elected. However, it is crucial to enhance the international cooperation as practice-based research is internationally somewhat new and there are few universities that offer quality education in artistic research in the audiovisual and new media sphere. Also, because of the small collegium, international research projects and collaboration with international universities are crucial steps for the future development. Even the development of the doctoral programme and steps are promising the programme is very new, and some shortcomings are there, that is why the experts evaluate the programme average.

Strengths:

1. The doctoral programme logically follows the BA- and MA-programmes.
2. Student centred curriculum and individual study process.
3. Structure of colloquiums.
4. Focus on artistic or practice-based research process.
5. Good premises, facilities and information provision of the two partner universities.

Weaknesses:

1. Limited full time research/professors' community.
2. Full time faculty with practical experience in the industry or strong artistic experience is limited.
3. Lack of project and research funding.
4. Internationalisation of the doctoral programme and approach is limited by far.
5. The course descriptions partly lack recent literature.

Evaluation of the study programme "Media Art and Creative Technologies"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Average

2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Media Art and Creative Technologies"

Short-term recommendations

- | |
|---|
| 1. The experts recommend the quality assurance centres of the two universities ensuring jointly quality assurance procedures for the joint doctoral programme. |
| 2. The experts recommend to further update the course descriptions with the latest literature. |
| 3. The experts recommend making together with LiepU an action/marketing plan to attract more both Latvian and international students to the joint doctoral programme. |

Long-term recommendations

- | |
|--|
| 1. The experts recommend having further cooperation with the creative industry partners and business to identify the needs of employers and to identify potential research topics and initiatives as well as to diversify funding. |
| 2. The experts recommend searching for project funding possibilities for international artistic/practice-based research collaboration and conferences. |

3. The experts recommend increasing the proportion of full-time teaching/research staff from the field of media arts and new technology industry.

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
R1 - Pursuant to Section 5, Paragraph 2.1 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions, the higher education institution/ college shall ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study field whilst implementing its internal quality assurance system:		Partially compliant	Riseba has established good internal quality assurance procedures, like SWOT-analysis, development plan and regular feedback systems for continuous development. Riseba has established a separate structural unit called Quality Centre to continuously enhance the quality. The discussions during the experts visit also evidenced that the university is aware and willing to develop the quality continuously. The main weakness of the Inner Quality Assurance System of Riseba, realised by the experts, is the lack of core process-descriptions and good visualisations - for example about the organisational charts with directors to clearly show the powers. The management system is described in detail in separate pictures/texts, but the real power structures of the staff, the well visualised organisational chart with directors/staff but also including the main collegial bodies is lacking. Now, the power structures between the directors and many collegial bodies remain somewhat hidden, which increases the likelihood for development of a so called "informal organisation". The transparency of power structures, especially of economic and recruiting powers and processes, should be improved. The core process descriptions are missing and should be created for transparency reasons. There are also sufficient mechanisms for gathering student/stakeholder feedback, but the mechanisms for informing students/stakeholders about the impact of their feedback is missing.

Requirements	Requirement Evaluation	Comment
R2 - Compliance of scientific research and artistic creation with the level of development of scientific research and artistic creation (if applicable)	Partially compliant	<p>The aims of MA- and doctoral level programmes comply well with contemporary scientific and artistic research/creation. Anyhow the critical mass of research/artistic staff is very small and the academic programmes are young, so the compliance is not yet sufficient with the European level of scientific research nor artistic creation even though there are singular high level artist-researchers involved. The compliance of research and artistic creation could be developed by inviting visiting international academic staff and enhancing the arts field teachers' possibilities for their own research and creative activities as well as for international exchange.</p> <p>The students' final works' parts A and B should have a connection. The emphasis of the Arts study field could be more on the exploration with digital audiovisual tools in wider environments in all levels, in order to get an academic/creative path from BA to MA and to doctoral programmes.</p> <p>The teachers' possibilities for research and artistic creation in international cooperation projects would help the Arts study field to develop scientific works and artistic creations and their interconnection.</p>
R3 - The cooperation implemented within the study field with various Latvian and foreign organizations ensures the achievement of the aims of the study field.	Partially compliant	<p>Riseba has signed some agreements with Latvian universities and has two joint programmes with Liepaja University. These are very good steps. University also collaborates with some international universities, but the scope of which could be widened and strategically and practically deepened with the selected one/s. There is only a limited number of local academic staff members who participate in outgoing mobilities. Even short exchange or shadowing visits are suggested for teachers. There should be more collaboration with the business sector of creative industry to find partners for innovative exploration, relevant research topics, and also teachers.</p>

Requirements	Requirement Evaluation			Comment
R4 - Elimination of deficiencies and shortcomings identified in the previous assessment of the study field, if any, or implementation of the recommendations provided.		Partially compliant		Riseba has eliminated most of the deficiencies identified in the previous assessment and implemented recommendations or is in process to implement the rest of the recommendations. The experts trust that all the ongoing developments will be implemented. The experts understand that the long term recommendations take time to implement.

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	Audiovisual Media Arts (43213)	Not relevant	Partially compliant	Partially compliant	Fully compliant	Average
2	New Media and Audiovisual Art (45213)	Partially compliant	Partially compliant	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Average
3	Media Art and Creative Technologies (51213)	Partially compliant	Partially compliant	Partially compliant	Partially compliant	Average

The Dissenting Opinions of the Experts

There are no dissenting opinions of the experts.